

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 196 - 05 August 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 04 August)

- MSF, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Al Maktoume Foundation had their activities suspended by the Ethiopian government on 30 July.
- The Ethiopian Agency for Civil Society Organizations, described as a government organisation, suspended their licenses for a period of three months.
- They accuse the organisations of spreading disinformation on Social Media “outside of the mandate and the purpose in which they are allowed to operate”.
- They are also accused of employing Foreign Nationals without the appropriate working permits, MSF Holland was accused of importing and using illegal satellite equipment, and the Al Maktoume Foundation was accused of failing to comply with the ministries for education Covid-19 protocol, mismanagement of budget, and misuse of budget in the name of school.
- Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the UN, has said on twitter that the suspension of MSF and NRC was unacceptable, and added that the organisations are “internationally respected.”
- Three aid workers of MSF were killed while providing humanitarian assistance on June 24th.
- Since before the war, MSF and NRC provided critical support to Eritrean refugees in Tigray. MSF runs a very much needed mental health programme. NRC is in charge of support to thousands of unaccompanied minors, sometimes as young as four years old, in the camps.
- MSF was one of the first organisations to provide support in Tigray as it was suffering from the war and to address famine.
- In Tigray 400,000 people are already facing famine-like conditions.
- USAID administrator Samantha Powers visited refugee camps in Sudan. While there she spoke to refugees, including “wrenching testimony from women refugees whose villages were raided by militia.”
- In a tweet, she continued by saying that the US is calling on:
 - The TPLF to withdraw its forces immediately from the Amhara and Afar regions.
 - The Amhara regional government to withdraw its forces from western Tigray.
 - The Eritrean government to withdraw its forces immediately and permanently from Ethiopia.
- WFP Chief, David Beasley said 175 trucks have arrived in Tigray with food and humanitarian aid.
- “Now we need 100 trucks rolling every single day to reach the millions in dire need. Now more than ever we need full access, more funds and most important of all a ceasefire today,” he said.
- Social media commentators suggest that it would be easier to bring in support from Asmara (Eritrea), which is a distance of 340 km from Mekelle.
- Eritrea has a reputation of capturing food aid and assistance and selling it for profit, which benefits its leadership.
- New pictures have been released of Prime Minister Abiy visiting a new drones centre in Semera, Afar. The origins of the drones have yet to be identified.

- PM Abiy was pictured with the President of the Afar Regional State during a two hour visit to the region, following the TDF invasion of Afar.
- The Ethiopian National Disaster Risk Management Commissioner has said that “The pressure to open a corridor through western Tigray is unacceptable”. He added that “Even though some Western countries and their institutions insisted for such additional corridor openings, the government has strong positions that the Djibouti line is sufficient to provide assistance to the needy and that it will not open any more corridors”.

International Situation (per 04 August)

- PM Hamdok has offered to mediate in Ethiopia. PM Abiy mediated in Sudan two years ago.
- Following a visit of an Eritrean delegation to Sudan to meet PM Hamdok, the Minister of Information of Eritrea tweeted: “ As it is the case elsewhere, frameworks of collective regional security and associated architectures are determined, solely and freely, by relevant sovereign countries. This normative practice cannot be vetted, and is not subject to prior approval, by powers extraneous to the region.”
- U.S. Secretary of State A. Blinken spoke with Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok about the conflict in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray and agreed to press for negotiations leading to a ceasefire.
- The State Department spokesman Ned Price said: “The two discussed the expansion of armed confrontation in the Amhara and Afar regions of Ethiopia, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Tigray region, and reports of Eritrean troops re-entering Ethiopia, all of which impact regional stability.”
- The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, has concluded his six-day visit to Ethiopia. He spoke with representatives of the federal government, the African Union, the Amhara regional government and humanitarian and diplomatic community. He also met with the Prime minister and minister for Foreign Affairs.
- While in Ethiopia, he spent two days in the Tigray region, including passing in Hawzen, where he “visited a family whose house was burned and crops were looted. It was heart-breaking to see the scale of devastation and families who, to this day, do not have a place to live or food to put on their table”.
- Griffiths also said that the ““Blanket accusations of humanitarian aid workers need to stop," and that "They are unfair, they are unconstructive, they need to be backed up by evidence if there is any and, frankly, it's dangerous.”
- He also said that the war needed to be urgently ended, that the humanitarian situation is dire, and that “We need to change the circumstances that have led to the slow movement of aid – we need the conflict to stop”.
- He continued by saying that the fighting that has spread to Amhara and Afar has led to 200 thousands people displaced in Amhara, and another 50 thousand in Afar.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 04 August)

- The JIRRA Permanent Humanitarian Fund for Oromos states in a letter to the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to stop the return of Ethiopians. According to the letter 41.000 Ethiopians who were in prisons in Saudi Arabia have been returned to Ethiopia. The letter speaks about the women and children detained because they lack residence papers.

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Links of interest

<https://www.devex.com/news/ethiopia-suspends-msf-and-nrc-over-dangerous-accusations-100541>
<https://www.unocha.org/story/press-statement-erc%E2%80%99s-visit-ethiopia>
[U.S.'s Blinken, Sudan's prime minister discuss Ethiopia's Tigray conflict | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/100000-displaced-by-fighting-ethiopia-amhara-region-8000-afar-region-un-aid-2021-08-03/)
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097082>
<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/100000-displaced-by-fighting-ethiopia-amhara-region-8000-afar-region-un-aid-2021-08-03/>
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