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Denna sammanställning av information/länkar är baserad på informationssökningar gjorda av Migrationsverkets landinformationsenhet under en begränsad tid. Sammanställningen gör inte anspråk på att vara uttömmande och bör inte tillmätas exklusivt bevisvärde i samband med avgörandet av ett enskilt ärende. Refererade dokument bör läsas i sitt sammanhang.

Etniska grupperna tigre och bilen i Eritrea

Fråga:

Information omkring tigre- och bilen-grupperna i Eritrea önskas.

- Hemvist, regioner och orter (även i omkringliggande länder såsom Sudan och Etiopien).
- Talade språk? Vi har sett en ökad andel av personer från tigre-gruppen som uteslutande talar arabiska. Vilka språk talar de som bor i Eritrea? Kan arabiska vara ett huvudspråk om de bor i Eritrea?
- Intern uppdelning, exempelvis stamtillhörighet och religion?
- Ställning i samhället? Särskilt utsatta grupper?

Svar:

Nedan finns en sammanställning av information från olika källor.

I Ethnologue (2009) finns detaljerade uppgifter dels om de språk som talas i Eritrea och dels om de olika folkgrupper som finns i landet.

State of Eritrea. 4,527,000. National or official languages: English, Standard Arabic, Tigrinya. Independence from Ethiopia 1993. Literacy rate: 37%. Immigrant languages: Central Kanuri, Hadrami Spoken Arabic (100,000), Hausa, Qimant, Sudanese Spoken Arabic (100,000), Ta'izzi-Adeni Spoken Arabic (18,000). The number of individual languages listed for Eritrea is 13. Of those, 12 are living languages and 1 has no known speakers.

Languages of Eritrea

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=ER

Tigré

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tig

Bilen

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=byn

Landguiden redogör kortfattat för språk och folkgrupper i Eritrea:

Det finns nio etniska grupper i landet, uppdelade efter språk. Tigreanerna utgör ungefär halva befolkningen. De är kristna och lever av jordbruk i höglandet. Tigreanerna talar tigrinska, som är ett semitiskt språk. Uppåt en tredjedel av eritreanerna, både i höglandet och på slätten i väster, talar det närbesläktade språket tigré. De tigrétalande är övervägande muslimer och nomadiserande boskapsskötare.

Tigrinska, arabiska och engelska används i offentliga sammanhang. Endast mindre grupper av eritreaner har arabiska som modersmål, men arabiska är vanligt som andraspråk.

Det är framför allt majoritetsfolket tigreanerna i det centrala höglandet som är kristna, men det finns även tigrétalande eritreaner som bekänner sig till kristendomen liksom många kunama och blin. Nästan alla kristna tillhör den koptiskt ortodoxa kyrkan, men små minoriteter av katoliker och protestanter finns. Eritreas ortodoxa kyrka frigjorde sig från den etiopiska vid självständigheten 1993.

Arabiska används som administrativt språk i Eritrea. Det dominerande språket i Eritrea är tigrinya.

Landinfo (2008)

I dag er arabisk offisielt språk i Djibouti, Mauritania, Sudan (15) og Tsjad, og brukes i tillegg administrativt i Eritrea.”

[Fotnot]15 Bare i Nord-Sudan – i Sør-Sudan er engelsk offisielt språk. (s.18)

I de fleste landene i Afrika sør for Sahara er språkene til tidligere kolonimakter fremdeles dominerende i mange sammenhenger, dette gjelder fransk (brukt i både tidligere franske og belgiske kolonier), engelsk og portugisisk. I bare relativt få land dominerer lokale språk mer enn disse.

[Fotnot]13...Videre dominerer tigrinya i Eritrea,... (s. 14)

Landinfo (2010-06-30)

Språket likner på andre semittiske språk i regionen, som for eksempel Tigre, som snakkes av grupper i både Eritrea og Sudan, og bruker de samme skrifttypene som det fjernere amhara-språket. (s.1)

Landinfo (2010-09-13)

Den eldre flyktningstrømmen tilhører i hovedsak Tigre-grupper og er muslimer som deler kultur og etnisitet med lokalbefolkningen i Øst-Sudan. (s. 2)

De er i hovedsak kristne eritreiske Tigrinja som forlot Eritrea fra 2001 og utover. Disse flyktningene er yngre, utdannede og ofte enslige mindreårige med klare ambisjoner om videre migrasjon til Europa, Midtøsten eller Khartoum. De tilhører hovedsakelig folkegruppene Tigrinja og Bilen i henhold til en rapport fra vestlige immigrasjonsmyndigheter (2009). (s. 2)

