

## Situation Report EPPA HORN No. 1 - 17 November 2020

[Europe External Programme with Africa](#) is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specialised in issues of peace building, refugee protection and resilience in the Horn of Africa. EPPA has published extensively on issues related to 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.

Key in-depth publications [can be accessed on the website](#).

### **Key information (in addition to what is already widely published)**

#### Regional dimension (as confirmed per 17 November 2020)

- Claims made by Tigray President Debretsion that Eritrea is involved in the war (specifications below), denied by Eritrea, but local activity reported from within Eritrea.
- Claim made by Tigray Central Command Spokesperson (Getachew Reda) that UAE was involved in attack Tigray through drones sent from Assab port (in Eritrea) but no confirmation of where they made impact.
- Ethiopian troops recalled from Somalia and redeployed to Tigray. Tigray troops remain in Somalia. Claims made by reliable source that 200 Tigrayan officers were arrested in Somalia, but no confirmation.
- Uganda expressing interest to bring Ethiopian Federal leadership and Tigray leadership together. Pictures appearing of a meeting in Uganda, but no evidence of TPLF presence. Mediation denied by Addis in press statement, who cited the meeting had a different objective.
- Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen Hassen reported to have visited Kenya afterward Uganda for a meeting with President Uhuru Kenyatta. Pictures appeared on Twitter.
- Letter sent by Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Defense to request firing of Tigray General in charge of security at AU; request was implemented.
- Ethiopian government reportedly requested (according to *one* news output only) 4.000 soldiers from South Sudan People's Defence Forces.

#### Military capacity (as confirmed per 17 November 2020)

- Prime Minister Abiy stated last week that rocket launchers targeted in Tigray had a range of around 300km, consistent with a Scud-type short range ballistic missile. PM Abiy reported the missiles were destroyed, but missile launches continue from Tigray.

### Damage from the war (as confirmed per 17 November 2020)

- In Tigray: damage to Tekeze electricity dam and sugar industrial complex (disputed by the Wolkayit Sugar Factory via the Ethiopian News Agency), rocket hits outside Mekelle in the village of Indeyesus near a Church, one child injured.
- Heavy fighting in Southern region Tigray – Amhara border (Raya) with casualties amongst troops (estimated 760 casualties).
- Rockets fired by Tigray forces on Asmara (airport and Ministry of Information), which did not hit targets, but caused an explosion large enough to break windows.
- Rockets fired by Tigray defense forces on Bahirdar and Gondar; military terminals serving as a base to carry out airstrikes, claims the Tigray regional government.
- Reports on social media of execution of around 54 elderly in Tigray border town Zalembessa (attributed to Eritrean forces on social media).

### Situation refugees (as confirmed per 17 November 2020)

- In Tigray: 70.000 refugees from Eritrean origin in four camps near border (near Shire-town). Potential humanitarian disaster looming as international organisations are leaving and no food and supplies are coming in to Tigray due to closures of airports and close of transport to Tigray. Call by UN for humanitarian corridors, as international agencies currently have no access into the region.
- Around 25.000 refugees fled from Amhara and Tigray to Sudan, including Eritrean and Tigrayan soldiers, Federal government soldiers and refugees from Amhara region. New camp facility opened in Sudan (an old Ethiopian famine refugee camp has been re-opened). Sudan has officially closed borders on 5 November (this may not be fully enforced given complexity of the border).

### Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 17 November 2020)

- Communication starting up following complete shut-down, but only landlines within Tigray and satellite internet use is increasing somewhat. Mobile phones and internet not working.
- Banks are open, bank system and ATMs not working.
- Electricity is back on.

### Press and media (as confirmed per 17 November 2020)

- Ethiopian journalists, including Addis Standard editor Medihane Ekubamichael and Bekalu Alamrew, arrested in relation to their journalistic work.
- Stricter cyber-crime regulations reportedly come into force in Ethiopia on 17 November; may lead to closer monitoring and regulation of (social media) communications.
- Spokesperson Ethiopia Federal: Billene Seyoum (<https://twitter.com/BilleneSeyoum>)
- Spokesperson Tigray: Getachew Reda ([https://twitter.com/reda\\_getachew](https://twitter.com/reda_getachew))

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## Links of interest

<https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/corporation-dismisses-tplf-s-claim-about-wolkait-sugar-factory-bombing/ar-BB1b3ASX>

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/82978>

<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-urges-return-to-dialogue-rather-than-conflict-in-ethiopia>

<https://www.ibtimes.com/heat-hunger-sudan-struggles-shelter-25000-ethiopian-refugees-3083192>

[https://thessherald.com/2020/11/16/ethiopia-requests-4000-troops-from-s-sudan-as-violence-reaches-boiling-](https://thessherald.com/2020/11/16/ethiopia-requests-4000-troops-from-s-sudan-as-violence-reaches-boiling-point/?fbclid=IwAR0oSlhpAyKVTAO5uZwiFveWyBGxrs85ynNWX2dRkiTejvIGNgsbV_WtPB0)

[point/?fbclid=IwAR0oSlhpAyKVTAO5uZwiFveWyBGxrs85ynNWX2dRkiTejvIGNgsbV\\_WtPB0](https://thessherald.com/2020/11/16/ethiopia-requests-4000-troops-from-s-sudan-as-violence-reaches-boiling-point/?fbclid=IwAR0oSlhpAyKVTAO5uZwiFveWyBGxrs85ynNWX2dRkiTejvIGNgsbV_WtPB0)

<http://msrisk.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Security-Advisory-Ethiopia-9-November-2020.pdf>

<http://msrisk.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Security-Advisory-Ethiopia-16-November-2020.pdf>

<https://cpj.org/2020/11/ethiopian-journalist-bekalu-alamrew-arrested-accused-of-disseminating-false-news/>

<https://cpj.org/2020/11/ethiopian-authorities-arrest-addis-standard-editor-medihane-ekubamichael/>

<http://communications.amecea.org/index.php/2020/11/13/ethiopia-amidst-escalating-ethiopias-tigray-conflict-amecea-bishops-appeal-for-peaceful-dialogue/>