

Extra - Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 191 - 23 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 23 July)

- It is reported that “many” dead bodies of civilians are floating down the Tekeze River from Humera, Western Tigray.
- Reported that Amhara militia and Fanno are in Humera and that citizens are killed.
- It was earlier reported that Ethiopian soldiers were seen transported on trucks wearing Eritrean uniforms.
- This has given rise to the concern that the killings could be of Tigrayan citizens in an exercise of revenge, in response to the offensive Tigray Defense Forces has launched.
- Getachew Reda, the spokesperson of the Tigray government, has called the killings “genocidal”.
- Reported that Tigray Defense Forces control the town of Kobo in the Amhara regional state after days of fighting with the ENDF and Amhara forces.
- Four ENDF divisions including police forces from Oromia and Amhara were defeated and that Abiy has no more professional divisions.
- Tigray defense forces (TDF) has captured military depots and equipment including Tanks, BM-40 rocket launcher and other heavy artilleries.
- Following the victory of TDF in Kobo, it is reported that TDF is moving on to the town of Woldiya, which is the capital of Northern Wollo, in the Amhara region.
- On the Western front, it is reported that TDF is moving to Zarema and heavy fighting is going on in Zarema area after passing AdiArqay in the Amhara region, neighbouring the Western zone of Tigray.
- It is reported that TDF is advancing towards Mille, which is located on the main road connecting Djibouti and Addis Ababa.
- The road is a critical logistical channel for supplies to Addis Abeba.
- The Djibouti government has vehemently denied reports that military troops from Djibouti were moving into Ethiopia.
- A statement by the Government of the National State of Tigray says it is gravely concerned by the displacement and attacks of Eritrean refugees in Tigray.
- “We call for an UN-led independent international investigation into all atrocities committed against civilians and refugees,” the statement reads.
- The statement also said: “The Government of Tigray recognizes its international responsibilities under international humanitarian law, and we are committed to supporting the refugees, who like the civilians in Tigray, have been victimized by invading forces.”
- “While the Government of the National State of Tigray expresses its readiness, we urge any plan to resettle Eritrean refugees out of Tigray must be done with their consent and with respect to their wishes,” added the statement.
- World Food Programme sent a second flight to Mekelle, Tigray, following the unilateral ceasefire, declared by the Ethiopian Government. It is reported that more than thirty individuals and humanitarian personnel are on board. It is not confirmed whether the plane arrived.

- WFP has said (after sending the second plane) they are only reaching a fraction of the people requiring emergency support.
- Tigray is still entirely locked off from the world in terms of communication; there is no phone connection and no internet connection, apart from some services by international organisations.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 23 July)

- The Gambella Liberation Front (GLF) says it has lost confidence in negotiations through peaceful means with the Prosperity Party-led government and will consider alternative strategies.
- The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) said the Prosperity Party-led Ethiopian government is forcing most underaged children below 15 years old for military training and preparing them for war.
- “Most of the children they are conscripting are from the poor sector of our society who are shoe polishers, daily laborers and those looking for manual labor work to earn their daily bread,” said OLF.
- The OLF also said the government forcefully recruit these children by giving them false and misleading information promising them jobs.
- “The Prosperity Party armed forces are conscripting several children from Ambo and Dalattii (Sabbata) prisons, Sululta, Burayyu and other areas including from streets and individual homes,” added OLF.
- It is reported that an Ethiopian military helicopter has crashed in Somalia. One person was believed to be killed and two others were injured.
- Reported that ethnic Tigrayans recently returned from Saudi Arabia were profiled and arrested in Addis Ababa and the Afar region.
- Some of the returnees were arrested on arrival at Bole International Airport and others while travelling to Tigray through Afar regional state.
- The returnees were also presented on state media as Prisoners of War (POWs) by the Ethiopian government.
- It is also reported dozens of ethnic Tigrayans were arrested and businesses closed in the Somali regional state of Ethiopia.

Situation in the Horn region(per 23 July)

- According to Hany Raslan, Advisor to Al-Ahram Center for Sudan and Nile Basin Affairs says Ethiopia’s announcement of the completion of the second filling of the GERD is false.
- Raslan called the announcement an attempt by Ethiopia to use this issue to cover up the catastrophic situation facing its people amid ongoing wars, massacres, and defeat.
- He stated that Ethiopia is spreading media propaganda to serve Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.
- “Ethiopia failed miserably in completing the second filling, as the Ethiopian Minister of Irrigation did not mention the quantity that was stored, which is a total of approximately seven billion cubic meters for the first and second filling together, while the planned was 18.5 billion, due to the failure to complete the ramp work in the middle corridor,” said Raslan.
- He stressed that the Irrigation Minister deliberately misled the public by failing to announce how much water was added to the reservoir during the second filling, adding that this move makes clear a complete loss of credibility.

International Situation (per 23 July)

- The British government has confirmed that it is considering an air-bridge (along with the EU), but airdrops would not be a viable response to the current situation in Tigray.
- It has also decided not to ask the Eritrean government to allow its ports to be used for aid deliveries, preferring to put pressure on Asmara to pull its troops out of Tigray.
- Experiences of aid sent through Eritrea to famine-stricken areas in Ethiopia or Eritrea have historically not been successful, as the Eritrean authorities confiscated the goods and sold these on the market.

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Links of interest

[British government confirms it is considering an air-bridge to feed Tigray, but has not asked Eritrea for its ports to be opened - Eritrea Hub](#)
[Addis Ababa failed to fill GERD reservoir: researcher - Egypt Independent](#)