

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 176 - 29 June 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 28 June)

- The Tigray Defense Forces have reportedly taken control of Axum, Adwa and Shire. There were reports earlier in the day that the Eritrean Defence force withdrew from those cities. The TDF now is in control.
- Reported that ENDF troops were forcing drivers and private car owners to drive them out of Mekelle while fleeing the capital.
- The former TPLF-led government of Tigray, the Tigray Government, which has taken control of the capital of Mekelle.
- The Tigray government has not responded to the unilateral ceasefire offered by Ethiopian leader PM Abiy. The TPLF says it will talk under the conditions already set earlier such as the withdrawal of Ethiopian, regional and foreign troops from Tigray.
- The Tigray Government, which continues to be led by President Debretsion, has a political arm (the government) and a military wing (the Tigray Defense Forces).
- Eritrean troops are reportedly trying to flee to Eritrea but many are blocked by TDF which reportedly controls all outgoing roads. Despite the agreement that Eritrean troops would withdraw from Eritrea three months ago, this had not happened.
- The spokesperson from the Eritrean Government, Minister of Information Yemane G/Meskel has not responded to journalists' questions regarding withdrawal of Eritrean troops.
- G/Meskel made the following statement in twitter: "TPLF trolls - & their enablers - are incapable of reading/infering from contemporary history: Igri Metkel, Adi-Begiao, Assab front, Tsorona/2016 & recent military debacles. By the same token, they cannot comprehend the profound meaning, dimensions & manifestations of "GAME OVER""
- The Addis Standard reports that the Amhara branch of the ruling Prosperity Party (APP) has warned the TDF that the areas captured by Amharic regional forces in former Western Tigray belong to the Amhara region and that the regional forces had liberated these areas from Tigray.
- The Spokesman of the Tigray Government, Getachaw Reda said Tigray Defense Forces will enter neighbouring Eritrea and the Amhara region to pursue "enemy" forces, if it is required.
- In a call with Reuters, he also said that the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Ethiopian government is a "joke". Hundreds more have been killed in fighting near the Afar region in Ethiopia on Tuesday.
- "Our primary focus is to degrade enemy fighting capabilities...So if going to Amhara is what it takes, we will do it, if going to Eritrea is what it takes, we will do it," said Getachaw.
- According to a report from TDF Central Command: in the operation Alula Abanega, 28,300 troops killed and 6011 captured.
- The TDF has captured 600 vehicles since the start of the offensive.
- The TDF also captured materials: 25 (122mm) heavy artillery, 6 (107) rockets, 13 (120mm) mortar, 78 (82mm) mortar, 16 Zu-23, 142 Dshk, 630 Bren, thousands of Klashinkovs, 391 different military vehicles and 747 military radios in the operation.
- Also 6 heavy artillery, 6 Zu-23, 4 (107) rockets, and 88 military vehicles were burned.

- CNN reports that Gebre Gebretsadkan, Tigray's military spokesperson said that "the TDF had downed an Ethiopian air force plane, as part of a renewed offensive against the Ethiopian military."
- CNN reports that Ethiopia's military spokesman has denied that the plane had been shot down, stating that the plane had crashed due to technical issues.
- A nurse from Ayder Hospital has told CBS that Ethiopian soldiers shot at university students while withdrawing from Mekelle. It killed two and wounded three.
- German newspaper Der Spiegel documents serious Sexual Violence against women in Tigray including hurting women in gang rape for days, in front of relatives and stuffing the women's private parts as well as burning it with acid.
- Der Spiegel also reports deliberate attempts to infect women with HIV/AIDS. The article states that - even though this is difficult to prove, the number of HIV/AIDS cases has increased.
- Der Spiegel reports the perpetrators provide genocidal reasons to the women, when they speak about the situation, in that they were purposefully sent to Tigray because they had HIV/AIDS so that they would infect the women.

International situation (per 28 June)

- Ireland, the US, and the UK have requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council. The meeting could be held as early as Friday, although it is up to France to decide. France holds the Presidency of the council.
- The acting assistant secretary of state for the US State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, Robert Godec, said that the Biden administration was far advanced in its assessment of whether to call events crimes against humanity, genocide or war crimes.
- Godec said: "The administration is in full agreement that horrifying atrocities are being committed in Tigray," he told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee.
- Godec further said that "We will not stand by in the face of horrors in Tigray," and urged the Eritrean government to immediately join in the cessation of hostilities.
- Godec called for a commitment of all parties to a permanent, negotiated ceasefire in the region.
- US House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Greg Meeks said that there was and to get the crisis in tigray under control and was cited stating that "we could witness one of our closest and most powerful allies in Africa march toward civil war and, eventually, a state collapse."
- Republican Representative Michael McCaul, the top ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said that in his assessment acts of genocide had been carried out against residents of Tigray.
- McCaul called for targeted sanctions against the perpetrators of genocidal acts in Tigray.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised Tigray at a Group of 20 meeting of foreign ministers in Italy.
- Blinken stated: "I sought robust action to push all parties to commit to a negotiated ceasefire to resolve the conflict in Tigray."
- US Representative Karen Bass, the chair of the panel's Africa subcommittee, stated that "Every effort must be made to make this ceasefire meaningful, including discussions with all parties to the conflict,"
- Charlie Flanagan, Chair of Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs & Defence of Ireland says that the "International Community must work towards real dialogue between Tigray authorities & Ethiopian Government based on complete withdrawal of Eritrean & Amhara forces."

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Links of interest

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tigray-forces-will-pursue-enemy-forces-into-eritrea-amhara-region-spokesman-says-2021-06-29/>
<https://addisstandard.com/news-ruling-party-in-amhara-state-warns-tigrayan-forces-against-attempt-to-retake-areas-in-western-tigray/>
https://news.yahoo.com/u-official-warns-washington-not-144122896.html?soc_src=social-sh&soc_trk=fb&tsrc=fb&guce_referrer=aHR0cDovL20uZmFjZS9yY29tLw&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAB7P2lNh4qAvF5ngNngv9Iq7fXKJ12wHDtdxXw2kGJnReW_mZtbWc-YNFnWFRsEP5N4hp9hMYmxaHmVOkbf1jgVDDGfgZfVUFqDvjcq47yUG72yJ0Pr8l_rlzNv60dfCmFirRK9aUBpoGbPExWBgf1sQMihTwpAtShK2asvhb5&guccounter=2