

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 28 - 17 December

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Military situation (as confirmed per 17 December)

- Heavy shelling is continuing in many villages in Tigray.
- Reported that male youth were forcibly recruited: “any males who tried to return home were taken to a local meeting and told by the Amhara forces that they would have to become soldiers.” Forced recruitment was earlier reported by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet.
- According to former Minister of Defense from Eritrea, Mesfin Hagos, Eritrea deployed in Tigray 17 infantry and mechanized divisions, a brigade and commando division and TPLF claims that Eritrean technical and combat units also participated (the 11th, 17th, 19th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 52rd, 53rd infantry and 42nd, 46th, 48th and 49th mechanized divisions and 2nd brigade and 52nd commando division).

International dimension (as confirmed per 17 December)

- The European Union asks: (1) full humanitarian access, (2) allowing refugees to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, (3) end discrimination and ethnic prosecution, (4) the establishment of a mechanism for independent investigation of human rights violations, (5) and the reestablishment of communication and media channels to Tigray.

Regional dimension (as confirmed per 17 December)

- The Somali Prime Minister is set to formally demand the removal of Kenyan troops from AMISOM. Reportedly he wants these replaced with Eritrean troops. Previously Ethiopian Tigray troops were taken off AMISOM. Eritrea has been accused in the past of training and supporting Al Shabaab. Observers warn the impact this re-arrangement may have on counter-terrorism policies.
- Somalia may stop issuing visas to Kenyan troops in AMISOM by the end of the month.
- In clashes at the Sudan-Ethiopia border, four Sudanese soldiers have been killed and twelve more wounded. The clash took place on territory claimed by Ethiopian farmers.
- PM Hamdok of Sudan deplores loss of military who “were ambushed by some Ethiopian forces and militias inside Sudanese territory”.
- Discussion on border issues between both countries was on the agenda of the Summit between Ethiopian PM Abiy and Sudan PM Hamdok last Sunday. Discussions on the border disputes are due to start next week in Khartoum according to the Sudan Tribune.
- Firefights are reported in Mogadishu as anti-government demonstrations are taking place. Local militias and security forces have been clashing.

Human Rights (as confirmed per 17 December)

- A Catholic bishop and several nuns and other missionary members, based in Adigrat, are missing.
- AFP reports that the Federal Ethiopian army separated men and women and executed a group of men in the village of Bisober in Southern Tigray on November 14th.
- Witnesses tell about executions of civilians in the Wukro area during November 25th -29th.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 17 December)

- Eritrean refugees who fled from Tigray refugee camps to Addis Ababa and were forced to return to Tigray have been taken to two camps (Mai Aini and Adi Harush), even if they lived in Shimelba and Hitsats camps before.
- There is a severe shortage of food and water in Mai Aini.
- Eritrean refugees are suffering from hunger and lack of medical assistance in Tigray refugee camps. Women are reportedly giving birth without medical assistance.
- Many families have been separated. Calls for an urgent family tracing program to support reunification and information regarding missing persons.

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 17 December)

- In Tembien, Adi Qeweylo, Tigray, nine priests were killed by Federal Ethiopian and Eritrean troops.
- Reports of looting continue to come in. Eritrean soldiers are said to continue plundering valuable equipment from factories and universities. Videos have come out of what the descriptions claim are Eritrean trucks in Shire Endasilasie carrying loot back to Eritrea.
- Social media reports state that Eritrean soldiers may be engaged in “massive looting” of cultural artifacts. This could include raids on remote monasteries which keep ancient manuscripts. Ancient Christian religious manuscripts and texts may be in danger. Calls on UNESCO to investigate.
- Report that Al-Njesahi Mosque of Negash (Tigray) is looted; the oldest Muslim settlement in Africa.
- The UN has confirmed that 18 trucks have reached Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray.
- The UN states it does not have unhindered and full access to the region.
- More supplies, organised by the ICRC, have arrived in Mekelle.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 17 December)

- A number of Tigrayans who have spoken with the New Humanitarian have said that they have encountered growing ethnic profiling and discrimination. They are experiencing harassment on the streets, but have also been targeted by government investigations. The government has been acting against TPLF members, but non-members say that they have been targeted as well.
- The Ethiopian deputy PM, Demeke Mekonnen, has met with UN senior officials to discuss the latest developments in Tigray.
- CORRECTION: Journalist (as per yesterday’s report) not arrested but journey was delayed.

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<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/12/16/Ethnic-profiling-Tigray-tensions-Ethiopia>
<https://twitter.com/RABdiAnalyst/status/1339228121216725008?s=20>
<http://www.africaglobalvillage.com/first-foreign-aid-arrives-in-tigray-as-civilians-recount-the-horrors/>
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