

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 189 - 20 July 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 19 July)

- According to Dedebit Media, over 608 Amhara forces were killed and over 750 injured in the fight with Tigray defense forces in a place between May Tsebri and Adi-Arkay.
- Reported that many ethnic Tigrayans living in the town of Humera, western Tigray were killed, tortured and abducted by the Amhara forces. The whereabouts of hundreds remains unknown.
- Tigrayan forces have started passing into the neighbouring region of Afar.
- Afar region spokesman Ahmed Koloyta said Tigrayan fighters crossed into Afar on Saturday and Afar forces and allied militias were still fighting them on Monday.
- "Now [Ethiopian military forces] are on their way and we will work with them to eliminate [the Tigrayan forces]," said Ahmed.
- Getachew Reda, a spokesman for the Tigrayan forces, confirmed they had been fighting over the weekend in Afar.
- "We are not interested in any territorial gains in Afar, we are more interested in degrading enemy fighting capabilities," he said via satellite phone.
- The International Red Cross has said that it has started to visit prisoners of War held in Tigray.
- The UN said a convoy bearing food for Ethiopia's war-hit Tigray came under attack at the weekend, dealing a further blow to aid distribution in a region threatened with famine.
- The 10-vehicle World Food Programme convoy was attacked on Sunday about 115 kilometres (70 miles) from the town of Semera "while attempting to move essential humanitarian cargo into the Tigray region."
- The agency said it was working with local officials to determine who was behind the incident. "WFP has suspended movement of all convoys from Semera until the security of the area can be assured and the drivers can proceed safely."
- The Times says Ethiopian Prime Minister has vowed to wipe out the "cancer" of what Ethiopia refers to as "a rebel group" in war-torn Tigray, prompting fears of genocide.
- Abiy used words such as "weeds", "cancer" and "disease" to describe the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).
- "We work to remove the weeds. When we remove the weed, we take care of the wheat, we will not hurt the wheat. The weed is being removed from our country," said Abiy.
- OCHA has released a new report on the situation in Tigray. It says that "Over eight months on since the start of the conflict in Tigray, the humanitarian situation remains alarmingly dire and could further deteriorate if immediate action is not taken."
- Aid can now reach previously hard-to-reach areas, with 75% of the population in accessible zones. While new aid is arriving, it remains far too little, and more is required to avert a disastrous situation.
- Increased funding is also required to purchase and provide the necessary aid. A \$435 million funding gap for OCHA to reach the population in need was identified.
- Humanitarian access to Tigray is now only possible through Semera in Afar.

- Lastly it says that “The ongoing agricultural season (June to September) offers an opportunity to contain the increasing hunger and malnutrition affecting millions of people in the region.
- Ethiopian soldiers wearing Eritrean uniforms were seen on a transport in Eritrea. There is some speculation that this could mean a renewed Eritrean offensive in Tigray and further confusion of soldiers who wear uniforms referring to different parties in the war to create confusion.
- Analysis of witness statements on conflict-related violence against women identifying '111'-type scarring may suggest potential deployment of Beni Amer people in Tigray. These are a sub-group of the Beja people and live in the Eritrean Western Lowlands and Eastern Sudan.
- The Tigray regional government says in a press release that it is not including child soldiers in its defense forces and invites members of the media and diplomatic corps to inspect its troops and training facilities.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 19 July)

- The Ethiopian minister of Irrigation announced that the second filling of the GERD dam has been completed. It says that it now has sufficient water to run two turbines.
- Ethiopian Airlines has suspended flights to Semera, capital of the Afar region.
- Reported that Ethiopian security forces abducted Senay Tsadkan, the son of General Tsadkan Gebretensae, leader in the Tigray Defense Forces.
- This time "he's been abducted by government forces. There is no due process, he hasn't been formally arrested and no charges have been filed. We don't know where he's been taken," said the relatives.
- The relatives added: "Senay has no military or political affiliation whatsoever. We believe he is being deliberately targeted because of his ethnicity and to cause harm to Lieutenant General Tsadkan."
- The Ethiopian government has started to arrest family members of leaders in Tigray as collective punishment and punishment by association.
- The Addis Standard has published a piece regarding the revocation of their license by the Ethiopian Media Authority, arguing that the revocation is against multiple parts of Ethiopian Media Law.
- The Standard argues that the law that the Ethiopian Media Authority used to withdraw the Addis Standards licence is only pertinent to Broadcasting organisations. “Revoking, recalling or suspending certificates of registration is not the state mandate of the Ethiopian Media Association, nor should such actions lead to the suspension of content publication.”

International Situation (per 19 July)

- Reportedly, Embassies in Addis Ababa are making contingency plans in case the situation in Ethiopia deteriorates further.
- A group of Tigrayan academics has written to the UK Government’s CDC Group PLC (CDC) raising concerns over a £65 million telecoms investment that could fund serious human rights abuses in Ethiopia’s armed conflict in the Tigray region and asking the matter to be investigated.
- Demonstration of the Eritrean diaspora in London organised by the Eritrean regime accusing Tigray Defense Forces of killing Eritrean refugees in Tigray.
- The demonstration has the apparent intent to create confusion on the situation, given that Eritrean troops invaded two Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray and abducted Eritrean refugees who were forced back to Eritrea.
- In fact, the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray was announced months ago, but Eritrea has still not withdrawn its troops from Tigray.

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Links of interest

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/abiyis-pledge-to-crush-weeds-of-tigray-raises-fears-of-genocide-in-ethiopia-sx0xkqb2v>
https://news.yahoo.com/food-aid-convoy-headed-ethiopia-155150506.html?guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly90LmNvL
<https://addisstandard.com/statement-of-fact-on-the-suspension-of-addis-standard-content-publication-subsequent-discussion-with-eth>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/19/ethiopia-tigray-forces-enter-neighbouring-afar-region>
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Situation%20Report%20-%20Ethiopia%20-%20Tigray%20Region%20Humanitarian%20Upda>