

Europe External Programme with Africa

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

## No. 206 - 18 May 2022

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**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 organisations, civil society, and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and across Africa. The Situation Reports can be found [here](#). To receive the situation report in your e-mail, [click here](#). You can unsubscribe at any moment through the link at the bottom of each e-mail.

### Situation in Eritrea (per 18 May)

- Source indicates that many Eritreans have left Asmara, presumably to join a military campaign.
- Reports of increased activity observed in Sawa and other military sites in Eritrea. Rumours indicate the possibility of something occurring around Eritrean Independence Day on 24 May.
- A statement by the Eritrean government on 17 May says that Tigrayan forces are advancing for another war with “support and blessing from the west” and vowed to defend itself.
- The statement accused Tigrayan forces of trying to gain access via Sudan by controlling Western Tigray, a territory currently controlled by Amhara forces with the support of the Eritrean army..
- A serious buildup of troops is taking place in three places: Badme, Rama and Zalembessa on the Eritrean - Tigray border. This has not been verified.
- Eritrean TV is heightening language on an upcoming war.
- On Social Media heightened aggression is reported, such as for instance: Eritreans "said they will destroy every city in Tigray if attacked" disbursed on a Facebook post. Social media is widely echoing Shabait Eritrea Ministry of Information messaging.

### Situation in Tigray (per 18 May)

- Tigray External Affairs Office (TEAO) says allegations on forceful mobilisation in Tigray are false.
- The statement affirms that the mobilisation is based on volunteering.
- The TEAO statement also accused the Ethiopian Federal Government of orchestrating a “weaponized starvation” on Tigray by blocking supply lines.

### Situation in Ethiopia (per 18 May)

- The Ethiopian deputy Prime Minister and foreign minister, Demeke Mekonnen, says: “We are cooperating with Eritrea on the basis of mutual benefits.”
- Former commander of Amhara region Special Forces, Gen. Tefera Mamo, is missing.
- His wife told BBC Amharic that despite her efforts to search for him and going to the Addis Ababa Federal Police bureau, she was told that “he has not been in custody.”
- UNHCR states “The number of refugees in Addis Ababa has risen from 30,000 to 80,000 after the onset of the conflict” in Tigray and Northern Ethiopia..
- The Ethiopian Ministry of Women and Social Affairs plans to repatriate more than 100,000 Ethiopians From Saudi Arabia. Those Ethiopians live in a dire situation, says the ministry.

## Regional Situation (per 18 May)

- Pictures have been shared of heavy tanks and military equipment being loaded onto trucks with Ethiopian licence plates in Djibouti where the pictures were reportedly taken.
- Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been elected as Somalia's president, 5 years after his previous term ended. This could reshape relations with Ethiopia and Eritrea; former President Farmajo was seen as pro-Isayas and pro-Abiy in the war against Tigray, *Bloomberg* reports.
- Former Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) Director Fahad Yasin is under house arrest in Mogadishu and prevented from leaving the town.
- Fahad Yasin was a close collaborator of former Somali president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, better known as Farmaajo, working on national security matters.

## International Situation (per 18 May)

- In a letter to the UN secretary general, António Guterres, 12 African civil society groups urge the UN Security Council to address the situation in Ethiopia: "Twenty-eight years ago, the Security Council similarly failed to recognize the warning signs of genocide in Rwanda or act to stop it."
- UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ilze Brands Kehris, is travelling to South Sudan and Ethiopia and will attend the launch in Ethiopia of the joint AU, EU and UN project that aims to ensure peace support operations conducted in accordance with international law.
- *Amnesty International* calls on the UN to renew its embargo on arms supplies to South Sudan.

## Links of interest

[Eritrea accuses Tigray of advancing for another war with support from west, vows to defend itself](https://shabait.com/2022/05/17/%e1%88%93%e1%89%b0%e1%89%b3-2/)

[https://shabait.com/2022/05/17/%e1%88%93%e1%89%b0%e1%89%b3-2/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvL6Kvo-BiU)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvL6Kvo-BiU>

[Families searching whereabouts of former Amhara state Special Forces commander](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-17/power-play-shifts-in-horn-of-africa-as-somalia-elects-new-leader)

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-17/power-play-shifts-in-horn-of-africa-as-somalia-elects-new-leader>

[Ethiopia, Eritrea Working together on Common Interests – Deputy PM](#)

[South Sudan: UN must renew arms embargo amid persistent impunity and ongoing sexual violence](#)

<https://twitter.com/UKinEthiopia/status/1526518660097003522?t=7fL9GSKnbmCtFiVlt2wlhA&s=08>

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[Number of refugees in Addis Ababa tripled since war in Northern Ethiopia: UNHCR](#)

[African Civil Society's letter to the United Nations Security Council on the ongoing situation in Ethiopia](#)



Pictures taken in Djibouti circulating in Social Media.

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