

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 2 - 18 November 2020

[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.

Key in-depth publications [can be accessed on the website](#).

### **Key information (in addition to what is already widely published)**

#### Damage from the war (as confirmed per 18 November 2020)

- Cities of Shire and Aksum have been attacked by the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), Amhara Special Force, and the Eritrean army. Fighting takes place in close proximity to Eritrean refugee camps, which are under attack. This includes Hitsats camp with a population 25,248, many unaccompanied minors. UNHCR had earlier evacuated refugees and humanitarian staff from Shimelba camp to Hitsats. Also refugee camps Adu Harish and May Ayni under attack. The total population of the four camps is estimated at around 90.000 people. 5,000 Internally Displaced Persons are also in Shire.
- It is reported that Shire, Raya area, including (South Tigray) and Aksum are now under control of the ENDF. BBC reported Aksum under Ethiopian Federal control.
- Sources on the ground report that United Arab Emirates jets and drones were part of the attack on Mekelle, Shire and Aksum.
- Tigray regional forces have given up Humara Town and Alemata town. Evacuations from both towns, from Alemata to Mekoni.
- The Ethiopian government stated that Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) destroyed infrastructure (4 bridges) on the road from Shire towards Mekelle to delay the approach to the capital city. Tigray President Debretsion Gebremichael confirmed that the defence line had shifted and towns of South Tigray were under Federal control, but denied destroying bridges.
- ENDF expected to have dominance in the air. Reuters quotes Jane's that ENDF has 15 Sukhoi Su-27SK and eight MiG-23ML fighter jets, around 20 Mi-24 and Mi-35 helicopter gunships and a range of air defence and missile systems, as well as scores of Russian T-55 and T-72 tanks.
- Sources on the ground report massive looting and destruction of property, houses, food, and cereal, taking place; especially by Eritrean forces.

- Letter from Tigray President Debretsion Gebremichael (included in this sitrep below) stating that “non-African actors” had provided Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to Eritrean and Ethiopian forces.

#### Humanitarian situation, refugees and internal displacement (as confirmed per 18 November 2020)

- The Institute of Population Studies from Mekelle University [issued a letter](#) to the European Institutions (attached to this situation report) warning of a devastating regional and international humanitarian and refugee crisis if the conflict continues.
- Hundreds of thousands of people are reported displaced in Tigray by sources on the ground. Internally Displaced Persons are particularly mentioned to come from Shire, the four refugee camps in Tigray, Rama and Mereb and from Zalembeza (all Northern border towns).
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have launched emergency numbers for people looking for relatives in Ethiopia.
- 4,000 refugees are crossing into Sudan daily. There are now an estimated 30,000 refugees in Sudan who fled this conflict.

#### Regional dimension (as confirmed per 18 November 2020)

- Fighting has been reported between Tigray and Eritrea in Quala area (Adi Quala), Zalembeza, Taruna (i.e. Tsorona), Ali Tina (Alitena), Wadqomdi, and Bademe.
- Sudanese media report that Eritrean soldiers have fled to Sudan. Unverified reports are circulating that Eritrean opposition holds the Eritrean town of Senafe.
- Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen made a round past Ugandan President Museveni, Kenyan President Kenyatta, and Rwandan President Kagame, but no official mediation including TPLF has taken place yet.
- Djibouti issued a communique to the Federal Government of Ethiopia on 15 November calling for peaceful settlement, recognising PM Abiy as “sole guarantor of that Unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia”.
- Russia approved plans for a naval base in Sudan, Port Sudan, with room for 300 people and 4 nuclear-powered war ships.

#### Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 18 November 2020)

- 34 bank accounts of businesses affiliated with the TPLF were suspended.
- Banks in Tigray are open, but have little money.

#### Press and media (as confirmed per 18 November 2020)

- Spokesperson Ethiopia Federal: Billene Seyoum (<https://twitter.com/BilleneSeyoum>)
- Spokesperson Tigray: Getachew Reda ([https://twitter.com/reda\\_getachew](https://twitter.com/reda_getachew))
- Disclaimer: All information in this situation report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to [info@eeпа.be](mailto:info@eeпа.be) any additional information and corrections.