Statsborgerskap/nasjonalitetsbevis

En velfinformert eritreisk kilde opplyste til Landinfo under en samtale i London 2010 at svært mange eritreere av muslimsk bakgrunn som kom som flyktninger til Sudan på 1960-tallet har fått sudansk statsborgerskap. Den første etniske gruppen som fikk sudansk statsborgerskap var ifølge Landinfos kilde Ben Amer (3). Senere fulgte Habab (4), Maria (5) muslimske Bilen (6). Kilden utelukket ikke at eritreere med etnisk

tilhørighet til andre muslimske grupper fikk tilgang til sudanske nasjonalitetsbevis. Tedros Abraham understreket at Tigre-grupper i tillegg til pass, også fikk tilgang til sudanske ID-kort (Abraham 2009).

[Fotnoter]

3 Ben Amer er tigre-talende og regnes som en del av Tigre-gruppen (en av Eritreas ni offisielle etniske grupper). Ben Amer er organisert som klan og er primært pastorale.

4 Regnes som Tigre-gruppe.

5 Regnes som Tigre-gruppe

6 Bilen er en av Eritreas ni offisielle etniske grupper og består både av kristne og muslimer.(s. 3)

Flere eritreiske grupper i Sudan har i henhold til den velinformerte eritreiske kilden egne umda. Dette inkluderer i tillegg til de ovenfor nevnte også Bilen (kristne), Saho og Rashaida.(s. 4)

Landinfo (Augusti 2007)

The Bilen speakers live in close proximity with Tigrinya-speaking Christians and Tigre-speaking Muslims, and they tend to know both Tigre and Tigrinya as their second and third languages. Bilen-speakers are divided almost equally between Muslims and (mostly Catholic) Christians. Rather than demanding the use of the Bilen language as the medium of instruction in their communities, those Bilen who are Muslim have opted for Arabic primary schools and those who are Christian have opted for Tigrinya. The present underdevelopment of Bilen as a language of instruction is partly a result of the manner in which education was introduced to the region. The beginning of formal education in the area came with the settlement of the missionaries around Keren in the late nineteenth century (Olsen 1997:11). Although missionaries were the first to write Bilen using Ge'ez script, they never used the language for teaching purposes. Instead, as in most schools in Eritrea, they taught in Italian during the Italian period, in Tigrinya and Arabic during the British administration, and in Amharic during the Ethiopian rule (Government of Eritrea 1996:49).[1]

Landinfo (2009)

Ca. halvparten av eritreerne er tigrinya, som er en kristen etnisk gruppe. De lever hovedsakelig som

bofaste jordbrukere i høylandet og snakker et semittisk språk kalt tigrinja. Det samme språket som den etniske gruppen Tigray snakker på den etiopiske siden av grensen. En minoritet av tigrinjatalende omtales som Jiberti, og er muslimer. Ca. 30 prosent tilhører en samling med klaner, tigre. Tigre er muslimer, og lever hovedsakelig som pastoralister i det nordlige høylandet, langs kysten og i lavlandet mot Sudan. Disse snakker tigré som er nært beslektet med tigrinjal tillegg finnes blant annet afarer (danakil) som er bosatt i den svært hete Danakil-ørkenen. De er muslimer og kamelnomader og snakker et kusjittisk språk (i likhet med somalisk). De øvrige gruppene er saho, nara (baria), rashaida, beja (hedareb, beni amber), bilen (bogor) og kunama.

De vanlige forvaltningsspråkene i landet er tigrinja, engelsk og arabisk. I tillegg undervises det i morsmålet i grunnskolen

Minority Rights Group (2007)

Main languages: Tigrinya, Afar, Beni Amer, Tigre (Tegre), Saho, Arabic

Minority groups include Tigre 16%, Afar 3.3%, Saho 3.7%, Beni Amer (Bedawi) 3.1%, Bilen 1.4%, Kunama 2.2 % and Nara 1.6%.

Tigre is used to describe the people who speak Tigre and the language itself. It shared origins with Tigrinya but is now very different. Its use is declining under the impact of Tigrinya in Eritrea. Tigre are made up of three groups, Habab, Ad Teklei and Ad Temaryam. They are all nomadic herdspeople except for Ad Teklei who have settled in Keren. Other Tigre-speakers live between Mensa and Bilen (Bogos) on the Dahlak Islands and among the Beni Amer. Tigre means 'serf'. They were originally Muslim vassals of the Christian Bet Asgedo. During the nineteenth century the Muslim rulers adopted the language of their subjects as well as their religion but kept them serfs.

