

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 182 - 06 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 05 July)

- In an interview with the New York Times, Debretsion Gebremichael, the Tigrayan President of the region, said that he “didn’t expect to make it back alive”.
- He told the NYT that the Tigrayans knew the Ethiopians were coming. According to him, the ENDF and its allies had been massing troops along the border for a while already in preparation for an attack on Tigray.
- According to Debretsion, the Tigray Defense Forces defeated 7 out of the 12 Ethiopian divisions sent to the region and killed over 18 thousand soldiers.
- He elaborated that the Tigrayan forces were caught off guard by a large UAE drone and bombing campaign, which cut Tigrayan supply lines.
- He also said that the Tigrayans were planning on expanding the conflict to the rest of Tigray until all foreign forces, both Eritrean and Amhara forces, had left. “They have taken the land by force, so we will take it back by force,” he said.
- More than 7000 Ethiopian War prisoners were paraded through the streets of Mekelle. Debretsion said that most Ethiopian prisoners of war would be released. The officers will however remain in captivity.
- Debretsion has also rejected the UN and Ethiopia Human Rights Commission (EHRC) joint investigation into the massacres in Tigray, saying that it was partial.
- Reported that power has been restored today by the Government of Tigray in some towns including the city of Mekelle.
- According to video footage broadcasted by Asena TV, more than 416 ENDF’s Prisoners of War walked into Mekelle from Eastern Tigray.
- Asena TV also said over 428 Ethiopian soldiers were captured recently in Southern Tigray.
- Reported that ENDF soldiers destroyed computers, studios and other vital equipment of Tigray Mass Media Agency (TMMA) before they fled Mekelle last week.

Developments in Ethiopia (per 05 July)

- The Addis Standard is reporting that it has been receiving an increasing number of arbitrary arrests and ethnic targeting of Tigrayans.
- They have several accounts of Tigrayans telling them that police and federal police accompanied by men in civilian clothes have been stopping them and asking them for identification.
- Twelve journalists were also recently arrested over the last few weeks.
- The location of the people that have been arrested is often unknown.
- Reported that Ethiopia is going to close 30 of its Embassies and consulates worldwide.
- Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said on Monday his nation had better dramatically reduce the number of overseas missions.
- Abiy told the parliamentarians, “at least, Ethiopia would need to close 30 of its embassies.”

- Abiy said Ethiopia would no longer sustain all its foreign missions purely for economic reasons. "The ambassadors of embassies to close may follow up from Addis Ababa."
- Ethiopia, according to him, is facing debilitating inflation that needs to be addressed, and an insurgency backed by foreign powers and the international media.
- Currently, Ethiopia has 43 embassies and 49 consulates worldwide.
- According to Nation Africa, Ethiopian Embassy in Kenya among the 30 to be closed.
- Al-Jazeera says the Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed has defended the decision to fight rebels in the Tigray region and said he wants to foster a period of "silence" in the area.
- Abiy said the country could raise more troops if needed but said he wanted a period of calm after months of fighting in which thousands have been killed.
- "In one, two or three weeks, 100,000 trained, armed and organised special forces can be mobilised," Abiy told lawmakers.
- Abiy added: "If said special force isn't enough, if a militia is needed, in one or two months half a million militiamen can be organised. One million youths can be mobilised and trained."

Situation in the Horn region (per 05 July)

- The Ethiopian Prime Minister has said that the GERD dam is meant to produce electricity without harming countries downstream.
- Sudanese Irrigation Minister Yasser Abbas said Sudan has asked the UNSC to intervene in the dispute caused by the GERD because the dam has become a threat to regional peace and security.
- The UNSC is set to meet on Thursday over the matter at the request of downstream countries Egypt and Sudan.
- The minister also called on the council to urge all parties involved from taking any unilateral measures, including the filling of the multi-billion-dollar dam's reservoir.
- Abbas also said: "We hope the Security Council would respond to our demands... our expectations are positive, but we do not know the final result [of the session]."
- "Our demands are logical and clear and contribute to solving the issue," added Abbas.
- Daily News Egypt says Ethiopia has officially notified Egypt of the start of the second filling of the controversial GERD dam.
- Egypt's Irrigation Ministry responded that Egypt rejects any unilateral action which violates international laws governing management of transboundary rivers.

International Situation (per 05 July)

- The Secretary General of the UN has said that he is "deeply concerned" about the situation and that "The presence of foreign troops is an aggravating factor of confrontation" is aggravating the situation.
- The Guardian has published a series of photos depicting the captured Ethiopian soldiers being marched through Mekelle. They include several pictures of female soldiers.
- They depict many soldiers being marched through Mekelle or transported in trucks. Many people can be observed celebrating on the sides.
- EEPA is holding a Webinar on Voices From Tigray: "Hunger For Peace, Hunger For Justice" on 13th July at 14:00-16:00 EAT, 13:00-15:00 CET, 07.00-09.00 U.S East. You can register here for the webinar: <https://bit.ly/3jPwi1t>.

Links of interest

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/03/world/africa/tigray-leader-interview-ethiopia.html>

<https://nation.africa/kenya/news/africa/ethiopian-embassy-in-kenya-among-30-to-be-closed--3462318>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-analysis-fresh-wave-of-arbitrary-arrest-of-tigravans-in-addis-abeba-rights-commission-says-it-is-monitoring-the-situatio>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-benishangul-gumuz-regional-government-appoints-25-former-rebels-in-different-positions/>

<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/ethiopian-premier-says-nation-should-reduce-overseas-missions-3575839>

https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2021/jul/05/captured-ethiopian-government-soldiers-reach-tigray-capital-in-pictures?CMP=share_btn_tw

<https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/416606/Egypt/Politics-/Sudan-resorted-to-UNSC-because-GERD-poses-a-threat>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/5/ethiopia-abiy-ahmed-defends-tigray-conflict-rebel-gains?sf147121235=1>