

## Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 175 - 28 June 2021

**Europe External Programme with Africa** is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peacebuilding, refugee protection, and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EEPA has published extensively on issues related to the 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 organizations, 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 situation in Tigray (per 27 June)

- Three MSF workers were killed in Tigray on Thursday. MSF lost contact with them on Thursday, and their bodies were found the next morning. It brings the number of aid workers that have been killed in the conflict to twelve.
- The victims from MSF were an emergency coordinator from Madrid, an Ethiopian assistant coordinator, and an Ethiopian driver. The international community has widely condemned the killing.
- Borell, the EU high representative for foreign affairs, and EU Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič, released a statement condemning the attack. They stated that the “targeting of civilians and aid workers adds to existing allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity as well as the use of starvation and sexual violence as weapons of war. “
- The Ethiopian military has confirmed on Thursday that it was performed the airstrike on Togoga village last Tuesday. The airstrike killed 64 people. The ENDF said that it was targeting fighters, however, a doctor that arrived on the scene said that most of the victims were “mothers, children, and elderly fathers. There were few young men.”
- Togoga is also called Edagaselus, which translates to “Tuesday Market”. Reportedly, the day of the attack was a very busy day, as it was taking place before planting season. Many farmers would have been present to sell wares and buy seeds.
- The BBC was told by locals that no fighters were present in the area. However, it also added that locals were unlikely to tell them.
- The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, has condemned the airstrike on Tagoga. He added that independent investigation into the airstrike is necessary.
- There have also been new reports that the Ethiopian military launched new airstrikes on June 27th in Central and Southern Tigray.
- USAID states that 900 thousand people in Tigray are facing famine with millions more at risk.
- Samantha Power, the USAID administrator, also said that PM Abiy was wrong in saying that there was no hunger in Tigray. She added that “critical aid is being blocked & prevented from saving lives.”
- OCHA has released a new report on the situation in Tigray. It says that it has reached 3.1 million people since 1 May out of 5.2 million people in need.
- OCHA says that they are facing a serious funding gap of 300 million US Dollars.
- Reported that ethnic Tigrayan construction contractors and professors have been recently abducted from Mekelle University and Bole International Airport by Ethiopian security forces. Their whereabouts remain unknown.
- All roads and flights to and from Tigray have been halted by the Ethiopian government.
- There is communication and internet blackout in the Tigray region and in Mekelle and flights to Mekelle are stopped for now.
- In Tigray, transport from and to the regional capital, Mekelle has also been halted by ENDF and Eritrean soldiers.

### Reported military situation (per 27 June)

- The Tigrayan Defence Force claims to have made extensive territorial gains. The Ethiopian government denies this, but the TDF has released footage of captured Ethiopian equipment. They have also released pictures of at least hundreds of Ethiopian and Eritrean prisoners of war.
- The former head of Information Network Security Agency (INSA) of Ethiopia, General Teklebrhan W/Aregay said on his Twitter page that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of ENDF soldiers (around 7 divisions) were killed, wounded and captured within one week of TDF Operation Alula.
- Reported that unusual warplane flights were seen in Mekelle city coming from unusual directions.
- There are also reports that ENDF soldiers stationed at the outskirts of Mekelle has pointed the direction of their heavy artilleries towards the city.

### Reported situation in the Horn region (per 27 June)

- Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said Egypt hopes that the UNSC will enhance Egyptian and Sudanese efforts to reach a legally binding deal over the filling and operation of GERD.
- Shoukry also said Egypt “will have exhausted all peaceful means” if Ethiopia does not abide by the UNSC reaction on the GERD issue.
- Shoukry affirmed that the UNSC would be the last option available within the diplomatic framework.
- “In case we do not reach an agreement after all these efforts, we will have exhausted all the peaceful means and the extent of intransigence and absence of political will from the Ethiopian side and the extent of flexibility by Egypt and Sudan would be revealed to the international community,” said Shoukry.
- Commenting on the letter sent by Ethiopia to the UNSC, Shoukry said the accusations in the letter are all “claims” and “attempts to evade responsibility” and “blame others to cover the reality of the Ethiopian side.”

### International situation (per 27 June)

- A 72-page report accuses Western media of “being complicit in spreading disinformation about the crisis in Tigray, Ethiopia, and Eritrea’s involvement in the ongoing conflict”.
- Reportedly Eritrean and Ethiopian ministers and diplomats have helped spread and publicize the report which accuses Western media and governments of scapegoating Eritrea for the conflict in Tigray.
- The report entitled “Disinformation in Tigray: Manufacturing Consent For a Secessionist War”, was written by an organisation (New Africa Institute) that does not have a registered NPO address, and only has one employee. This employee is reportedly a vocal Eritrean government supporter.
- The report uses fact checking tropes and other forms of manipulation to dismiss evidence of atrocities committed in Tigray as disinformation. Among the facts that are being denied is the large scale sexual violence being committed by Eritrean soldiers in Tigray, claiming such rape does not happen in Eritrea.
- The author of the report said that “officials in various countries are reviewing what was said in that report, and it is potentially being used in diplomatic circles.”
- The Atlantic Council, publishing on the report, is a well-known spin doctor for the Eritrean regime and was previously linked to interests of the mining industry - such as Nevsum, in Eritrea, as pointed out by [journalists Francois Christoph](#) and [Martin Plaut](#).
- EEPA is holding a Webinar on “The involvement of Eritreans in the war in Tigray” on June 29th, 14:00-16:00 EAT, 13:00-15:00 CET, 07.00-09.00 U.S East. The registration link is: <https://bit.ly/3qfQ335>

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#### Links of interest

<https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2021/06/25/eritreas-final-war/>

<https://medium.com/dfrlab/eritrean-report-uses-fact-checking-tropes-to-dismiss-evidence-as-disinformation-385718327481>

[Rapport Disinformation in Tigray](#)

[Francois Christoph on Atlantic Council](#)

<https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/100801/statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-and-commissioner-cr>

<https://apnews.com/article/africa-ethiopia-ca9b378c5fce53d10c33e4e14b8d03d5>