## Links of interest

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ethiopia-conflict/ethiopia-faces-hell-in-battle-for-tigray-say-rebels-idUKKBN27YOSM>

<https://twitter.com/addisstandard/status/1328617639934124033?s=08>

<https://lta.reuters.com/article/uk-ethiopia-conflict-military-factbox-idUSKBN27X19E>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54984056>

<http://rfi.my/6qLp.W>

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Ethiopia%20Tigray%20Update%2018%20November\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Ethiopia%20Tigray%20Update%2018%20November_0.pdf)

Report from the Mekelle University Institute of Population Studies: <https://www.eepa.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CompressedInstitute-MU-Humanitarian-and-Refugee-Crises-escalating1.pdf>



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The Government of National Regional State of Tigray  
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Office of the President

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Date 17, Nov, 2020

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Ref No 0/19/125/80

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**Excellency,**

The government of Tigray National Regional State has, over the last couple of years made several attempts at resolving the crisis engulfing our country, Ethiopia, through an all-inclusive and comprehensive dialogue. However, the relationship with the federal government has degenerated to an active combat situation over the last two weeks, with Dr. Abiy Ahmed publicly, declaring that he would bomb dense urban areas of Tigray. He has followed up on the threat and for the last two weeks major Tigray towns have been under heavy air bombardment, with no regard to international law pertaining to protecting civilians under war situations.

Currently, the government of Dr. Abiy Ahmed has chosen to escalate its discriminatory and bellicose policy against Tigray. It has conspired and coordinated with a foreign state, Eritrea, and has since 3 November 2020 launched a full scale scorch to earth military campaign against Tigray. Almost three quarter of the Ethiopian army and sixteen infantry and mechanized Eritrean divisions are mobilized and have occupied a big chunk of Tigray territory. Civilians have already started to suffer the consequences of this senseless war and thousands are displaced and killed. Many thousands have also fled to the Sudan.

**Excellency,**

Dr. Abiy Ahmed ignored all domestic and international attempts to resolve the constitutional and political crisis through dialogue and has rather chosen to resolve it through bloody military campaigns. He has first escalated the crisis into a regional level by inviting the Eritrean government to attack his own people. He has now escalated the conflict into an international scale by allowing non-African actors to



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☎ 251-04-409193 ☒ 120 ፋክስ/ Fax 251-04-407723/402437  
መቐለ ትግራይ  
Mekelle Tigrai Ethiopia



Letter dated 18 November by PM Abiy

<https://twitter.com/PMEthiopia/status/1328922475267305478?s=08>



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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

November 18, 2020  
Addis Ababa

**Distinguishing TPLF from the People of Tigray**

The Federal Government of Ethiopia reaffirms its commitment to uphold the rule of law, its resolve to bring unlawful perpetrators to justice and denounces, in the strongest of terms, mis-characterizations that this operation has an ethnic or other bias.

Make no mistake the current law enforcement operations in Tigray target primarily the disgruntled, reactionary and rogue members of the TPLF clique that have been destabilizing Ethiopia. As such, the Federal government intends to put an end to the deadly crime spree of this group within TPLF, which has also affected the people of the Tigray region.

The people of Tigray will be the first to benefit from an operation that works towards a community based on the rule of law, freedom, unity and democracy. Our vision for Ethiopia is a that of a multinational society, where the many ties that bind us make it possible to cherish our diversity while upholding our unity.

Our common heritage and destiny is strong enough to overcome the threat posed by the divisive, sinister and toxic machinations of the TPLF clique.

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Ethiopia: A New Horizon of Hope

REPUBLICHE DE DJIBOUTI  
UNITE - EGALITE - PAIX

جمهورية جيبوتي  
وحدة - مساواة - سلام

MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES  
ET DE LA COOPERATION INTERNATIONALE

وزارة الشؤون الخارجية و التعاون الدولي

N° 135/CAB/20/MAECI  
DJIBOUTI LE .....

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### Communique

The Republic of Djibouti is following with great concern the internal conflict situation that has been unfolding since the 4th of November 2020, in Ethiopia, an armed conflict between the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and the TPLF from Tigray region.

Djibouti fully supports the Unity and the Territorial Integrity of the Federal and Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

The Djibouti government also recognises Prime Minister Abiy's government as the sole guarantor of that unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia.

Furthermore, Djibouti calls for a peace full settlement of this Ethiopian internal crisis under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Abiy Ahmed Ali, the Prime minister of Ethiopia.

Besides, Djibouti expresses its readiness to support all efforts, aimed at the peaceful resolution of this crisis.

REPUBLICHE DE DJIBOUTI  
MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES  
ET DE LA COOPERATION INTERNATIONALE

November 15th, 2020

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