

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 178 - 01 July 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 30 June)

- Fierce fighting between ENDF forces who were fleeing Mekelle and Tigray Defense Forces was reported at a place named Amentila near the Afar region on 29 June.
- Two brigades of ENDF's 12th division participated in the fight. While fleeing Mekelle, they were attacked and killed by Tigray Defense Forces after they refused to surrender.
- The spokesperson of Tigray Defense Forces, Gebre Gebretsadik told Tigray Media House (TMH) that they captured 2 (120mm) heavy artillery, 1 ZU-23 and 1 (127) rocket. Also 1 (107) rocket was burned.
- He also said that, while fleeing Mekelle and major towns in Tigray, ENDF had left one Battalion of the 20th division guarding a military depot in A'rato near the town of Wukro.
- "The Battalion was not informed by ENDF while they were fleeing and had no information about the fall of the regional capital, Mekelle to the Tigray Defense Forces," he added.
- The Battalion was attacked by the Tigray Defense Forces and over 200 soldiers were captured.
- Further confirmation has been coming from sources in the towns that the Tigrayan Defence Force is in control of Shire and Northern cities.
- There have been further reports that Eritrean forces are trying to withdraw to northern Tigray.
- Amnesty International is saying that civilians in Tigray remain in need of urgent protection. It stated that "Amnesty International remains deeply concerned about the safety of civilians in Tigray, who have endured months of fighting and serious human rights abuses, including war crimes, by all sides. As Ethiopian government forces retreat and Tigray regional forces re-establish control, protection of civilians must be paramount."
- They added that there are fears of reprisals against civilians by all sides.
- Most of Tigray was not reachable today.

Statements by the TDF (per 30 June)

- In a new interview with the AP, Getatchew Reda, the spokesperson for the Tigray Government said that "we'll stop at nothing to liberate every square inch" of Tigray.
- He added that the Tigray government will "want to stop the war as quickly as we can".
- He specified that liberating the territory is not just about the land, rather the security of the 6 million Tigrayan people. If the TDF sees the need to occupy Amhara or Eritrean territory to reach that goal, they will do so.
- Getatchew Reda countered an Ethiopian government claim that Eritrean troops were withdrawing from Eritrea. He said it was incorrect, and that instead they have been taking up defensive positions in Northern Tigray.
- Debretsion, who was re-elected as President of Tigray in September 2020, amid an election whose validity was disputed by the Ethiopian Federal Government, has said that the TDF cannot take the cease-fire seriously since the Ethiopians have cut power and communication lines to Mekelle and Tigray. He added that it is just a Ethiopian ploy to regroup. "We will not allow that", he said.

Statements by Ethiopian Officials (per 30 June)

- The party in power in Amhara, the APP, has warned the Tigrayans to not invade Western Tigray. They said that they “freed the land through their own sacrifice” and will fight for it.
- They added that if the Tigrayans tried to retake the land, then “there is no Amhara that will not pay the price for its freedom.”
- The Spokesperson of the Ethiopian Emergency Task Force, Redwan Hussein, claimed: “If it is required, we can easily enter Mekelle, and we can enter in less than three weeks,”.
- Redwan continued saying that the Ethiopian government will shift its focus to the second filling of the GERD dam and regaining disputed territory from Sudan.
- The filling of the dam is expected to resume in mid-July, during the Ethiopian rain season.

International situation (per 30 June)

- The Biden Administration called Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Tuesday to tell him to restore telecommunication services to Tigray. The US also said it was monitoring the situation closely.
- In a press release from the State Department, the US added that the “United States stands ready to work with the Ethiopian government, Tigrayan authorities, the United Nations, and other international partners to expedite the delivery of life-saving food assistance.”
- According to diplomats briefed on the situation in Addis Ababa, “senior officials within Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s government were at odds on how to proceed after claims from senior Tigrayan officials that they would keep fighting Ethiopian troops and their allied Amhara ethnic militias and Eritrean military forces.”
- Two western diplomats said that Eritrean officials are concerned that “the Tigrayans could reverse the tide of the conflict by invading Eritrea.”
- The diplomats added that intense diplomatic efforts are expected within days. The efforts to broker negotiations are expected to involve influential African emissaries.
- The US assistant secretary of state told the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that the US did not know whether Eritrea was withdrawing.
- He said that there has been no indication from Eritrea that it will commit to the ceasefire or withdraw.
- The assistant secretary also said that the famine that is starting to emerge in Tigray is “entirely man made”.
- Lastly he said that “It is essential now that all parties commit to the cease-fire, allow humanitarian access, protect civilians, there be independent investigations into atrocities, and that there is justice for victims.”
- The UN spokesperson said that operations to provide humanitarian aid to the region have been constrained the last few days due to fighting.
- Many telecommunications with Tigray remain cut. The assistant to the administrator for the United States Agency for International Development called on Ethiopia to reestablish communications.
- EEPA held a Webinar on Tuesday entitled “Voices from Tigray: The involvement of Eritrea in the War in Tigray”. The Webinar can be watched online at: <https://youtu.be/mY38kxSdnI0> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFYtUkc6Tgk>. The reports and testimonies discussed in the [webinar](#) are available here: [Testimonies](#) and [presentations 1 Game Over](#) and [2 Eritrean involvement in the war in Tigray](#).

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