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Horn Highlights: Ethiopia announces state of emergency, Foreign governments make contingency plans, OCHA says no humanitarian supplies left

In this week Horn Highlights: Tigray captures two key cities in northern Ethiopia; Ethiopian Council of Ministers calls state of emergency in Ethiopia; Ethiopian Government calls on civilians to defend the capital; Foreign governments make contingency plans for evacuation from Ethiopia; UN investigation of atrocities committed in Tigray faces questions; US revokes Ethiopia's AGOA privileges; OCHA says no supplies left to carry out humanitarian aid beyond a week.

Horn of Africa

Tigray captures two key cities in northern Ethiopia

Tigrayan Defense Force (TDF) captured cities to control the roads to Djibouti and Addis Ababa. The cities of Dessie and Kombolcha, 400 km from the Ethiopian Capital Addis Ababa, have been captured by the TDF, following the Ethiopian offensive against the TDF. The offensive started around 8 October. The cities are situated at an important juncture on the roads towards Addis Ababa and Djibouti. TDF is now moving to Mile, 160 km from Dessie, from where it would control the highway between Addis Ababa and Djibouti. The highway is critical for the transport of humanitarian goods to Tigray, which is suffering from famine as a result of the siege of the Ethiopian federal government. The Tigray government says that its key concern is the relief of the siege around Tigray, and opens the way for humanitarian aid to reach the Tigray region. Capturing Mile would open the road to Djibouti and break the federal government's blockade on Tigray by allowing convoys through. The highway is also critical for the import and export of Ethiopian goods. Reportedly, ENDF has left Semera, the capital of the Afar regional state. Semera is located 64 km north of Mile. The collapse of government forces in Dessie and Kombolcha also opens the road for TDF forces to move on Addis Ababa. The Tigrayans have linked up with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and formed a joint front. The OLA is the regional army of the Oromo regional state and has also been declared a terrorist organisation by the Federal Government. The OLA has seized several key junctures between Addis Ababa and both cities.

- [Tigrayan forces' capture of two towns raises fears for Ethiopian capital](#)

Ethiopian Council of Ministers calls state of emergency in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Council of Ministers has announced a nationwide state of emergency, the Federal Broadcaster announced. The Ethiopian house of representatives is expected to approve the measure within 24 hours. It comes in the wake of the Tigrayan capture of two critical cities, 400 km North from Addis Ababa. The state of emergency

requires all civilians to carry an ID card at all times and conduct arrest without a warrant. It also allows security forces to conduct random raids and confiscate weapons. The administration also said that it was conducting house to house searches and arresting people suspected of relations with TPLF. There have been many concerns, including from Human Rights Watch, that Ethiopian security forces have been ethnically profiling Tigrayans and detaining them without cause. The Minister of Justice has further announced that publications and broadcasts favorable to the “terrorist group” (TPLF) will be banned. reported that new fresh mass arrests of ethnic Tigrayans are taking place.

- [Council Of Ministers Declares Nationwide State Of Emergency](#)
- [News Alert: Addis Abeba Joint Peace And Security Task Force Announces Taking Strident Measures On “Supporters & Tplf Nostalgic” Individuals](#)
- [Tweet: Reports of mass arrests of Tigrayans in Addis. Police said moving from house to house.](#)

Ethiopian Government calls on civilians to defend the capital

Civilians in Addis Ababa have been called upon to defend the city. The head of a newly established taskforce to safeguard the peace and security of the capital city, has called on residents to stand with security forces and defend the city. The city administration stated that “Residents can gather in their locality and safeguard their surroundings”. It further called on residents to register their weapons or hand them over if they “can’t take part in safeguarding their surroundings”. The new task force is composed of members of the National Security and Intelligence Service (NISS) Federal and Addis Ababa Police as well as Oromia Police. It announced new measures against “supporters” of the TPLF. The establishment of the taskforce comes following the capture by the TDF of two important cities 400 km North from Addis Ababa.

- [News: Addis Abeba City Administration Cautions Residents To Register Weapons In Two Days](#)
- [Ethiopia declares state of emergency as Tigrayan rebels gain ground](#)

Foreign governments make contingency plans for evacuation from Ethiopia

There have been reports that Western governments are making contingency plans for the evacuation of their personnel from Addis Ababa. US embassy personnel have been forbidden to travel outside of Addis Ababa city limits, and the US has urged citizens currently in Ethiopia to “consider making preparations to leave the country.” The US embassy in Ethiopia is also calling on nationals to register their presence in Ethiopia with the embassy. Reportedly, flights departing from Addis Ababa are fully booked as thousands of people are trying to flee the capital. With the fall of Dessie and Kombolcha, many expect the TDF and OLA to move onto Addis Ababa. Thousands of officials and civilians are reportedly trying to leave the city. The Russian embassy also put up a warning against traveling to Ethiopia.

