

Extra - Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 190 - 21 July 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 20 July)

- Reported that the 23rd division of ENDF was destroyed by Tigray defense forces near the border of Afar region and dozens of heavy and light military equipment were also captured.
- The Operation Head of ENDF's Eastern Command, Colonel Awel Yassin, has been captured by Tigray Defense Forces together with many ENDF soldiers and Oromia police forces.
- Tigray Defense Forces has intercepted a convoy full of police forces from Oromia in Afar.
- There was barely a fight and hundreds of Oromo police forces has surrendered.
- Reports of a quick advance by Tigray Defense Forces towards the main route linking Addis Ababa with Djibouti.
- The Djibouti-Addis Ababa road, which Tigray Defense Forces are heading towards, is a critical supply line for the Ethiopian capital.
- Reported that if Tigray Defense Forces reach the town of Mille, things will radically change in Addis Ababa which will be cut off from major supplies.
- As for the information received from Afar region, there is a heavy fighting going on in Awra which is around 40 km from Chiffra.
- Once the town of Chiffra is controlled, both Woldiya in Amhara region and Mille in Afar region are in around 50 km radius.
- According to Tigray Media House (TMH), Tigray Defense Forces has received full cooperation from the local people in areas of the Amhara region which it has mobilized.
- The Tigray defense forces has also intensified their military operations in those areas.
- In areas of the Afar region, where the Tigray Defense Forces is operating, it is also receiving similar cooperation from the people of Afar and has intensified its military operation.
- "We would like to notify those people living in areas of Amhara and Afar regions where Tigray Defense force is operating that the personal weapons which you had acquired previously or had been given by the government, will remain yours," said TDF in a statement.
- The statement from Tigray Defense Forces also says "No force will take them away from you. And keep the arms in your homes and you should never shoot at Tigray Defense Forces."
- TDF also said: "We would like to notify you that so long as you do these two things, Tigray Defense Forces will not disarm you.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 20 July)

- Special forces and militias from a number of Ethiopia's regions are mobilizing to back the federal government's military operations in Tigray, signaling a widening of the conflict.

- Regular forces from Amhara have been fighting alongside the federal troops ever since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched the military offensive in Tigray.
- Now regular and irregular forces from six regions not previously involved in the conflict are joining, including from Oromia, Sidama, Somali, Gambella and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR).
- "The regional militia has been given a Kalashnikov and maybe some very rudimentary training. But they are being called in because the war has decimated the federal forces," said Kjetil Tronvoll, a professor of peace and conflict studies.
- He also told Deutsche Welle (DW) that: "The tragedy is that these militia may basically be perceived as cannon fodder and we can expect very high casualty rates if they don't defect or surrender in large numbers."
- US-based Ethiopia analyst Yohannes Woldemariam told DW that Afar region was "very strategic" because the road and the railway linking Addis Ababa to Djibouti run through there.
- "So if the TPLF manage to cut off the railway, then the federal government would not have access to the seaport," said Woldemariam.
- Reported that the Ethiopian Air Force has carried out a massive airstrike in the Afar region and many civilians are feared dead.
- Reported from Afar region that security is tight. Streets are empty early evenings and inflation has escalated.
- Reported from the Afar region that "Everybody is in fear. As for the military issue, most people have no clue about the Tigray Defense Forces progress due to distorted propaganda from the federal government and government sponsored activists."
- The president of Afar regional state (where it happens) does not oppose the advance by the Tigray Defense Forces.

International Situation (per 20 July)

- UK African Minister, James Duddridge says the UK is alarmed by escalating hate speech, incendiary rhetoric in Ethiopia, arbitrary arrest, detention and displacement of civilians in Addis Ababa and elsewhere as the Tigray conflict spreads.
- He also said that international humanitarian law requires all parties to the conflict to protect civilians.
- Diplomats in Addis Ababa are planning relocation to Nairobi or elsewhere.
- Robert Dölger, Germany Director for Sub-Saharan Africa and Sahel says Ethiopia is at the crossroads.
- He also said immediate ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian access and return of basic services to Tigray will be important steps to end the violence and start the search for peace.
- He added that Germany is committed to support a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

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Links of interest

<https://eritreahub.org/tigray-defense-forces-warns-people-in-amhara-not-to-fire-on-them-promises-not-to-attack-or-disarm-them>
<https://www.dw.com/en/ethiopia-fear-tigray-conflict-could-trigger-all-out-war/a-58566874>
<https://twitter.com/GERonAfrica/status/1417526391000686596?s=08>