



**VOICES  
FROM  
TIGRAY  
2021**

**TESTIMONIES OF  
BRUTALITIES, CRIMES,  
ATROCITIES COMMITTED  
AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF  
TIGRAY**

**WEBINAR REPORT - SUMMARY**



# **VOICES FROM TIGRAY 2021**

## **Webinar Report - Summary**

**25th May | 8th June | 15th June | 29th June | 13th July**



## ABOUT EUROPE EXTERNAL PROGRAMME WITH AFRICA (EEPA)

EEPA, is a Belgium-based Centre of Expertise with in-depth knowledge, publications, and networks, specializing in issues of peacebuilding, refugee protection, and resilience in the Horn of Africa.

The Centre has published extensively on issues related to the 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 organizations, civil society, and experts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and across Africa.

EEPA has been using research, analysis, advocacy, information collection, and distribution and in working with actors in the region it strives to increase knowledge and understanding around topics such as human trafficking, human rights abuses, and migration.

Since November 2020, the Centre has been giving daily Situation Reports on the conflict in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia.

### Trends in Human Trafficking

#### April 2020

Trends in Human Trafficking – Issue no. 9 – EEPA News Highlights

#### March 2020

- [Situation Report EEPA Horn No. 154](#), 2
- [Situation Report EEPA Horn No. 153](#), 2
- [Situation Report EEPA Horn No. 152](#), 21
- [Situation Report EEPA Horn No. 151](#), 20



Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 1 - 17 November

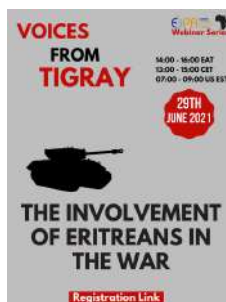


## VOICES FROM TIGRAY WEBINAR SERIES

**Voices From Tigray** is a 5-part webinar series organized by EEPA from May-July 2021. The focus of the webinar is to project the crimes, atrocities, and inhumane treatments meted against the people of Tigray during the conflict that started in November 2020.

### The webinar series had the following themes

1. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Women in Tigray – May 25th, 2021
2. Brutalities Against Religious Leaders, Holy Places and Heritage in Tigray – June 8th, 2021.
3. Crimes Committed Against Refugees Committed in Tigray – June 8th, 2021.
4. The Involvement of Eritreans in the War – June 29th, 2021.
5. Hunger For Peace, Hunger for Justice – July 13th, 2021.





## TOTAL ATTENDANCE SUMMARY



**635**  
Participants



**43**  
Countries

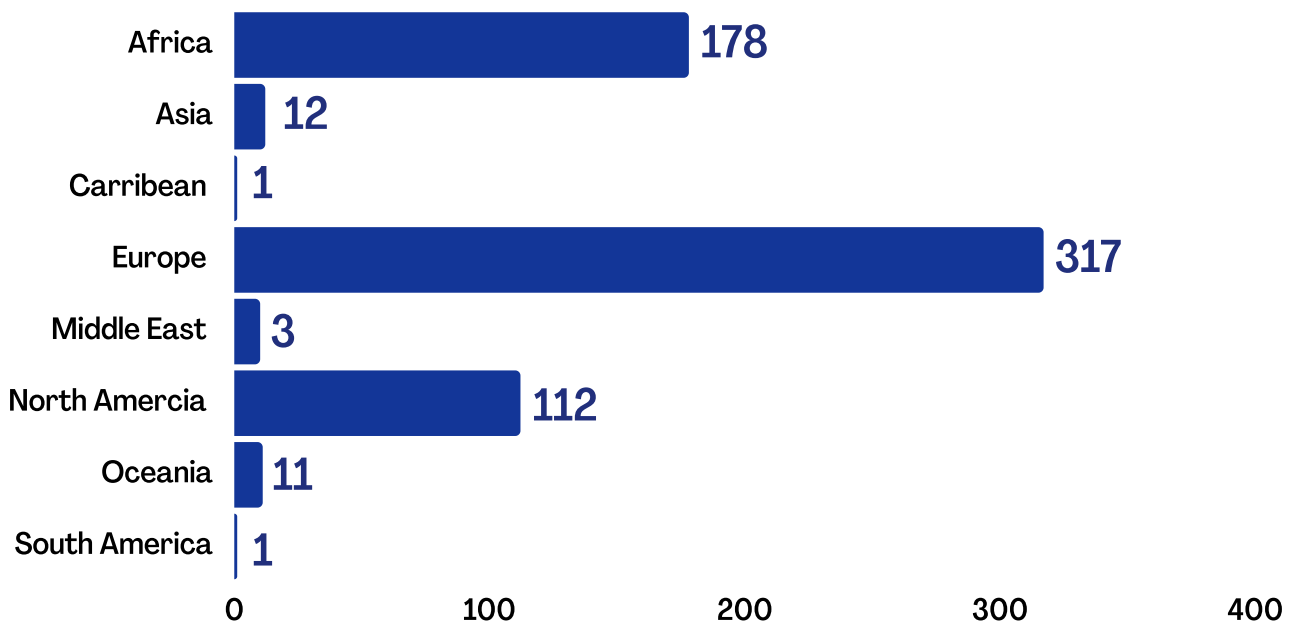


**28**  
Speakers



**38**  
Testimonies

## ATTENDANCE BY REGION





## Webinar 1: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Women in Tigray

 25th May, 2021

 3 Testimonies

 130 Participants

### Overview

The scale and brutality of crimes of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence against Women committed in Tigray have drawn widespread condemnation from around the world. While Tigray has been entirely closed off from communications for three months, and large parts remain closed off, large numbers of sexual violence have been reported.

