

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 76 - 04 February 2021

**Europe External Programme with Africa** is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peace building, refugee protection and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EEPA has published extensively on issues related to movement and/or human trafficking of refugees in the Horn of Africa and on the Central Mediterranean Route. It cooperates with a wide network of Universities, research organisations, civil society and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and across Africa. The situation reports can be found [here](#).

### Reported war situation (as confirmed per 03 February)

- Reported that refugee camps were systematically destroyed, by the DX Open Network: “These cumulative damage assessments show a campaign to degrade, destroy both the Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps from November 24 to January 27.”
- The Network reports: “There are clear and consistent patterns across both camps over a two month period demonstrating that these refugee camps were systematically targeted, despite their protected humanitarian status.”
- Vice reports the findings of the Network: “the destruction was systemic, and residential areas, clinics, and schools were targeted in what appears to have been an attempt at preventing future use of the facilities. Further, a significant number of military vehicles and soldiers are visible in and around the camps soon after the time of the destruction, which appears to point to their complicity in the razing.”
- Fierce fighting between ENDF allied forces (including Eritrean forces) and Tigray regional forces was reported today 03/21 in the Southern zone of Tigray.
- A spokesperson of the Tigray Regional Forces, Gebre Gebretsadik, states that there was fierce fighting between Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) allied forces and Tigray regional forces at Hedeg Wered, an area between Edaga Berhe and Aa’det. (DW)
- At the Hedeg Wered front, 2 infantry battalions and one supportive battalion of the ENDF 25th division were ambushed and completely destroyed by Tigray regional forces. The vice commander of the division and commander of the battalions were reportedly killed.
- Report that on 31 Jan 2021, more than 1.200 Eritrean soldiers travelled from Aksum to Wukro Maray. They were ambushed at Minaba (between Aksum and Wukro Maray) by Tigray regional forces. 120 Eritrean soldiers were killed and 235 were wounded. Eritrean soldiers retreated back to Aksum. (DW)
- 01 Feb, 2021, Eritrean forces returned with reinforcements. There was heavy fighting in Minaba. (DW)
- In the fighting on 1 Feb in Minaba, the 2nd and 3rd brigades of ENDF 25th division and one brigade of Eritrean forces fought against the Tigray regional forces. On the ENDF/Eritrean side it is estimated that more than 2.000 soldiers together participated. During this fight, more than 270 soldiers were killed and more than 350 soldiers were wounded. (DW)
- The Tigray regional forces state that the ENDF and Eritrean forces were defeated in Minaba. (DW)
- Reported that in Samre, after fighting during the last days, the area is now quiet.
- It is reported from Mekelle that two days ago a Bajaj driver was shot near Mekelle university. It was evening and he was slightly late, so he was killed with a shot through the window. The young girl with him was not hit and stayed in the bajaj the entire night.
- It is reported that the health system is severely suffering from the war. It is reported that health workers died in Wukro, Humera, and AbiAdi, including a midwife nurse from Ayder hospital.

- Transport interruptions to and from Mekelle have seriously affected medical services. Critical patients could not reach Ayder Hospital. Chronic patients at the hospital were left to die.
- Reported that there were three maternal deaths in Mekelle in the first week of the conflict alone due to delays in reporting to the hospital.
- The health sector suffers from shortage of medications and medical appliances. Hospitals could not buy drugs for two reasons. Firstly there were no providers. All stores were closed and empty. Secondly the banks were not working. Donations from abroad were stranded in Addis Ababa. The biggest problems were reportedly seen in dialysis medications, insulin, Heparine, TAT and anesthesia drugs.
- Pictures from the Veterinary school of Mekelle University show that the place is completely ransacked.

#### Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 03 February)

- Reported that Ethiopia has arrested 15 people accused of plotting an attack on the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Addis Ababa. A second attack was allegedly planned on the Embassy in Sudan.
- Concern over the lack of aid provision. 16 UN agencies and 25 NGOs have applied to provide aid, but so far only provisions are allowed through and these are stored in warehouses in Mekelle.

#### Reported International situation (as confirmed per 03 February)

- Tigray discussed today in the UN Security Council. Ireland calls for humanitarian actors to be given sustained, impartial, safe and unimpeded access; restoration of basic services; and all parties to comply with humanitarian and human rights law.
- President Macron called today with PM Abiy.
- Republicans have called on the Biden administration to help put an end to a humanitarian and security crisis in Tigray. Congressional republicans, led by Senate Foreign Relations committee ranking member Jim Risch (R., Idaho) and House Foreign Affairs Committee ranking member Michael McCaul (R., Texas), said that President Joe Biden must act to alleviate the human rights crisis emerging in Tigray.
- McCaul said Biden must “demand accountability”: “We still do not know the full extent of atrocities committed against civilians in Tigray, and the conflict has resulted in a staggering humanitarian crisis. We must demand accountability, elevate our diplomatic engagement with the government of Ethiopia, and work with our allies and partners to prevent further destabilization in the region.”
- Risch said that “we encourage [the Biden White House] to continue to push Ethiopian officials to abandon efforts that further the conflict” and “There is much bipartisan, bicameral support for such efforts. ... Ethiopia's federal government needs to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive national dialogue with the many different political and ethnic factions in Ethiopia.”
- More than 350 former Peace Corps volunteers and three former U.S. ambassadors have written to U.S. congressmen to press for humanitarian aid to all parts of Tigray, to urge the United Nations to investigate and to advocate for media access to the region “to document human rights abuses.”
- Isabella Olson, a former peace corps volunteer said communication links remain difficult to many parts of the Tigray region and only a small number of volunteers have reached friends there. “We have avoided explicit discussions on what is occurring due to safety concerns and our acute awareness that the Ethiopian government is monitoring the calls,” Isabella added.

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#### Links of interest

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/93wmbz/refugee-camps-in-ethiopia-appear-to-have-been-systematically-destroyed>  
<https://freebeacon.com/national-security/congressional-republicans-call-on-biden-administration-to-act-swiftly-on-ethiopia-crisis/>  
<https://apnews.com/article/ex-peace-corp-plead-help-tigray-ethiopia-b4439a666c69dbaac4aa330bbf17e9ab>  
<https://euobserver.com/foreign/150791>