

Europe External Programme with Africa

# SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

## No. 216 - 3 June 2022

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**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 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.

- Due to Whit Monday, there will be no Situation Report on 6 June.

### Situation in Tigray (per 3 June)

- According to the Voice of America (VOA), ethnic Tigrayans detained in Semera in the Afar regional state have called for international attention. After the withdrawal of Tigray Defence Forces in Afar, thousands were abducted by Afar troops from Abala, a town on the border between Tigray and Afar and have been detained in Semera for five months.
- VOA spoke over the phone with one of the prisoners who said about 12,000 ethnic Tigrayans are in the detention centre and they were starving and suffering without adequate food and water.
- Prisoners who spoke with VOA added that 76 of them have died and that they are exposed to diseases such as measles and other infectious diseases as the temperature in Semera intensifies.
- The prisoners told VOA that they had received some assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) twice and that Care Ethiopia was also providing them with basic assistance.
- Prisoners said they have not been reached by the relevant regional state or federal governments.
- World Food Programme (WFP) Ethiopia says it continues to push aid convoys to Tigray and affected areas. WFP added that 50,000 tons of food was delivered on 1,045 trucks in April and May.
- WFP said they have reached 350,000 people with lifesaving food assistance and they are working with authorities to deliver continuous flows of supplies on time to communities most in need.

### Situation in Ethiopia (per 3 June)

- A report by The New Humanitarian says they became the first international media who managed to get access to the Abala town of Afar region after the withdrawal of Tigrayan forces from the town and other areas in the Afar region in late April.
- The report says nearly all homes and shops in Abala, which had a pre-war population of several thousands, have been gutted by looting, their doors hanging open, and the walls covered with pro-Afar and pro-Tigray forces graffiti. Currently there is almost no one left in Abala.
- The New Humanitarian spoke with over 20 current and displaced residents of the town. Several residents both Afar and Tigrayan describe how Afar militia, police and security forces gathered the town's Tigrayans population at various sites within the town as Tigrayan forces approached.
- According to two Abala residents, a UN official and a lawyer, the Tigrayan population were then transported to a detention centre in Semera town, Afar's capital.
- "The Afar militia said 'we are taking you to the police station for your own safety, to save you from death,'" a Tigrayan from Abala told the New Humanitarian over the phone from Semera detention centre. The Tigrayans were ordered onto lorries and forcefully taken to Semera

- The detained Tigrayan in Semera described how local Afar, armed with guns, had looted property of Tigrayan residents over the course of several days, starting on 19 December, as the fighting around the town intensified. The looters came from rural areas.
- He added that he saw the bodies of three of his Tigrayan neighbours lying in the street. "They had bullets in their heads," he said. He accused the afar militia and added that friends of his saw 10 more bodies further down the road.
- The looting of properties was echoed by another Tigrayan from Abala who was held at Semera detention centre. "Every shop and all the houses were looted," he said. "Everyone was carrying a gun to loot. We were left with only the clothes on our backs."
- The two Tigrayan residents of Abala town described bleak conditions at the detention centre in Semera, where temperature regularly soars past 40 degree celsius. Aid agencies have delivered food, but one of them said there was no medication available except paracetamol.
- Both Tigrayans also said around 70 people had died in the detention centre, and that it is only possible to leave by paying hefty bribes to the Afar soldiers guarding them.
- On the contrary, most ethnic Afar residents of Abala interviewed by The New Humanitarian accuse the Tigrayan forces for the shelling of the town before they entered, killing several people.
- Imam Yousef, an Afar resident of Abala town who has sought shelter in the countryside during the fighting, said: "When we came back, the TPLF forces were looting. Nothing remains, including food and household equipment. I am a farmer, and they took the grain I stored in my home."
- Another Afar resident said several people were killed by Tigrayan forces as they fired from the mountain escarpment overlooking the town. "I saw 5 people I know, including 2 Tigrayans, killed by heavy machine gun fire," he said. Adding that "Their bodies were divided into pieces"
- Ethinc Afari are returning to Abala town. Sheltering at a small camp of huts just outside the town of Erebti, Kulsuma Faya said her family had been on the road for several months.
- "We are angry because we didn't receive any help so far – we have no food, no water," said Kulsuma. "One of the children just died. The men are burying her now. The main thing we need is to return home," she added. "But we don't know if we can. Everything there is destroyed."

### Situation in Eritrea (per 3 June)

- Reported that Eritrea is not participating in this year's ongoing naval manoeuvres of the "Red Sea Council". The RSC was initiated by Saudi Arabia in 2020 and includes Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan.
- Unofficially, Eritrean sources confirmed that it was not invited. It is rumoured that Isaias' efforts to establish strong links with Putin's Russia has angered RSC members and Russia is currently negotiating with Eritrea about the establishment of a naval base on the Eritrean coast.

### Links of interest

[The Ethiopian border town left in ruins as a ceasefire takes hold](#)

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[Twitter: WFP pushing convoys to Tigray and affected regions](#)

[Somalia's new president vows to beat back jihadists, then talk to them](#)

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