

Background to the Eritrean Refugee Crisis in Ethiopia Tigray

Prepared for Webinar 15 June 2021 EEPA

ERITREA NATIONAL SERVICE

Present day Eritrea is one of the most militarised countries in the world.

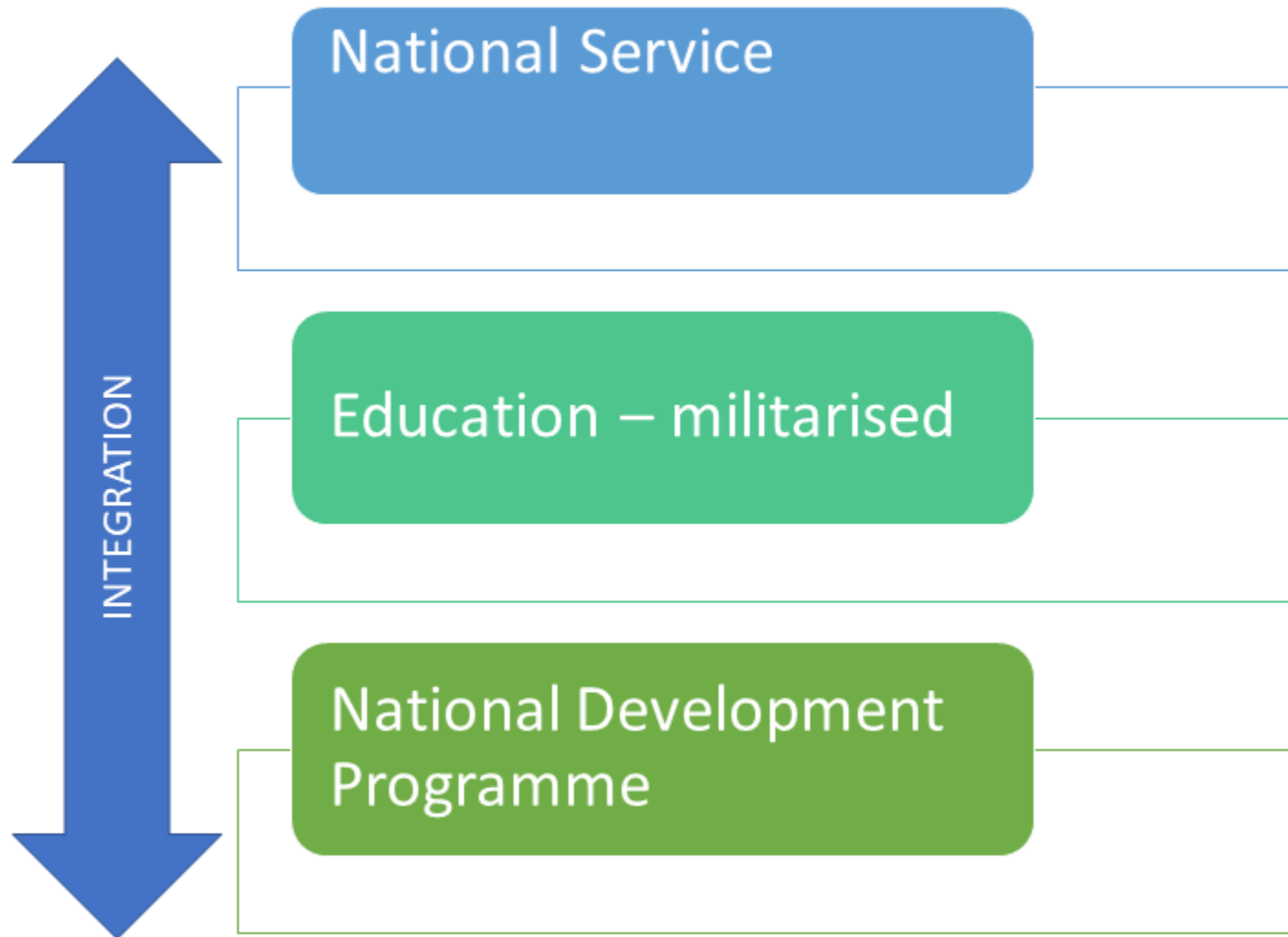
Conscription into the National Service is through:

a) The Education System

- a) All Eritrean students are required to complete high school (Grade 12) at the Sawa military school.
- b) Those who do not complete Grade 12 do not have access to higher Education.

b) The regular razzias (round-ups)

c) Everyone caught trying to flee the country



ERITREA NATIONAL SERVICE

- Those who do not participate in the National Service are denied the rights and benefits of citizenship.
- Conscripts are at the mercy of their superiors, who exercise control and command over them without restriction or accountability.

Compulsory & Indefinite

National scale Forced Labour

Starts at School Grade 12

ERITREA NATIONAL SERVICE

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (A/HRC/29/CRP.1, 2015) found that:

“... Eritreans are subject to systems of national service and forced labour that effectively abuse, exploit and enslave them for indefinite periods of time.”

By 2016 the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (A/HRC/32/47, 2016) found that there were:

“...reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity, namely, enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, other inhumane acts, persecution, rape and murder, have been committed in Eritrea since 1991.”

According to the UN Commission, National Service constitutes a Crime Against Humanity.

Forced Labour/Enslavement of Eritrean youth through National Service continues to date.

Minors are standard subjected to enforced subscription into the National Service.

National Service has been deployed in the war in Tigray and in Ethiopia.

The National Service is the main reason why Eritreans flee their country and the UN estimates that 5.000 people flee Eritrea every month.

The majority of the refugees under international protection in Tigray have fled National Service conditions in Eritrea.

ETHIOPIA OPERATION TIGRAY PRESENCE MAP

Site of Population Of Concern to UNHCR and UNHCR Offices in Ethiopia



Agency for Returnees and Refugees Administration (ARRA) – Regional HQ in Shire

Location of four main camps of Eritrean refugees under international protection in Tigray – Ethiopia:

- Shimelba
- Hitsats
- Adi Harush
- Mai Aini

Total of refugees was close to 100.000 from Eritrea in 4 camps at the beginning of the war

The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The data is based on reports and can be considered as indicative.

For more information, please contact [Stenulas Metayo UNHCR Information Management Officer](mailto:Stenulas.Metayo@unhcr.org) at the following email address metayo@unhcr.org.

Create Date: 19-November-2020
Data Source: proGres Database, RRP
IDP Data Source: DTM22, VAS Round 5
Datum: Geographical WGS 84
Web Resource: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/eth>

What is the current situation?

- Shimelba and Hitsats camps are now closed
- Reported that 20.000 refugees 'disappeared' from the two camps
- Estimated that thousands of refugees were returned to Eritrea, the country they had escaped from
- These refugees returned under duress are likely to have been redeployed under duress in National Service