

Europe External Programme with Africa

SITUATION REPORT - HORN OF AFRICA

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Peace negotiations (per 25 January)

- Eritrean forces are blocking humanitarian support from reaching Tahway Adiabo district, reports *Dimtsi Woyane* today.
- The district is located in the northwestern zone of Tigray and reportedly controlled by these troops.
- Despite the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement which provides for humanitarian access, people of Adiabo district have not received food and medical supplies yet, added DW.
- *The Washington Post* has verified photos and videos taken over the past two weeks in Aksum, showing Eritrean forces in their characteristic uniforms and sandals.
- Eyewitnesses also noted Eritrean forces in Adigrat and other cities.
- Eyewitnesses told *The Post* that as of 24 January, Eritrean troops were still present in Aksum, Sheraro and Adwa.
- Doctors in the three cities also note that women continue to report rapes by Eritrean soldiers. Continued reports of looting of food, animals and equipment, including phones, also reached *The Post*.
- *The Post* notes that videos shared of Eritrean convoys apparently withdrawing were shared, but that it is unclear whether the Eritrean troops are indeed pulling out, or simply repositioning.

Situation in Ethiopia (per 25 January)

- Yesterday (24 January), Ethiopian Parliament approved the appointments of three ministers proposed by PM Abiy Ahmed, reports the *Ethiopian Herald*.
- The newly appointed ministers are Dr Alemu Sime for Transport and Logistics, Dr Girma Amente for Agriculture, and Engineer Habtamu Tegegn for Mines.
- The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) yesterday (24 January) reportedly attacked Ataye town in North Shoa Zone of Ethiopia's Amhara Regional State, allegedly killing an unknown number of civilians including children, reports Amharic news outlet *Mereja.com* referring to eyewitnesses.
- Thousands of residents have reportedly fled the town as the militants "burned and robbed" hundreds of houses, added *Mereja.com*.
- Former Ethiopian communication minister Bereket Simon was reportedly released from prison after four years in detention in Amhara region, says *Addis Zeybe*.
- He was arrested after PM Abiy Ahmed came to power in 2018.
- Bereket Simon is one of the key policy makers of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front and a long term ally of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.
- The *Ethiopia Peace Observatory* (EPA) reported that between 14 and 20 January 2023, clashes continued between the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and Oromia regional special forces – and what it refers to as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

- Clashes in Oromia were reported in Gamo Waliso and Bada Gora kebeles in Liban Jawi woreda and Seyo area in Dano woreda in the West Shewa zone and were said to have lasted until 15 January.
- EPA noted that some violence in Oromia targeted civilians, naming three events where the ENDF, Oromia regional special forces, kebele militiamen, and Fano militia members targeted civilians.
- This included targeting civilian houses, killing five prisoners in Bofa, and Fano militia shooting and killing an unknown number of civilians in Serar Kulla, accusing them of cooperating with the OLF.
- Reena Ghelani, United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator, visited the Somali region of Ethiopia. She describes that due to the drought, women in Birlays wait for the daily rations of water, so that they can boil and grind wheat until it is soft enough for small children to digest.

Regional Situation (per 25 January)

- A large crowd of Sudanese protesters reportedly tried to march on the presidential Palace in Khartoum yesterday (24 January) but security forces dispersed them using tear gas, according to *Asharq Al-Awsat*.
- Another crowd of protestors marching on the parliament in Omdurman was dispersed, reportedly with excessive force.
- Resistance committees in Sudan are said to have called for people to protest the deteriorating economic conditions, as well as calling for an end to military rule.
- *Axios* summarises forecasts for the coming rainy season in the Horn of Africa region. They warn that the sixth rainy season in a row may be poor, while the last five rainy seasons failed.
- It notes that the drought is a combination of human-induced global warming effects and La Niña conditions.

International Situation (per 25 January)

- International Committee of the Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric has arrived in Addis Ababa for a two-day visit. She will discuss the humanitarian situation and the impact of conflict with Ethiopian officials and AU leaders, says ICRC.
- The US's Biden Administration should avoid going back to business as usual in its relations with Ethiopia, warns Senior Fellow for Africa Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations Michelle Gavins.
- "Standing firm in support of accountability is an essential element of any lasting peace even though it will undoubtedly complicate the U.S.-Ethiopian relationship," states Gavin.
- Gavin also warns that the "United States will need to assess the degree to which Ethiopia has become an instrument of Eritrea's agenda in the region, which is fundamentally at odds with U.S. interests in a stronger, freer, and more stable Horn of Africa."

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