

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 197 - 09 August 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 08 August)

- Reported that Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) controls Geregera, North Wollo and is advancing towards Debre Tabor town, South Gondar Zone.
- Debre Tabor town is only about 100 km from Bahirdar town, capital of the Amhara region.
- TDF has consolidated around Weldiya town and is heading south towards the town of Dessie.
- The Government of Tigray has rejected the call to leave neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions.
- "Nothing of the sort is going to happen unless the blockade is lifted," said Getachew Reda, spokesman for the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), referring to restrictions on humanitarian access.
- He said the push into Lalibela was part of a bid to secure roads in northern Amhara and prevent pro-government forces from regrouping. "You see, we are under siege. We are under blockage. Anything that Abiy is going to use to maintain its chokehold on our people, we will make sure it doesn't pose a serious problem," he said.
- He reiterated his position that Tigray does not aim on holding territory in Amhara and Afar and is instead focused on facilitating aid access. It remains committed, though, to retaking areas of western and southern Tigray that have been occupied by Amhara forces since the war's early stages.
- Reported that Vice commissioner and advisor to the Afar Police force, Col. As Mohammed joins TDF.
- In an interview with state TV, Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael said: "Ever since our people are massacred, we had not slept. It's time to tell truths."
- "Now we are operating in the areas of Amhara and Afar regions, thus, if the Abiy administration requires negotiated peace talks let Abiy's team clearly come forward; otherwise, we will continue to fight as we have no other options. We will accelerate the fight more than it was before," he said.
- The Government of Tigray has reiterated its commitment to "protecting civilians, heritage sites, and civilian infrastructures" as it continues to fight against what it called genocidal forces.
- A statement released by the Government of Tigray says the blockade of essential services has made it impossible for aid organisations to carry out their job. The fuel embargo has made delivery of food aid impossible, aid organizations and UN Agencies are unable to access cash or establish any form of telephone and internet communication within or outside Tigray.
- The statement said aid convoys are routinely obstructed on their way to Tigray, and, as a result, delivery of emergency assistance is limited to only a very small fraction of what is needed, and people are dying due to lack of food and other supplies.
- "The Government of Tigray would like to once again request the unfettered delivery of emergency assistance by air and the opening of all possible humanitarian corridors – including a corridor through western Tigray – that allows for the safe and fast delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need not only in Tigray but also to parts of the Afar and Amhara regions currently under the control of our forces," added the statement.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 08 August)

- The Ethiopian Political Parties' Joint Council seeks to mediate formal negotiations between the Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).
- Reported that Oromo Liberation Army (OLF) has taken control of Ali Doro town in north Shewa of the Oromo region.

- Ali Doro is a key town that is close to a strategic road that links Addis Ababa with the Amhara region.
- The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Hibir Ethiopia Democratic Party have issued statements calling for an inclusive political dialogue to end conflicts in Ethiopia.
- The First Instance Military Court of the Western Command have sentenced members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force, described by state media as “Tigrigna Speaking”, and who are accused of conspiring with the Tigrayan People Liberation Front (TPLF) to launch an attack on the military.

Situation in the Horn region(per 08 August)

- Sudan has recalled its ambassador to Ethiopia, frustrated by the stance of Ethiopian officials whom it said were refusing Sudan’s offer to mediate in the ongoing conflict in Tigray.
- “Ethiopia will improve its position if it considered what Sudan could do - instead of completely rejecting all of its efforts,” said the statement from the foreign ministry.
- The Ethiopian prime minister’s spokeswoman, Billene Seyoum, dismissed the possibility of Sudan meditating on the conflict in the northern region of Tigray.
- She described the relationship with Khartoum as “a little bit tricky” and said the trust should be the basis of any mediation but had “eroded” especially following the “Sudanese army incursion into Ethiopian territory.”
- In a foreign ministry statement, Sudan said the Ethiopian claims were part of Addis Ababa’s “habit” of ignoring facts. The claims, it said, were “rooted in the ambitions of some circles in the Ethiopian government that will stop at nothing to realise them.”
- “Sudan wanted to see a comprehensive ceasefire followed by political dialogue to “safeguard Ethiopia’s unity and stability,” said the statement.
- “A sense of responsibility and the tragic humanitarian suffering in Tigray entitle Sudan and anyone else capable of taking positive action to do what it can to help,” added the statement.

International Situation (per 08 August)

- A Joint Donor Group of 21 countries including the EU delivered a letter on humanitarian access to Deputy PM Demeke and said progress in delivering humanitarian assistance must be accelerated and protection of humanitarian space must be granted to deliver assistance to people in need.
- After her visit to Ethiopia, Samantha Power, USAID Administrator said: “There is so much we want to do together, but this is an own-goal,” she added, referring to the government’s increasingly antagonistic attitude to humanitarian aid groups, journalists and allies in the West.
- Asked on how and when punitive measures on aid might come into play, Power said she was still in wait-and-see mode. As for what she achieved at her meetings in Addis Ababa, she said she only got more commitments.
- “It’s not the kind of track record that would give one confidence yet, that those commitments are imminently to be met,” she said.
- She requested humanitarian aid be unhindered in delivery and government-aligned troops from neighbouring Eritrea, as well as militias from the Amhara region, withdraw beyond Tigray’s prewar borders.
- She added: “If we do not see progress in these domains, I think the administration made clear that we will not be left with much of a choice.”
- Dominic Raab, British Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State spoke with Abiy about the urgent need for all parties to end fighting in Tigray and allow unrestricted humanitarian access to the region.
- He said there needs to be an inclusive political process that is acceptable to the Ethiopian people.

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Links of interest

[Sudan recalls ambassador to Ethiopia after mediation offer rejected | Reuters](#)
[News: Western Command First Instance Military Court sentences army members to death, life in prison for "supporting TPLF's agenda" - Addis Standard](#)
[Tigray rebels reject calls to leave neighbouring regions - France 24](#)
[Sudan recalls its envoy to Ethiopia over Tigray conflict \(thenationalnews.com\)](#)
[Samantha Power travels to Ethiopia amid allegations of genocide and famine - The Washington Post](#)
[Joint Political Council seeks to mediate warring parties | The Reporter Ethiopia English](#)