Both a region and an ethnic group, Bilen inhabit the most northerly district of Tigray, Bogos, divided from the rest of that province by the Mereb River. The mostly agricultural people comprise two main tribes of about 15,000 each: Bet Teqwe and Gebre Terqe. They became Christians but adopted clothing in colours worn

by Muslims as a form of defence and so not to be easily recognized. The Gebre Terqe were slower to become Islamicized because of efforts of Roman Catholic and Swedish evangelical missionaries. About a quarter of the Bilen population is Roman Catholic today. In earlier times Bilen were prey to slave and cattle raiders from Egyptian Sudan. Keren, their capital, was occupied by the Egyptians in 1872. The return of Bogos was guaranteed by the Adwa Treaty in 1884 but the Italians annexed it and retained control until after the Second World War.

Oslo Center (2009)

The Eritrean government's position on minority rights reflects the ideological origin of the liberation struggle. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the precursor of today's government, defined its war against Ethiopia on a nationalistic basis, struggling to liberate the territory of Eritrea and all its culturally diverse inhabitants. The EPLF in principle rejected all notions of ethnicity in the struggle (as was the predominant organisational platform of resistance in Ethiopia), and fought as Eritreans, not as Tigrinya, Afar, Tigre or some other ethnic group. Ethnicity, and in particular minority concerns, was in this regard perceived as irrelevant and as a possible obstacle to the formation of a coherent national front. Thus, 'minorities' is not even a term recognised or used by the government: in the official language of the state, ethno-linguistic communities are identified as 'nationalities'(Pool 1997: 5).(s.108)

The Tigre group is constituted of diverse peoples inhabiting parts of the western lowlands, the northern highlands, the northern coastal plains, and parts of the Dahlak islands. The ten or so different clans speaking the Tigre language, of which the largest is Beni Amer, do not form a distinct ethnic entity, although they share a common adherence to Islam (cf. Fegley 1995). (s.111)

Bilin is a Central Cushitic language spoken by the people living in and around the town of Keren. The Bilin are sedentary agriculturists and in Keren some are occupied with trading. (s. 112)

The minority of Christian Tigre speakers also prefer to use Tigre as their language of instruction. Most Muslim communities, on the other hand, including Tigre, Nara, Afar, Saho, Bilen, Hadareb and Jeberti, have chosen Arabic instead of their ethnic languages. A cause, or an effect, of this is that there are no schools in Eritrea offering instruction in the minority languages of Nara, Bilen, Afar, and Hadareb. Consequently, the use and sustainability of these minority languages has reportedly been neglected.(s. 116)

Possibly as a reaction to the dominant Tigrinya culture, the Muslim lowland groups have turned to Arabic as a medium of instruction rather than their minority languages. This is most noteworthy among the Tigre group, which is the second largest group in Eritrea, constituting about 30 per cent of the total population of the country, but just 5 per cent of schools (29 out of 549) used Tigre as a medium of instruction in 1995-6. Furthermore, only 3 per cent of the pupils in elementary schools were learning in Tigre, whilst 12 per cent chose Arabic as the language of instruction³⁴⁶ (Woldemikael 2003: 127). (s. 116)

UNHCR (2005)

Eritrea's population is estimated at 3.8 million people. The population is fairly evenly divided between Tigrinya-speaking Christians in the southern highlands, Tigre-speaking Muslims in the northern highlands and on the eastern and western slopes, speakers of Saho and Afar in the coastal desert plain, and speakers of Beja and Nilotic languages on the western plain. Many inhabitants along the coast and the border with Sudan speak Arabic, and many of those around Asmara also speak Italian and some also speak Amharic. (s. 1)

Tigre/Tegre

The Tigre represent about one third of Eritrea's population. Culturally and ethnically, they are related to the Beja of Sudan. They claim Arab origin, and their language, Tigre, is Semitic. The use of the Tigre language is declining under the impact of Tigrinya in Eritrea. They also speak Bedawiye and Arabic. The Tigre are divided between Sunni Muslims and Ethiopian Orthodox

Christians. Most are nomadic but some have settled. The Tigre includes ten major tribal units: Ad Sawra, Ad Sheikh, As Mu'allim, Aflenda, Bet Asgeda, Bet Juk, Marya, Mensa, Meshalit and Sabdarat (World Directory of Minorities, 1997). (s. 8)

