

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 19 January)

- Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean president Isaias Afewerki met in Abu Dhabi, according to *Reyot media*.
- The two leaders reportedly met in UAE on the occasion of the event of 'the sustainability week' that took place in the country two days ago.
- According to *Reyot media*, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said it is "life threatening" for him to go to Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.
- Eritrean troops continue to be present in the central zone of Tigray, says an eye witness who travelled from Mekelle to Shire through Adwa, yesterday (18 January).
- According to the eyewitness, the Eritrean troops have established camps west of Maykinetal town on the way towards Adwa city.
- The eyewitness saw the troops in MayKinetal and Adwa cities yesterday. The eyewitness reported that he saw many troops, including Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Federal Police, Addis Ababa police, Southern region's Special Forces and Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF).
- According to the witness the civilians in the region were able to move around freely, but that there was a curfew in the evening.
- Tesfaselassie Medhin, Bishop of the Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat, stated: "It is not over yet, many of our faithful and our parishes are still besieged by foreign forces."
- Per the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) Agreement, the Eritreans were expected to leave Tigray concurrently with the handover of weapons of TDF to ENDF, which was carried out and verified by AU monitors, two weeks ago.
- Prof. Kjetill Tronvoll and Dr Meressa Tsehaye warn that organising an election in Tigray, as outlined in the CoH Agreement, may cause further conflict if it is rushed or not well organised.

Situation in Tigray (per 19 January)

- *Fana Broadcasting Corporation* reported that Timket (Ethiopian epiphany) was colourfully celebrated today in Axum City of the Tigray region.
- After years of blockade, thousands of people celebrated the religious festival also in Mekelle and Maychew, it reported.
- A memo published by the World Peace Foundation outlines key challenges to reconstructing Tigray and meeting the humanitarian needs of Tigrayans.
- The authors state this must be done in the "context of deep distrust between the Federal and Tigrayan authorities and a sharp decline in confidence among Tigrayans in their own political leadership."

Situation in Ethiopia (per 19 January)

- The Ethiopian government said that it will resolve its conflict with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) politically and peacefully, reports *Borkena.com*
- Legesse Tulu, minister for government communication services, said yesterday that the government has organised a task force in areas where OLA was active.
- The mission of the task force is to restore peace and economic activity in the Oromia region.
- The Minister also called on the public to press OLA to end the conflict peacefully.
- Sources state the fighting in Oromia is again escalating, as close as 25km east of Addis Ababa, as well as in Western Oromia.
- Ethiopia discovered over 2 billion barrels of crude oil in an area called Warra Illu with the Abay Basin, reported *Garowe Online*, as stated by former Minister of Mining Takelle Ouma, who resigned last week.
- Garowe online quoted the former minister saying "the government is working on utilising the crude oil resources discovered to ensure the prosperity of the country."
- An Ethiopian minister states that Ethiopia will not devalue the birr. The IMF had recommended a more flexible exchange rate.
- Ethiopian Orthodox Christian followers celebrated the feast of Timket (Ethiopian epiphany) across the country. Timket was registered as a UNESCO intangible heritage in 2019, according to *AFP*.
- In Ethiopia more than 22 million people are facing severe food shortages because of droughts in five consecutive rainy seasons, says *Down to Earth* citing Save the Children.
- Over half 22.6 million are suffering from climate-induced shocks combined with conflict, inflation and forced displacement. This has reportedly caused further misery and children facing increased risk of death from malnutrition.

Situation in Eritrea (per 19 January)

- Eritrea reportedly arrested 44 believers while they were gathering in two private homes at new year, says *Release International - Voice of Christians*.
- The arrested believers were 39 women and five men and they are detained at Mai Serwa prison on the outskirts of the capital, Asmara, adds *Release International*.

Regional Situation (per 19 January)

- The Somali national army and foreign troops launched an operation that killed at least 25 al-Shabaab militants. The militants were reportedly killed at Hawadlay Village in the Shabelle region of the country.

Links of interest

[Controversial trials over the effects of the truce in Tigray, while the conflict in Oromia reopens](#)

[Dimtsi Woyane on Timket in Tigray](#)

[Timket celebration in Axum. FBC](#)

[Meeting Tigrayans' Humanitarian Needs](#)

[Post-war election may trigger new conflict in Ethiopia](#)

[Twitter: Ethiopian Epiphany](#)

[Over 22 million in Ethiopia facing severe food crisis](#)

[Ethiopian gov't says it is pursuing "peaceful," "Political ways" to reverse Shane as a problem](#)

[Ethiopia discovers new oil deposits](#)

[Ethiopia says talk of birr devaluation 'completely unfounded'](#)

[PRAYER ALERT: Eritrean Christians arrested](#)

[Joint Operation leaves 25 Al-Shabaab militants dead](#)

[Youtube: Reyot media](#)

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