

## GISF Ethiopia Roundtable 3 Discussion

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021, 15:00 – 16:30 BST



### Key take-aways

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#### Purpose

The aim of this roundtable discussion, facilitated by GISF, was to provide members with an opportunity to share information, concerns, and questions on responses to the evolving situation in Ethiopia. The roundtable was not designed to provide an in-depth overview of the situation. Instead, it was an opportunity for questions and the exchange of expertise and experiences in a safe space.

#### Key discussion points:

- Ceasefire is increasingly fragile – appears to be in name only at the moment
- Last two days saw intensifying tension, especially along the borders
- WFP reported that a convoy of 9 lorries were attacked
- Three red lines to cross before the ceasefire officially ends:
  - Eritrean army moves against TDF
  - Ethiopian forces openly against TDF
  - TDF forces move into Tigray
- TDF looking to degrade enemy capabilities such interrupting supplies and creating their own supply links in Sudan
- TDF not looking to hold road and rail – they're looking to probe and degrade them and see what they can get out of them
- Likely that Ethiopian government will continue to maintain the ceasefire, in name only, until September
  - This is due in part to the rainy season – difficult to move in the weather conditions, especially with heavy artillery
- The ENDF will move against TDF if they seek to push forward to gain large amounts of territory outside Tigray
  - They will defend any major attacks, especially against infrastructure
- The TDF are looking to disrupt supplies between Afar and Djibouti
- Ethiopian government is expected to continue controlling movement and goods into Tigray
  - This may pressure TDF and also the civilians in the region who support TDF
  - The TDF may prioritize soldiers over civilians in terms of handing out supplies
  - They may then be forced to work with the Ethiopian Government
- Aid deliveries expected to continue – UN has the diplomatic ability to ensure supplies are delivered
- Concern remains over tensions around the GERD and the border with Sudan
- Access to and inside Tigray has slightly improved but still difficult

- Still huge problems with communications
- IDP's are increasing on the ground
- High restrictions on goods people can bring into country – basic needs such as personal medication and medical kits being taken away – new risk that needs to be explored
- Fuel and Cash are both getting very short – cash is also difficult to transfer
- Food security was dire in June – now with even more limited distribution it's concerning over what people are receiving
- Air bridge not set up – need numerous trucks coming through to the area
- Warnings of possible expulsion of aid workers, there are reports that Ambassador Redwan Hussein has said- "Some humanitarian coordinators, as is the case in other countries in Ethiopia, are known to play a negative role in arming the other side of the conflict, as it has done in the past," he said. "Some groups, especially those claiming to be coordinating humanitarian aid, are launching a propaganda campaign to harass, harass and tarnish Ethiopia rather than remotely, with the exception of those assigned to coordinate in Ethiopia."

*Considerations of where the situation may be in 4 weeks-time*

- Situation remains difficult to predict
- Ceasefire precarious – increased pressure internationally to keep the ceasefire in place
- Support of TPLF internally – Will they lose support? Not likely in the next two weeks, but may over time
- International pressure may impact change in situation. International community attention is on Afghanistan and the withdraw of US troops – Ethiopia is slowly being forgotten. If fighting starts again the attention may come back
- Remains a case-by-case basis on whether to pull international, expat staff out

**Resources:**

- [GISF Ethiopia Roundtable I Notes](#) (25<sup>th</sup> June)
- [GISF Ethiopia Roundtable II Notes](#) (8<sup>th</sup> July)
- [Ethiopia: Vigil Insight Information Alert](#) (16<sup>th</sup> July)
- [Ethiopia: Social Media Monitoring](#)