

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 81 - 10 February 2021

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### Reported war situation (as confirmed per 09 February)

- *Unconfirmed* report received that a payment of 500mln US dollars was made by Ethiopia to President Esayas of Eritrea and that Eritrea was provided with weapons for its participation in the war in Tigray.
- *Unconfirmed* report that when the National Security director of Eritrea visited Addis, he requested that the Ethiopian government would make the second additional payment of 500 mln USD so that Eritrean troops could do the 'final offensive' in Tigray.
- The understanding is that reportedly PM Abiy promised 1 billion USD to President Esayas from Eritrea, to be paid in two parts.
- In exchange, President Esayas from Eritrea offered his Indefinite National Service recruits to serve in the war in Tigray.
- National service troops of Eritrea have also been serving as mercenaries in the war in Yemen, despite the UN sanctions that were in place to curb Eritrea participation in regional destabilisation, until 2018.
- It is reported that the clashes between Ethiopia and Eritrea troops in Tigray a few weeks ago were caused by differences in the division of weapons between the two parties in the alliance. Reportedly many soldiers were killed on both sides.
- Ethiopia has closed two camps which previously sheltered internationally recognised Eritrean refugees in Tigray, Shemelba and Hitsats. Satellite footage shows the camps were completely destroyed. 20.000 refugees from the camps have disappeared and 10.000 are alleged to have been abducted to Eritrea.
- One year ago, President Esayas from Eritrea pressurised Ethiopia to close the four camps in Tigray. Many of the Eritrean refugees sheltered in the camps have fled the indefinite national service in Eritrea. It is a cruel practice which, according to the UN, constitutes a Crime against Humanity.
- It is reported from Eritrea that the situation there is absolutely desperate. Due to extremely harsh lock-down measures due to Covid-19, people have not been paid, there are no markets, small businesses are closed and people do not have work. People suffer from hunger and fight for survival.
- A delegation from the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia travelled to Tigray for a 'peace conference' and to discuss humanitarian aid. The delegation included Daniel Kibret, a political advisor of PM Abiy.
- The delegation is composed of religious leaders, elders and members of the council, and planned to make a three day visit and meet with members of the community and stakeholders in Tigray. The delegation was intended to "hold discussions on the challenges faced during the law enforcement operation held in Tigray regional state, particularly damage caused to churches."
- The delegation would meet with "heads of churches and elders as well as regional government officials and security forces" in Tigray and it sent out invitations to religious leaders and elders in Tigray but the Tigray elders and religious leaders have refused to attend.
- The Patriarch Abune Mathias is reported to have declined the invitation to meet the delegation.
- All shops, hotels and transport are closed in Mekelle as a sign of opposition to the visit of the council.
- The youth of Mekelle took to the streets and burned tyres on roadways to pass the message that the delegates should leave Mekelle. The youth blocked many streets. For example the road from Axum

Hotel to Relief society of Tigray was blocked by angry youth. There was gunfire around Kebele 17 and 18 (southern part of the city), probably to disperse the youth.

- The reported hate speech alleged to some members of the delegation visiting Mekelle includes: a proposal to throw ten heavy bombs onto each town in Tigray and to kill a million ethnic Tigray 'to shorten the war' as a sustainable solution. The allegations of hate speech circulate in social media.
- The Ethiopian army responded by indiscriminately shooting at civilians and by mass arrests. There are multiple reports of people having been shot and killed, AFP confirmed one death; other sources claim at least four people have been killed; a doctor and staff from Ayder hospital claimed as many as ten people shot and very many wounded.
- Following a meeting with the Council, the provisional government administrator, Dr. Mulu stated that "the rumor that humanitarian aid has not reached the people is completely false, he said, adding that the federal government is working to solve the problem by setting up an emergency response center."
- The delegation cut the three-day visit short and left Mekelle today.
- Video footage of a corpse left behind on the street in Mekelle circulates in social media.
- In the area near the bus station of Wukro many leaflets have appeared with a message from the Tigray regional forces: starting from the 7th of the Ethiopian month (which is coming Sunday) there will be no transport any more. People understand from this that the TPLF is planning a big offensive.
- Transport between Mekelle and Wukro was stopped today.
- Groundreport of fighting between ENDF allied forces and Tigray regional forces in Guya, Kola Tembien; Tigray regional forces report they destroyed one battalion of Ethiopian/Eritrean forces.
- Reported that the Ethiopia/Eritrea alliance is attacked by the Tigray forces in May Keyah of Wajirat, about 50-60 km South of Mekelle.
- Report on the war in the Samre area: one person was killed in Samre town when the Eritrean army entered, five civilians were killed by the Eritrean army in Addi Awso.
- Report that the number of fighters of the Tigray forces is rapidly increasing.
- Reported that the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) Western Command, the 22nd Eagle Battalion is ready to protect the country's sovereignty from both "internal and external aggression". It is reported that the brigade has been inspecting the capacity of its heavy artillery and vehicles.
- Footage shows the destruction of the hilltop Amanuel Orthodox church in Tigray on November 24, 2020. The church was - according to the person who recorded the footage, shelled 17 times by artillery fired by tanks. The church is close to the Negash (al-Nejashi) mosque, possibly the oldest mosque in Africa, which has also been severely damaged.
- The Ethiopian government has given the green light to UN agencies to provide aid in Tigray. It allows 25 staff members to enter Tigray and start providing emergency relief. The UN says that 60 more aid workers are awaiting approval to enter Tigray but have not had permission to leave to the region.

#### Reported international situation (as confirmed per 09 February)

- 200 Eritreans and Tigrayans in The Netherlands demonstrated today in front of the Parliament in The Hague to end the war and to demand justice, condemning the atrocities perpetrated in Tigray.
- A campaign has started asking the public to boycott buying flowers from Ethiopia. The campaign is specifically focused on Valentine's day and has slogans such as: "Lovely Valentine's day roses - but are they coming from a war zone? #Ethiopia is fighting a bitter war in Tigray."

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#### Links of interest

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1084192>

<https://www.tghat.com/2021/01/26/tigray-heritage-at-risk-due-to-the-ar-on-tigray/>