- [Security Alert: Update on Security Situation in Ethiopia](#)
- [Tweet: Reports from Addis senior Ethiopian regime members making getaway plans – pre booking flights, getting their families to safe havens](#)

UN investigation of atrocities committed in Tigray faces questions

The publication of the UN-led investigation into the crimes and atrocities committed in Tigray is due to be published on Wednesday 3 November, two days later than originally announced. Questions are raised about the reliability of the investigation. It was conducted in partnership with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a body appointed by the government. Ethiopia refused to allow the investigation without EHRC participation. While investigators did have access to the region, they were not able to visit all the locations where human rights violations have been reported, including Axum, where at least 200 people were killed during a massacre that took place in late November 2020. Some reports put the number of people killed in Axum at over a thousand. Additionally, human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have not been allowed into the region.

The Tigray government has already said that the findings are “fraught with a number of problems”, and that they have not been involved, despite the atrocities taking place in Tigray. The founder of Global Accountability Network, David Crane, has stated that these problems make the investigation “automatically suspect”. The Associated Press reported that several people told them that the head of the EHRC underplayed several allegations of atrocities committed by Amhara fighters. He tried to highlight atrocities committed by Tigrayan forces even though most witnesses have associated atrocities with Eritrean, Ethiopian, and Amhara forces. The AP reported that even the former Federal government appointed interim administration of Tigray, which had been set up after the government took control of the region, had also rejected the joint investigation. The former chief of staff of the administration said that “We informed the international community we wanted an investigation into human rights but not with the EHRC because we believe this is a tool of the government”. Meanwhile Reuters released a report on atrocities committed by Eritrean forces in Tigray. The report was immediately denounced as ‘vitriol’ by the Eritrean Minister of Information.

- [Ethiopia tried to limit rare UN report on Tigray war abuses](#)
- [Objectivity concerns over UN’s report on Tigray civil war](#)
- [Dual Agenda: In Ethiopia’s civil war, Eritrea’s army exacted deadly vengeance on old foes](#)

US revokes Ethiopia’s AGOA privileges

US president Joe Biden has informed congress that Ethiopia’s AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act) privileges will be revoked. The decision will come into effect from January 1st onwards. The President determined that Ethiopia no longer fulfils the necessary requirements to participate in the preferential tariffs programme. The decision refers particularly to the problem associated with “gross violations of internationally recognized human rights”. The decision could have a significant impact on the country’s economy. The country has exported \$245 million to the US through AGOA. Officials said that further sanctions were being prepared by the administration against individuals that are perpetrating the conflict. Biden also revoked the AGOA privileges of Guinea and Mali. Ethiopia has said that it was “extremely disappointed” by the decision and that “The Ethiopian government takes all human rights allegations seriously”. US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeffrey Feltman said on Tuesday that the two months before the suspension takes effect, gives time to make changes “to prevent us from actually moving forward implementing the loss of eligibility in January.” He added that “The extraordinary partnership we have enjoyed is not sustainable while the military conflict continues to expand, threatening the stability and the unity of one of Africa’s most influential countries ... and the fundamental well-being of its people.” The US also called on the TDF to not advance on Addis Ababa or lay siege to the Ethiopian capital. It also called on Tigray last Friday to “withdraw from the Amhara and Afar regions, including halting its advances in and around the cities of Dessie and Kombolcha.” They added that the only resolution to the conflict was through “ceasefire negotiations without preconditions”.

- [Ethiopia on verge of losing access to lucrative US trade program over human rights violations](#)
- [Taking Stock of U.S. Policy on Ethiopia: A Conversation with Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman](#)
- [News Alert: Us Calls For Tplf To Withdraw From Amhara, Afar Regions, Halt Advances In And Around Dessie And Kombolcha Cities](#)
- [Ethiopia “disappointed” by U.S. move to suspend trade benefits](#)

OCHA says no supplies left to carry out humanitarian aid beyond a week

The latest UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) report on the situation in Tigray, published last Friday, 29 October, says that no humanitarian supplies have entered Tigray since 18 October. Fuel for the humanitarian response has not entered since early August. The organisation says that “fuel shortage has significantly affected partners’ ability to transport food items for distribution as well as conducting monitoring and food security data collection.” The OCHA also reported that only 38,000 people, or 4.4 % of the weekly target of 870,000 persons, received food supplies. The UN organisation estimates that the current supplies “is enough to carry out humanitarian

operations for one week only". The organisation is also warning about a worsening situation in Amhara and Afar, where a growing number of IDPs are fleeing the fighting. Electricity and telecommunications have reportedly been cut in Dessie and Kombolcha since 30 October, and many people have been fleeing the area, where the majority of the fighting has taken place during these last two weeks.

- [Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update](#)

* If you have any comments, questions, or additions to the next news highlights, please let us know.

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