UNFPA estimated in April that 22.500 women would require support as a consequence of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. There is massive underreporting of sexual violence. Large parts of Tigray are closed off. Journalists and aid workers cannot reach all areas. The shame and fear associated with the violence and perpetrators acting with impunity and the destruction of local administration and hospitals compound the problem of underreporting. What is being reported is the tip of the iceberg. The webinar on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Women in Tigray highlighted these issues.

### Speakers

- Hon. Julia Duncan-Cassel
- Assita Kanko - Member of European Parliament
- Victor Odero - International Rescue Committee
- Mohammed Alamin - Bloomberg News
- Selam Kidane
- Mariam Basajja - Africa Women for Peace in the Horn
- Malgorzata 'Gosia' Tarasiesicz - East and West Women's Network
- Meaza Gidey Gebremedhin - Omna Tigray

### Highlights

- Overview of Sexual Related Violence in Tigray



## Webinar 2: Brutalities against Religious Leaders, Holy Places and Heritage in Tigray

 8th June, 2021

 7 Testimonies

 207 Participants

### Overview

Tigray is a region endowed with immense religious and cultural heritages that are footprints of millennia's history, which extends back to 4000 BCE. Hence Tigray is a foundation for hundreds of thousands of written artifacts (inscriptions and manuscripts).

Aksum Tsion is a symbol (in Tigray) for the first introduction of Christianity into Sub-Saharan Africa. AlNejash Mosque (in Tigray) is a symbol for the first introduction of Islam into Africa. Tigray is home to the first Christian and Moslem diaspora in history. By estimation, hundreds of religious places and monasteries (with their heritages) are damaged and/or their tradition vandalized.

According to the Təgray Orthodox Church diocese report at the beginning of February, 326 members of the church priests were among the countless civilians randomly and callously killed. This webinar exposed the Brutalities against Religious Leaders, Holy Places, and Heritage in Tigray.

### Speakers

- His Eminence, Archbishop Angaelos - Coptic Orthodox Church, UK
- Hen Berhane - Campaigner for Human Rights In Eritrea and Tigray
- Dr. Alula Tesfay Asfha - Post-doctoral researcher at University of Tsukuba, Japan
- Dr. Hagos Abrha Abay - Researcher of Philology and Ge'ez Manuscript Culture
- Fisseha Tekle - Amnesty International researcher for Ethiopia
- Wolbert Smidt - Ethnohistorian Jena University and Adjunct Prof Mekelle University
- Benoit Lannoo - Ecumenical, Interfaith & Interreligious Dialogue
- Dr. Khataza Gondwe - Head of Advocacy and African Middle East Team Leader at Christian Solidarity Worldwide



## Webinar 3: Crimes Against Refugees Committed in Tigray

 15th June, 2021

 11 Testimonies

 98 Participants

### Overview

Present-day Eritrea is one of the most militarized countries in the world. Conscription into the National Service is through - the educational system, regular razzias (round-ups), and everyone caught trying to flee the country. Those who do not participate in the National Service are denied the rights and benefits of citizenship. Conscripts are at the mercy of their superiors, who exercise control and command over them without restriction or accountability.

According to UN Commission, the National Service constitutes a crime against humanity. Minors are also subjected to enforced conscription into the National Service. The National Service is the reason Eritreans flee their country, and the UN estimates that 5,000 people flee Eritreans every month.

The National Service has been deployed in the war in Tigray. The majority of Refugees under international protection in Tigray have fled National Service conditions in Tigray. It was reported that up to 20,000 refugees have disappeared, and forcefully returned to Eritrea under duress. In this webinar, we highlighted the crimes committed against these refugees.

### Speakers

- Abraham Tesfai
- Muluberhan Temelso - Human Rights for Eritreans
- Klara Smiths - Human Trafficking from Eritrea
- John Stauffer - Eritrean Refugees in Tigray
- Mike Slotznick - Eritrean Refugees in Tigray
- **Morgane Wirtz** - The End of the Road of Refugees in Libya
- Fr. Mussie Zerai - Roman Catholic Priest From Eritrea in Italy
- Dr. Khataza Gondwe - Head of Advocacy and African Middle East Team Leader at Christian Solidarity Worldwide





## Webinar 4: Eritrean Involvement in the War in Tigray

 29th June, 2021

 17 Testimonies

 103 Participants

### Overview

Since the start of the conflict in Tigray, Eritrea has been accused of being involved in the conflict. It took five months for Eritrea and Ethiopia to acknowledge the Eritrean presence in Tigray. When they did, they declared that Eritrean troops would be withdrawing immediately. It has been three months since that declaration, and the continued presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray is well documented.

