

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 203 - 23 August 2021

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Reported situation in Tigray (per 22 August)

- The ENDF and Amhara militias have recaptured several towns. These include Kimir Dingay and Nefas Meewcha. There are suggestions that the TDF withdrew from the area.
- It is reported that some 800 Afar soldiers under Eritrean flag have joined fighting in Barahle near Samare in the Afar region and that fierce fighting is going on at the Chifra front in the Afar region.
- TDA is moving around Tebre Tabor with fierce fighting around the city. According to a statement issued by the Tigray Central Command, Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) have “in a 3-day counter-offensive operations destroyed Abiy Ahmed's 6 army divisions & 11,000 militias (sent to retake Debre Tabor town), 3000 Republican Guards and one commando division deployed to retake Mersa town.”
- Samantha Powers, the USAID administrator has said that for the first time in the conflict, food is set to run out with aid workers, stomping them from distributing food.
- She elaborated that the emergency situation was not because of lack of food, but because “Ethiopian Government is obstructing humanitarian aid and personnel, including land convoys and air access.”
- In a statement through a press release, she further stated that “The U.S. calls on the Ethiopian Government to immediately allow humanitarian assistance to swiftly move into Tigray in order to prevent a catastrophic stop to food assistance that millions need to survive.”
- To meet the humanitarian demands in Tigray, a 100 trucks need to arrive each day. 5000 trucks required since July 1st. However only 320 have arrived. This represents 7% of the required aid.
- The aid continues to face delays at checkpoints as well as “as well as repeated intensive searches.” Humanitarian workers also continue to be harassed.
- She also says that “Fuel deliveries, electricity, telecommunications, and banking services must all be immediately restored”
- The statement ends by saying that the further conflict further worsen the situation and by calling on “urges the TPLF to halt its offensive and withdraw its forces immediately from the Amhara and Afar regions, the Amhara regional government to withdraw its forces from western Tigray, and the Eritrean government to withdraw its forces immediately and permanently from Ethiopia.”
- The Emirate News Agency has said that the UAE has sent a relief plane to Tigray. According to the news agency, it includes 200 tons of food. The delivery was done in collaboration with the World Food Organisation.
- A study published in The Conversation on the impact of the war in Tigray has revealed several reasons of concern why agricultural yields will be negatively affected by the war.
- One reason is the Eritrean troops which joined the war in Tigray, which do not allow farmers to plough. Eritrean soldiers They told farmers, “we are here fighting to die, and you want to plough?”
- According to the report, the war disabled the farmers from ploughing die to the destruction of implements: “Most oxen have been slaughtered or looted by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers. The Eritrean soldiers are not only disallowing farmers to plough but also burnt and destroyed their farm tools.” Seeds and fertilizers were also taken.

- Other reasons were the youth leaving the farms to join the Tigray Defense Forces. The report states that "Having experienced atrocities, many young Tigrayans felt compelled to join the forces."
- A witness told the researchers: "The number of youngsters joining the Tigrayan Defence Forces per household may vary based on what happened in their surroundings (especially massacres, rape and destruction). In a village that I know well, almost all the young men joined after witnessing the indiscriminate killing of 13 people."
- The researchers found that who farmed has also changed: "Farmers feared that they'd be killed while ploughing. We were told that, in some places, during the daytime elderly people, women and children worked on the lands."
- OCHA reports that bringing aid to Tigray has remained restricted to a single road passing through Afar. Many checkpoints delay movement over the road.
- OCHA says in its report that in Afar, more than 76,500 people have been displaced due to the conflict.
- In Amhara, it is estimated that there are 150 thousand people that have been displaced.
- According to the OCHA map, the areas that continue to be hard to reach are in Western Tigray, where Amhara militias are in control, Northern Tigray, and Southern Tigray around Alamata.

The situation in Ethiopia (per 22 August)

- Reports that Asmara-led Human Trafficking channels to Libya and Europe have opened from Ethiopia. The new trading in persons is benefiting from the war in Ethiopia.
- According to sources, Ethiopia has spent a large amount of money on social media activities.
- Bloomberg further estimates that the government has raised 8.8 million dollars through various other funding efforts. The government is challenging the funding efforts through Ethiopian banks.
- The Ethiopian government is further funding the war effort by asking civil servants to donate a month's salary to fund the army.
- Inflation in Ethiopia rapidly increasing, with reports of artificial exchange rates affecting the Ethiopian Birr, similarly to the artificial exchange rates of the Eritrean Nakfa.
- Reported that PM Abiy Ahmed signed a military cooperation agreement with Turkey during a visit last week. The same day the UAE also visited Turkey.
- The OLF is continuing to conduct checkpoints on the border with Kenya.
- The Ogaden Peoples Movement, a group that claims to represent the people of the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, which has a significant Somali population, has declared its intention to declare independence from Ethiopia.
- It follows other such declarations from other regions in Ethiopia, such as from the OLF in Oromia.
- Ethiopia has signed a military cooperation agreement with Turkey. It is presumed that PM Abiy Ahmed asked Turkish support to obtain military technology, especially drones.
- Following the visit of PM Abiy to Turkey, it was reported last week that the Ethiopian authorities transferred the management of 6 of 11 Turkish schools in Ethiopia which used to be run by the Gulen Movement to the pro- Government Turkey's Maarif Foundation.

International Situation (per 22 August)

- Ireland, Britain, US, France, Estonia and Norway have asked for a U.N. Security Council meeting on Ethiopia next week. Ireland will be taking the Chair of the UN SC in September.
- U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday called for an immediate ceasefire and unrestricted aid access in Ethiopia's Tigray region. He said millions of people needed help and women have suffered "unspeakable violence."

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Link of Interest

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/22/world/africa/ethiopia-civil-war-spreads.html>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-tigray-region-humanitarian-update-situation-report-19-august-2021>

<https://theconversation.com/how-ethiopias-conflict-has-affected-farming-in-tigray-166229>