

## Situation Report EPPA HORN No. 84 - 15 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. EPPA 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 in Tigray (as confirmed per 14 February)

- The UAE armed forces are quietly leaving the Assab base in Eritrea. They have been in Assab since 2015. The UAE has come to a decision to withdraw from the conflict in Yemen where it was involved. Eritrean mercenaries were also involved in Yemen.
- The departure of UAE from Eritrea will have consequences for the conflict in Tigray where the UAE was involved providing assistance to the Ethiopian allied forces with drone attacks carried out against Tigray regional forces on Tigray territory. The drone was stationed in Assab.
- Reported that Ethiopia is paying the Eritrean troops in Tigray. Report that Eritrean troops have between 10.000 - 20.000 birr in their pockets (200-400 €, which is a big amount as Eritrean national service troops will receive only around 3 USD a month in their pocket (depending on the calculation).
- Reports of fierce fighting between ENDF allied and Tigray regional forces around Samre and TDF claims that the ENDF's 32 division was destroyed. Samre is in the South-East of Mekelle.
- The Eritrean army has increased its presence in Wukro; they have opened a camp in the Wukro Lodge. During the protests in Wukro on Wednesday 18 youth were killed by Eritrean soldiers.
- Reported by phone that 20 youth were executed in Adwa and 10 in Shire during the protests during the last days. Other sources from within Tigray confirm similar reports and numbers by phone.
- In Adigrat famine and lack of medicine is causing people to die, reported by phone.
- Report that the Debre Damo monastery is destroyed. After it had been bombed, reportedly by Eritrean troops, Eritrean troops climbed onto the 6th century monastery and looted old manuscripts and treasures. The houses and buildings on top of the flat mountain are completely destroyed.
- Tigray's elected but ousted regional state President Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael made a statement on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the beginning of the struggle of the people of Tigray.
- In his statement, the ousted president called all Tigrayan youth to join the struggle and fight for Tigray's self determination.
- In an audio recording, a member of the leadership of the Tigray Independence Party (TIP) made a statement on the occasion of the 46th anniversary calling on all Tigrayan youth to fight for freedom and independence.
- Reported that some parents in Tigray are shaving their daughters hair off and dressing them as boys to protect them from being raped.
- The Ethiopian minister for women, Filsan Abdullahi, has confirmed that there are cases of rape in Tigray. A task force deployed to the region confirmed it. The taskforce has however only been able to operate in and around Mekelle, so the number of rape cases will rise.
- Video of Ethiopian/Eritrean soldiers beating civilians laying on the street: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1360917891068162050>
- Videos appear of Eritrean soldiers looting, vandalising and entering houses of citizens in Tigray.

- A horrific picture circulates on the internet of a doctor of the Adwa clinic who is held captive by soldiers. The pictures are degrading and the doctor looks famined and in a bad state.
- Reported that metallic chain tanks were used on roads in Tigray intentionally to destroy asphalt roads. The asphalt road from Axum to Adwa is destroyed due to chain tanks driven on them.
- A UNICEF team has traveled to Tigray and has found an “incomplete but troubling picture” of the situation of Children in Tigray and states: “children are in acute need of protection and assistance”.
- The UNICEF team visited Shire, the first UN mission there since the conflict began, and found that the town (population of 170 thousand), is hosting 50 thousand IDPs. Those are sheltering in schools.
- UNICEF and its partners have also found severe malnutrition.

#### reported situation in the Horn Region (as confirmed per 14 February)

- Turkish foreign minister states that Ethiopia’s foreign minister Demeke Mekonnen will pay a two-day visit to Turkey starting on Monday.
- The road from Gallabat to Metma, which connects Sudan and Ethiopia, has been closed by Sudan.
- Sudan’s foreign ministry said Ethiopia forces crossed the border into Sudanese territory in an act of “aggression”.
- “Ethiopia’s trespass into Sudanese land is an unfortunate and unacceptable escalation, which could have dangerous repercussions on security and stability in the region,” the ministry said in a statement.
- General Yasir al-Atta, a member of the Sovereignty Council visited the border region between Sudan and Ethiopia. In a speech to the troops, the General said that the government intends to end the “abandonment of the Sudanese territory” and establish a permanent military base on the “international border”.

#### Reported international situation (as confirmed per 14 February)

- UK states: “We have assessed the appropriateness of UKAid programmes in Ethiopia in light of the developments of the Tigray conflict and are carefully considering our delivery model. We will continue to provide £37.8m of funding to non-governmental partners, to ensure we continue using ODA to alleviate the humanitarian situation and poverty.”
- Foreign Minister of Germany Heiko Maas and his counterpart Haavisto had a good discussion after Haavisto’s visit to the region. The German ministry of Foreign Affairs has said that action in the coming weeks is critical to avoid all out famine in Tigray.
- Ethiopia has hired a lobbying firm for outreach to Congress and the Joe Biden administration and reportedly signed a \$35,000-per-month contract with DC-based law firm Venable on Feb. 1. It is reported that the contract is for an initial three months but can be extended. The lobby activity has been filed with the US Justice Department.
- In an editorial, the Financial Times states that “Some Tigrayans smell a plot to divide their region between Eritrea and Amhara. The government should allay those fears by insisting that armed forces from both Eritrea and Amhara withdraw. Disputes over land between Tigray and Amhara should be resolved through a boundary commission.”

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