Since the start of the conflict, Eritrean troops have been accused of committing atrocities, War Crimes, and Crimes against Humanity. These human rights violations are built on the system of repression that already exists in Eritrea. This heavy repression has given them the unfavourable nickname of the “North Korea of Africa”

Ever since their independence in 1991, Eritrea has considered the TPLF as one of their major rivals in the Horn. However after the TPLF was removed from power, the TPLF leadership retreated into Tigray. The conflict in Tigray has provided Eritrea with an attempt to get rid of its historic rivals and to attempt to further reinforce its position in the region. This webinar provided an evidence against Eritreans participation in the Tigray War.

### Speakers

- Interview with Martin Plaut - Expert on the Horn of Africa



## Webinar 5: Hunger For Peace, Hunger For Justice

 13th July, 2021

  97 Participants

### Overview

Truth is an indispensable element of any pathway to justice and to peace. The search for truth in Tigray was hampered by a complete communication shut down in the first three months of the conflict. This created a situation of impunity against atrocious crimes.

EEPA consider what civilian people in Tigray have testified when they were able to do so, and have rigorously verified the testimonies. What we presented early on in the Situation Reports has been systematically denied by the perpetrators, but as time went by, each of those stories appeared to be true.

In this webinar, we discussed how

- How the war began
- The destruction of health facilities on a systematic scale
- The systematic destruction of livelihoods
- The attack with chemical weapons on civilians

While EEPA is confident of the sources and the checks implemented to verify the information, independent investigations remain absolutely necessary to establish the veracity of all of information and testimonies.

### Videos and PowerPoint Presentation

- Destruction of Livelihoods
- Destruction of Health Facilities
- The attack with Chemical Weapons
- The start of the War
- Powerpoint reviewing the key issues



## Important Links

- The webinar slides, testimonies, speaker slides, summary of webinar proceedings can be accessed on this webpage - [eeпа.be/?page\\_id=5111](http://eeпа.be/?page_id=5111), or scan the QR Code below for quick access.



- All the videos from the webinar can be accessed on our YouTube Channel - [youtube.com/channel/UCMEMKvXMFWSgeLP8ZPFIwrg/videos](https://youtube.com/channel/UCMEMKvXMFWSgeLP8ZPFIwrg/videos). Scan the QR Code below for quick access.



- To receive the EEPA Situation Report or EEPA Highlights, write to us at [info@eeпа.be](mailto:info@eeпа.be)



## Breakdown of Attendance by Country

Region	Country	25/05/21	08/06/21	15/06/21	29/06/21	13/06/21	Total
<b>Africa</b>	Botswana					1	1
	Eritrea	2		1	1		4
	Ethiopia	18	45	14	4	10	91
	Kenya	19	7	13	11	9	59
	Morocco				1		1
	Nigeria	3				1	4
	Rwanda		1				1
	South Africa	2	1		2	1	6
	Sudan	5		1	1	1	8
	The Central African Republic		1				1
	Tunisia	1					1
	Uganda			1			1
<b>Africa Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Asia</b>	China		2				2
	India	1	3	1	1		6
	Japan	1					1
	Kazakhstan	1					1
	Taiwan		1				1
	Timor-Leste					1	1
<b>Asia Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Carribbean</b>	Grenada					1	1
<b>Carribbean Total</b>						<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Europe</b>	Albania	1					1
	Austria	1	4				5
	Belgium	13	11	5	4	4	37
	Denmark		2		1	1	4
	France	1	4		2	2	9
	Germany	6	11	7	11	4	39
	Ireland	7	2	5	1	1	16
	Italy	10	12	2	3	5	32
	Norway		6	2	2	1	11
	Poland		2				2
	Portugal	1		2	1	1	5
	Slovakia	1	1			1	3
	Spain	2	1		1	1	5
	Sweden	2	5	2	3	1	13
	Switzerland	1	5	1	3	3	13
	The Netherlands	11	7	6	7	7	38
The United Kingdom	12	23	17	19	13	84	
<b>Europe Total</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>Middle East</b>	Israel		1				1
	The United Arab Emirates			2			2
<b>Middle East Total</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>North America</b>	Canada	2	4	3		3	12
	The United States	6	37	12	22	21	98
	United States Minor Outlying Islands				1	1	2
<b>North America Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Oceania</b>	Australia		8	1	1	1	11
<b>Oceania Total</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>South America</b>	Venezuela					1	1
<b>South America Total</b>						<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>130</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>635</b>

“

Today there should be one clear message, that the international community must come together to condemn these atrocities, but that more importantly – they must act.

Governments and institutions have always been cautious to use certain terms: genocide and rape as a weapon of war. But we mustn't be afraid to use these terms if they accurately describe what is taking place.

”

Assita Kanko - Member of European Parliament