

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 198 - 10 August 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 09 August)

- Reported that Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) fully controls the town of Weldiya, North Wollo in the Amhara region and is advancing north towards Mersa, a town between Weldiya and Dessie.
- In an interview with Tigray Mass Media Agency (TMMA), Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael said: “We had three aims at the start of the struggle; chase away the invaders; restore the democratically elected government and enable the people of Tigray to exercise their right of self-determination.”
- He said the struggle has not been completely fulfilled. Areas remaining under the occupation of invading forces have to be liberated; exercising self-determination has not yet been fulfilled; conditions have not yet become conducive; Tigray has to be completely liberated and the legally elected administration has to be restored all over Tigray - the struggle has to continue until that is fulfilled.
- He ridiculed the idea that federal forces withdrew from Tigray for the sake of the farmers. He stated that, while the Ethiopian government is intentionally blocking basic services, the government can't possibly claim to be involved in a unilateral humanitarian-based ceasefire.
- He claims the real reason for the unexpected withdrawal of federal forces was that the Abiy administration was planning a pleasant surprise on the eve of the general election which was to destroy Tigrayan forces around Tembien in concert with the Eritrean army. The aim was to woo the public and conduct the election at the back of this victory.
- “The Ethiopian forces were fundamentally misled into thinking that TDF only had 13 battalions. This has led the ENDF to underestimate the Tigray forces culminating in total defeat. The aftermath of the battle enabled TDF to get hold of heavy artillery which it didn't have before,” he said.
- He added the Tigray command immediately started to prepare to capture Mekelle and when it deployed its forces, the Ethiopian army, realizing the strength of its foe started to flee out of panic.
- “The time of contemplation was merely a dupe by the federal government to find the time to reorganize and invade again. Lying is their treasure,” he said.
- He also said the federal army was in disarray while withdrawing from Mekelle and had abandoned two battalions of ENDF units who were tasked with protecting a military depot. “It was the locals that told them (the 2 battalions) that Mekelle had fallen under TDF,” he added.
- He also said: “It's as if a foreign force has come. But the war is against the people of Tigray. It is the people who've been wronged that are fighting. They are saying 'you have massacred us; and we will go to the ends to bring you to justice'. [Tigray] is fighting to defend itself; to get out of the rope [around its neck]. It has been strangled. It is trying to tear apart the rope. It's trying to open transportation so that food [aid] may enter and for commodities to be exchanged.”
- Debretsion said the people of Amhara are welcoming TDF forces that they welcomed them with their rifles. “The good memories of the virtue of TPLF forces during armed struggle has been invoked in their minds,” he said.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 09 August)

- Reported that the Ethiopian government has closed its embassies in Washington, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, Stockholm, Canberra and the Hague.
- There are reports that 18 senior diplomats at the embassy in Washington are recalled back to Ethiopia.
- Sources indicate those diplomats who were recalled back to Ethiopia from Washington will resign protesting the closure of the embassy and seek political asylum in the US.
- Ethiopian Consulates in California and Minnesota have been permanently closed.
- The Ethiopian Embassy in Canada is also reportedly closed with only the Ambassador remaining.
- The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) released an update on recent days fighting with federal forces and claimed that it has controlled federal military camps and multiple districts in the Oromia region.

Situation in the Horn region (per 09 August)

- Sudan Tribune (ST) says Sudan has opened the fourth camp for Ethiopian refugees who continue to cross into Sudan fleeing war in their country. "The locality has opened a new centre to accommodate Ethiopian refugees," said Mamoun Al-Daw, Executive Director of Basenda.
- Al-Daw said that the new centre will be dedicated to the Gumuz and Kimant nationalities, as it will accommodate 2,500 refugees in the first phase.
- Al-Daw also said that there are 50,000 refugees on their way to Basenda, coming from seven areas in the Amhara region.
- "The high wave of displacement was caused by the security turmoil and military operations between the Kimant and the Amhara nationalities on the one hand, and between the Gumuz and the Amhara on the other," he said.
- He added that there are over 3,000 Kimant refugees residing in the southern Taya area because they have a large number of cows and livestock.

International Situation (per 09 August)

- A Statement by UNICEF Executive Director, Henrietta Fore, reads: "UNICEF is extremely alarmed by the reported killing of over 200 people, including more than 100 children, in attacks on displaced families sheltering at a health facility and a school in Afar region on Thursday, 5 August."
- The statement by UNICEF said crucial food supplies were also reportedly destroyed in an area that is already seeing emergency levels of malnutrition and food insecurity.
- "The intensification of fighting in Afar and other areas neighbouring Tigray is disastrous for children. It follows months of armed conflict across Tigray that have placed some 400,000 people, including at least 160,000 children, in famine-like conditions," added UNICEF.
- UNICEF also said it estimates a 10-fold increase in the number of children who will suffer from life-threatening malnutrition in Tigray over the next 12 months. The food security and nutrition crisis is taking place amid extensive, systematic destruction of health and other services that children and communities rely on for survival.
- "The humanitarian catastrophe spreading across northern Ethiopia is being driven by armed conflict and can only be resolved by the parties to the conflict," said UNICEF.
- UNICEF also called on all parties to end the fighting and "to implement an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. We call on all parties to do everything in their power to protect children from harm."

Disclaimer: All information in this situation report is presented as a fluid update report, as to the best knowledge and understanding of the authors at the moment of publication. EEPA does not claim that the information is correct but verifies to the best of ability within the circumstances. Publication is weighed on the basis of interest to understand potential impacts of events (or perceptions of these) on the situation. Check all information against updates and other media. EEPA does not take responsibility for the use of the information or impact thereof. All information reported originates from third parties and the content of all reported and linked information remains the sole responsibility of these third parties. Report to info@eepe.be any additional information and corrections.

Links of interest

[Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on reported killing of hundreds of civilians, including children, in Afar, northern Ethiopia](#)

[OLA Update #5 / 9th August, 2021 – O.L.A. Communiqué \(olacommunique.com\)](#)

[Sudan opens 4th camp for Ethiopian refugees - Sudan Tribune: Plural news and views on Sudan](#)