

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 186 - 13 July 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 12 July)

- Reportedly, fighting has started in Southern Tigray. The TDF launched an offensive southwards, and captured areas such as Beri Teklay and Bala.
- The TDF have reportedly captured the towns of Korem and Alamata, while Amhara and ENDF forces are continuing to flee from Tigray. Other reports suggest that the TDF has retaken the entirety of Southern Tigray in Operation Tigrayan Women.
- Pictures of TDF forces travelling in captured Amhara police cars are surfacing online. This follows new reports of Tigrayans capturing many ENDF and Amhara weapons and vehicles.
- It is estimated that thousands of ENDF and Amhara troops were captured in the fight in Southern Tigray in the last three days.
- Reported that three brigades of the Amhara forces, named after Tana, Abay and Tewodros, were completely destroyed.
- Decland Walsh, the chief Africa Correspondent for the NYT has returned from Tigray. He says that the last few days have been a “huge loss for Ethiopia.” He also says that the conflict is intensifying as the TDF is expanding operations in Southern and Western Tigray.
- He also says that he has observed many women fighting on both sides of the conflict. One woman he interviewed says she joined the TDF after she saw Eritreans rape women in her village.
- Walsh Says Ethiopian forces abandoned Mekelle on the evening of June 28th. Many people gathered and celebrated as ten thousand prisoners were paraded through Mekelle. He added that “The Ethiopians looked absolutely miserable, and it all seemed to bode poorly for the unity of the country.”

Situation in Ethiopia (per 12 July)

- Many Tigrayans in Ethiopia are increasingly feeling unsafe. One told a journalist that he feared leaving his apartment. His brother was arrested at the beginning of the conflict, and held for several weeks.
- Several people have said that police are going around detaining ethnic Tigrayans, accusing them without evidence of having ties to the TPLF, and celebrating the TDF capture of Mekelle. Many of these arrests are taking place in bars and restaurants.
- One of the witnesses said that his uncle was arrested at the beginning of the conflict and has not been heard from since. He was an officer in the army.
- One who was arrested was brought to a compound where at least a thousand other Tigrayans were being held. While being held, they only receive a small piece of bread each day.
- After three days, he says many Tigrayans get transferred to a military camp 221 km from Addis Ababa. He himself was able to get released as he paid 10 thousand Birr, and a non-Tigrayan friend of his knew the Police Commissioner.
- Fisseha Tekle, a researcher at Amnesty International has said that it was clearly “racial discrimination”. He further said that the arrests were not only taking place in Addis Ababa, but also in Dire Dawa.
- Many businesses owned by Tigrayans continue to be closed down by Ethiopian police. Another witness told African Arguments that they barged in and “the police came in and told everyone they had to

leave". All their neighbouring shops, also owned by Tigrayans, were closed as well. Their bank accounts have also been frozen.

- According to a former Tigrayan law professor, PM Abiy Ahmed has increasingly moved towards blaming Tigrayans as a whole, rather than just the TPLF. "because of Abiy's recent statement, people are claiming all Tigrayans are traitors and it has fuelled the process of racial profiling that already existed."
- He says that he is now afraid of everyone, not just the police. Anti-Tigrayan messages are becoming increasingly common on social media and fueling anger and violence against Tigrayans.
- Another Ethiopian who has Tigrayan roots, but does not consider himself Tigrayan said that he is afraid they will find out. "Everyone is so full of hate here and hate for Tigrayans is growing all over the country. I feel like I'm around full-scale fascism". He added that "The ethnic cleansing has already been happening, but I'm scared the worst is yet to come. I'm worried we will become the next Rwanda."
- Fisseha Tekle says that there have not been signs of violence by civilians against Tigrayans yet, and that it remains mainly a prosecution by the government against Tigrayan civilians (at least in Addis).
- Dagnachew Assefa, an advisor of the Prime Minister Abiy, recently suggested that "Tigrayans out of the Tigray region (Addis Ababa) should be registered and sent back to Tigray," a possible call for ethnic cleansing.
- He recalled how Eritreans were registered and deported during the Ethio-Eritrean war in 1998/2000 and vowed similar measures to be taken against Tigrayans.
- The National Bank of Ethiopia has ordered that all accounts opened in Tigray must be frozen.
- Col. Hussein Mohamed, the captured commander of Ethiopia's 11th infantry division said that he had wanted to commit suicide after having been surrounded by Tigrayan fighters but junior officers stopped him. He figured that of the 3,700 troops under his command, at least half were probably dead. "The course of this war is political madness, to my mind," he said.

International Situation (per 12 July)

- The European Union Foreign Affairs Council met on Monday. During the meeting they agreed to work on an airbridge to Tigray to provide the necessary supplies.
- EU Foreign Affairs Chief Borell calls for further restrictive sanctions over the Ethiopia crisis as it condemns the further isolation of Tigray.
- The EU Commissioner for Crisis Management says that he is in close contact with the World Food Programme and other international organizations.
- The UN Human Rights Council adopted the resolution A/HRC/47/L.14 on Eritrea and the mandate of the rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea was extended.
- Reported that youth who had been involuntarily taken from Somalia to training camps in Eritrea underwent cruel treatment. Speaking to the media they recalled the harsh conditions at the camps as they were subject to constant torture. "Some of us were executed", one of the youth stated.
- Reportedly, Sudan is preparing a complaint against Ethiopia in the UNSC regarding the land dispute in Benishangul Gumuz.
- The Egyptian Foreign minister is reportedly heading to Brussels to discuss the issue of the GERD dam with the EU. He will arrive in Brussels on Saturday 17 July.
- Russia and Ethiopia sign a military cooperation agreement.
- 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>.

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Links of interest

https://addisfortune.news/central-bank-suspends-accounts-opened-in-tigray-state/?fbclid=IwAR0DUScdDipnFUilMYLPlarTTsk_71X3JOjNCTzJvGLXcyfT4H
<https://www.egyptindependent.com/egypt-fm-heads-to-brussels-for-talks-with-eu-over-gerd/>
<https://africanarguments.org/2021/07/tigrayans-in-ethiopia-fear-becoming-the-next-rwanda/>