

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 180 - 03 July 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 01 July)

- Reported that Tigray Defense Forces have started moving into the western zone of Tigray, and major fighting is expected to take place in the next days.
- The UNSC has discussed the situation in Tigray, as France took over the Presidency of the UNSC on Thursday in which members insisted on the need for dialogue and reconciliation.
- UN OCHA earlier briefed the UN Security Council on “tragedies of historic proportions.” US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the US stands ready to assist Ethiopia in solidifying and implementing a cease-fire and providing life-saving humanitarian aid and resolving the conflict.
- The UNSC discusses the situation as aid and supplies to Tigray need to be scaled up, and communication and electricity need to be restored.
- Norway states at the UNSC that the continued presence of Eritrean forces is a threat to regional stability and calls for their immediate withdrawal.
- The Ethiopian Ambassador to the UN reports that Eritrean troops have left Tigray according to “his latest information”.
- USAID Administrator Samantha Powels reports that she has spoken to EU Ethiopia Special Envoy and Finnish Foreign Minister Haavisto about Tigray, and working closely to keep pressing for an end to hostilities & full humanitarian access.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) reports a second bridge over the Tekeze river has been destroyed (which is confirmed by the Ethiopian government) and calls for an Air Bridge to the region to transport crucial supplies, as humanitarian aid is failing to reach Tigray.
- Reported that air access to WFP is denied for 10 days, whilst 3800mt of their food aid is blocked.
- The Government of Tigray commits itself fully to supporting humanitarian access in Tigray: “The Government of the National State of Tigray and the Tigray Defense Forces remains ready to robustly support the United national and humanitarian organizations working to deliver life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable in Tigray.”
- The statement also reads that “We extend our support to ensure the safety and security of international humanitarian workers.”
- The WHO said it ceased operations for 48 hours and 38 staff members were trapped due to hostilities.
- Ethiopia has denied accusations that it’s trying to “suffocate” the people of Tigray by denying them urgently needed food and other aid. Transport and communication links to the region remain cut.
- Deputy PM Demeke Mekonnen told diplomats that “The allegation that we are trying to suffocate the Tigrayan people by denying humanitarian access and using hunger as weapon of war is beyond the pale”. He claimed that Ethiopia was rebuilding damaged infrastructure and restoring services to Tigray.
- Reuters says that just before the capture of Mekelle, it observed a convoy of 34 trucks, each loaded with 43 tons of food, stopped for four days at a government checkpoint. The food was ultimately unloaded before reaching the destination.
- A senior diplomat told Reuters that no food has reached Mekelle since the Tigrayans recaptured it.
- TPLF spokesperson Getachew Reda has told Reuters that the continued government shutdown of services and supplies was seen as a continued “Act of War”.
- According to several sources, the Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki, and other Eritrean members of the leadership, are nervous about the potential repercussions of the current developments in Tigray. They

fear that Eritrean army commanders might take action to remove them from power. There are also fears that the Tigray Defense Forces might invade Eritrea.

- In a piece for the New Humanitarian, Lucy Kassa has written about the toll that it is taking on journalists covering the news of massacres in Tigray. She says that she “used to feel sad about when people died from COVID-19. Now, I don’t feel anything.”
- The conflict has had a strong effect on Kassa; the cruelty and barbarism that she has encountered has left her “short of words to describe her agony”. The level of cruelty was hard for me to comprehend.”
- She finishes by saying that what she has reported is only the “tip of the iceberg”.
- Amhara forces have looted private and public properties from the town of Alamata in Southern Tigray.
- “The Amhara militia and special forces has looted shops, market centers, stores, and construction materials since 01 July 2021. And they were transporting it to the town of Kobo inside the Amhara region,” said a witness.

Developments in Ethiopia (per 01 July)

- The Oromo Liberation Front and the Oromo Federalist Congress, the two main opposition parties in Oromo, have declared that the region does not have a legitimate government anymore, and have thus declared the “establishment of the Oromia Regional National Transitional Government of Oromia (ORNTG) on this day of July 1, 2021”.
- The OLF and OFC say that the Federal government is “diligently working to dismantle the Oromo Regional State” and that “the 6th national election is null and void since it does not meet the criteria of an election by any standard.” They add that political opposition was almost non-existent due to opposition parties being “forced to withdraw”.
- In effect the OLF and OFC have declared their intention to secede from Ethiopia, and set up their own government structures. They have said that they would hold elections within three years, establish a parliament, and establish a separate executive.
- The arrest and profiling of ethnic Tigrayan activists, civil society workers, lawyers and businessmen has been intensified at a larger scale in Addis Ababa. Shops, internet cafes, restaurants and other businesses owned by ethnic Tigrayans were also closed by Ethiopian federal forces.
- In some places of Addis Ababa, internet shops were told by Ethiopian federal forces to register the name of ethnic Tigrayans who use the internet for hours.
- Ethio-Forum said journalist Yayasaw Shemelis has been abducted by Ethiopian federal forces and intelligence officers on 02 July and his whereabouts remain unknown.
- The Committee to Protect Journalists said that Ethiopian Journalist Abebe Bayu who works for Ethio Forum media was abducted by four men and forced into a car. The men brought him to the side of a cliff, stole his phone and his money, and told him that if he were to move, he would be shot. The men also told him “not to criticize the government”. They then left him near the cliff.

International developments (per 01 July)

- EU Foreign Affairs Chief Borell has said that ““A cease-fire doesn’t mean cutting a region off power or destroying critical infrastructure”. Instead it is about doing everything possible to help those vulnerable and in need.
- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has said that the situation in Tigray is continuing to deteriorate.
- Tanzanian Zitto Kabwe, leader of a Tanzanian opposition party, writes that PM Abiy Ahmed must be stripped of his Nobel Prize in The Continent.

Links of interest

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ethiopia-says-tigray-ceasefire-work-progress-amid-fears-famine-2021-07-01/>
https://cpi.org/2021/07/ethiopian-journalist-abebe-bayu-abducted-and-assaulted-by-unidentified-men/amp/?_twitter_impression=true
<https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-ethiopia-africa-9ba0c98ebdaa75583aec156b1fd83265>
https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/first-person/2021/6/29/emotional-toll-of-reporting-ethiopia-tigray-conflict?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=a51aaa9c77-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_07_02_Weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-a51aaa9c77-7549
<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/security-council-report-monthly-forecast-july-2021>
<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2021/07/ethiopia-tigray-open-briefing.php>
<https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-linda-thomas-greenfield-at-a-un-security-council-briefing-on-ethiopia-and-the-situation-in-tigray/>
<https://twitter.com/AlemayehuGK/status/1411071477424795654?s=08>