

Europe External Programme with Africa

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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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.

Peace negotiations (per 30 December)

- Sources from Addis Ababa said that the next meeting on the implementation of the peace agreement may take place in Addis Ababa before Ethiopian Christmas (on 07 January). A high level delegation from Tigray is expected to travel to Addis Ababa to attend this meeting.
- Maj. Gen. Stephen Radina from Kenya is leading the AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism (AU-MVCM) that was officially launched in Mekelle on Thursday 29 December. The mission was led by Kenya former President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Nigeria President Olesogun Obasanjo.
- The launching of the AU-MVCM in Mekelle on 29 December was streamed on social media: <https://youtu.be/w7MRUjxf85Y>
- During the launching event in Mekelle, former President Uhuru Kenyatta said he expects the next meeting will take place in Addis Ababa.
- The visit of the AU-MVCM in Mekelle on 29 December has exposed the presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray. The troops should have already been withdrawn under the terms of the Cessation of Hostilities.
- The monitoring team assesses the progress on the disarmament of the Tigray forces; the withdrawal of Eritrean troops; the restoration of services to Tigray and the resumption of humanitarian aid.
- Eritrea is withdrawing its military from Shire and Aksum, two towns in Central Tigray according to eyewitnesses that spoke to *Reuters*.
- Others confirm that large numbers of Eritreans are leaving from Aksum. It is alleged that they are "taking a lot of goods with them", which they buy with "great amounts of Ethiopian Birr".
- The "Eritrean army has deployed hundreds of 'Obama FSR' trucks and is withdrawing its forces from many towns of central and north western zones of Tigray", says a journalist from *Awramba Times*.
- Information reported from the ground is communicated as that Eritrean forces have "withdrawn from Adwa, Axum, Shire, Shiraro, Endabaguna, Selehleha, in general, from Lailay and Tahtay Adiyabo, Koraro and Medebay Zana woredas".
- It has been previously alleged that Eritrea was paid for its military "services" in Tigray by the Government of Ethiopia.
- The withdrawal has not been confirmed by Eritrea. *Reuters* says that aid workers in Axum and Shire saw trucks and cars with Eritrean soldiers leaving towards the Tigray border town, Sheraro on Thursday.
- The Ethiopian government has sent federal police to Mekelle as part of the implementation of the COH Agreement and per the Constitution of Ethiopia.
- Twitter Outlet *HornIntelligenceAffairs* posts that Eritrea's security agents are "embedded" with the Ethiopia Federal Police and will be "hand picking" what it refers to as "TPLF officials" and "cadres".
- The government announced that "it will provide security for airports, electricity power, telecom services, banks and other federal institutions that provide services to the community."

- In a statement by US Secretary of State, Blinken, he welcomes “the signing and launch of the African Union’s Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM) in Mekelle, another important step toward securing lasting peace for the people of northern Ethiopia.”
- He added: “The United States stands ready to support the AU-MVCM and full implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement (COHA).”

Situation in Eritrea (per 30 December)

- Bishop Fikremariam has returned to his Eparchy in Segeneyti.

Situation in Tigray (per 30 December)

- Risk advisor Crisis24 warns that “The disarmament process could trigger clashes between federal forces and TPLF combatants as foreign, federal allied forces”.
- Crisis24 says it is particularly concerned about the neighbouring Eritrean troops and Amhara Region militias. These have remained present and in control in large parts of the north and west of Tigray, despite the CoH Agreement.
- According to Ethio telecom it reconnected Mekelle and 27 other urban areas in Tigray to communication services (internet and phone) on Wednesday.
- Many calls are being placed, confirming that people in Tigray are coming back onto the internet. The communication also comes with sad news of relatives who lost their lives.
- Mekelle has been reconnected to the electric grid according to the Ethiopian government.
- The first commercial flight to Mekelle had been sold out in hours with people eager to return home.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 30 December)

- The International Organization for Migration, IOM, reported that during the first ten months of 2022, over 100,000 Ethiopian migrants have returned from abroad, more than 70% from Saudi Arabia.
- In its latest Ethiopia Crisis Response Plan, IOM said “ the alarming number of migrants arrive destitute and with serious medical and psychiatric conditions.”

Links of interest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7MRUjxf85>

<https://addisstandard.com/news-kenyan-general-leads-joint-ethiopia-peace-monitoring-mission-as-u-s-hails-positive-step/>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/mediators-meet-bolster-ethiopia-truce-amid-signs-detente-2022-12-29/>

<https://theprint.in/world/eritrean-soldiers-leave-major-towns-in-northern-ethiopia-eyewitnesses/1289953/>

<https://www.facebook.com/100069403920568/posts/pfbid02tp6hcG4dqfwbtrVJWyFiXhRoM9zGmJnJrnTcd31Uka17utpWkrThrcJgYQXDaocjl?app=fbl>

<https://www.facebook.com/1820875526/posts/pfbid029b57wpNIBp7FEatr2cxetdZpMJ54X6Df21hjdVCebuEaWYNxTccuv25UpBWRyMtol/?app=fbl>

https://twitter.com/affairs_horn/status/1608493718662971393?t=LHHub2ZOT2TC8MAfZq0TpA&s=08

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tears-prayers-hopes-flights-ethiopias-war-torn-tigray-resume-2022-12-28/>

<https://www.state.gov/launch-of-the-au-monitoring-verification-and-compliance-mission-in-ethiopia/Over-100000-Ethiopian-migrants-return-home,-IOM>

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