

Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 8 - 26 November

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Regional dimension (as confirmed per 26 November)

- Reports that Ethiopian military is engaged in fighting on another front along the Kenyan border. Locals in Moyale town say at least 9 Kenyans arrested and taken into Ethiopia as soldiers battle Oromo Liberation Front Shane group in Western Ethiopia.
- The Gov of Kenya has held talks with Ethiopia on the abduction of 9 Kenyans in Moyale by Ethiopian forces. Kenya is pressing for their release.
- Djibouti President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh states PM Abiy had to “punish those seeking to break up the country.”

International dimension (as confirmed per 26 November)

- The EU warns of a destabilisation of the Horn and calls for an immediate ceasefire and non-interference of external parties.
- Reported that UN Sec Gen Antonio Guterres spoke to Ethiopia PM Abiy and AU chair and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to try and de-escalate the conflict.
- US President-elect Biden’s choice for National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, raised concern about the situation in Ethiopia and urged for the start of an immediate dialogue.
- British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, in discussions with President Uhuru Kenyatta, expressed concerns about the risks to regional stability and security if the violence in Ethiopia will escalate.
- In a letter to the UN, the International Oromo Lawyers Association calls for de-escalation of conflict in Ethiopia as the situation poses a serious threat to regional peace and security.

Military capacity (as confirmed per 26 November)

- Ethiopian PM Ahmed Abiy issued a statement on Twitter on the elapsing of the 72-hour ultimatum, stating that the Ethiopian National Defense Forces have been directed to commence the “third and final phase of the Rule of Law operations”.
- In social media multiple reports of defensive fortifications being prepared in Mekelle. These include barricades in the streets.
- An Ethiopian ultimatum for Tigrayan surrender elapsed. Expectations of an imminent attack on the Tigrayan regional capital. The government has previously warned civilians of no-mercy.

- Human Rights Concern Eritrea (HRCE) reports to have further evidence that elements of the Eritrean armed forces are facilitating ENDF operations, actively participate in the offensive and are on the ground within Tigray.
- Reports that witnesses from Eritrea conscripted in the national service were put in Ethiopian uniforms and were taken to the front lines; they state that few survived.
- Both sides continue to claim success. The ENDF claims to have encircled Mekelle, while the TPLF claims to have destroyed another division of Ethiopian armed forces and Tigray sources report that four divisions of the Eritrean armed forces have been defeated.

Damage from the war (as confirmed per 26 November)

- After the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission reported that at least 600 civilians were killed on November 9th in Mai Kadra by militias loyal to the regional government, AFP notes that different stories are being told by victims and that the full extent of the event is unknown.
- Telegraph also reports attacks by Amhara militias.
- The Telegraph reports, after investigation in refugee camps in Sudan, that towns in Tigray were indiscriminately attacked by artillery fire coming from the border with Eritrea.

Situation refugees (as confirmed per 26 November)

- The UN states that most refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan are in overcrowded transit centres at the borders waiting to be relocated to the designated settlement sites. As of 24 November, only around 8,000 had been relocated.
- The UN and humanitarian partners in Ethiopia are now urgently seeking US\$76 million until January 2021 to help 2 million people in Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions. Canada announces 3 million in assistance for those affected by the conflict. The EU is preparing 4 million € in aid.
- UNICEF has reported that the conflict in Tigray has left 2.4 million children in need of urgent help.

Reported situation in Tigray (as confirmed per 26 November)

- Electricity, communications, and internet services remain cut. Little access to or contact with the region is available.
- AFP reports that a photograph supporting the claim that TPLF soldiers handed in guns is false.

Reported situation in Ethiopia (as confirmed per 26 November)

- Fears that the conflict in Tigray and beyond may lead to other clashes and escalation of ethnic tension, which has already started. Particularly mentioned is the Konso zone in south-western Ethiopia.
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Links of interest

<https://twitter.com/AbiyAhmedAli/status/1331853743810285575/photo/1>
<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/11/23/ethiopia-tigray-fuel-conflict-hotspots-ethnic-politics>
<https://www.unocha.org/story/daily-noon-briefing-highlights-ethiopia-yemen>
<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201125-questions-linger-among-the-corpses-of-an-ethiopian-massacre>
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<https://twitter.com/jakejsullivan/status/1331496157290393600?s=08>;
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