Bilen / Bogos

They constitute 2.1 % of the Eritrean population (Lonely Planet, 2000), and generally live around the town of Keren (World Directory of Minorities, 1997). They are generally an agricultural people. They have two sub-clans; Bet Teqwe and the Gebre Terqe. They speak Bilin and Tigre, both of the central Cushitic language group (The Encyclopedia of Peoples of the World, 1993). (s. 10)

Shabait (2010-09-01)

Cultural events like wedding, engagement, rites of passage have been instrumental in preserving community spirit in Eritrea. In the Blin community of the country, one of these cultural elements is Mirtate. Mirtate is one of the elaborate and striking rites of passage. This is how it is celebrated.

Shabait (2010-10-15)

Shengelot is one of the traditions that are celebrated colorfully among the Tigre ethnic group. It is celebrated in times of transforming a young boy to man. Similar to the rituals in the Bilen, the boy celebrating his adulthood will visit all his relatives except in the Maria clan of the Tigre Ethnic group where the tradition is not observed.

Lonely Planet (2003)

The Tigré make up about 30% of the population, and inhabit the northern lowlands, from the Sudanese frontier to the western limits of the Danakil.

A heterogeneous people, the Tigré are divided into groups and clans. Most Tigreans are Muslim, and they are both sedentary and nomadic. The sedentary farmers cultivate maize, *durra* (sorghum) and other cereals.

Tigrean society is traditionally hierarchical, with a small aristocracy known as *shemagille* ruling the masses. When the village leader dies, his power passes to his offspring.

Tigrean oral literature is rich. Fables, riddles, poetry, funeral dirges, war cries and supernatural stories colour the different elements of Tigrean life. The Tigré are also known for their love of singing and dancing, usually to the accompaniment of a drum and a *mesenko* (a type of guitar). Dances are used to celebrate many occasions, such as the discovery of a new waterhole. (s. 281f)

Bilen

The Bilen inhabit the environs of Keren and make up approximately 2% of the population. Cushitic in origin, the Bilen are either settled Christian farmers or Muslim cattle rearers.

Bilen traditional society is organized into kinship groups. The women are known for their brightly coloured clothes and their gold, silver or copper nose rings which indicate their means and social status. Like the Beja language, Bilen is slowly being replaced by Tigré, Tigrinya and Arabic, due to intermarriage, economic interactions and because Arabic is taught in local schools. Henna tattoos that mimic diamond necklaces or little freckles are fashionable among the women. (s. 283)

Awkir. Eritrean website featuring resources relevant to Tigre history and culture. På webbplatsen finns samlad information om tigre; bl.a. historia, geografi, kultur och konst.

<http://www.awkir.com/>

Smidt Wolbert G.C. (2006)

Smidt ger i boken en beskrivning över bilen och dess undergrupper.

The Blin are an ethnic group located in the Northern Eritrean highlands and, for the greatest part, living in and around the city of Keren and north of it in the region of Halhal. They speak the Cushitic language, Blin, a branch of Agew (Central Cushitic), which is mainly spoken in Ethiopia. Scholars have studied them since the 1850 s9. Hence, one would expect the Blin to

be thoroughly known by today. Yet, knowledge on them is fragmentary and sometimes confused. This is partly due to the fact that, as a rather small ethnic group (max. 100,000 members today a figure including non-Blin-speakers who still identify themselves as Blin), they always entertained close connections with the dominating neighbors, diverse Tigre groups and Tigrinnya speakers. Thus, obfuscated by these dominating cultures, they lost visibility. (s. 134)

Richard V. London (1984) ger en beskrivning av både tigre- och bilen-grupperna vad gäller språk, historia, geografisk utbredning, levnadsförhållanden samt seder och bruk.

Eritrea has been rent with violence for many years as the government of Ethiopia attempts to incorporate the province forcibly into the Ethiopian political and economic system. Many Tigre have left the country to settle in Sudan. The future of those who have remained will continue to be one of hardship, not only because the fighting but because a new Marxist government in Addis Ababa is not sympathetic to those who lead a non-sedentary life-style, especially if they are Muslims. (s. 788)

Currently Eritrea, including Bilinland, suffers through one of the longest and severest of armed conflicts in modern African history. Bilin peasants have moved or been forced from most of their hamlets, now largely abandoned and in ruins. The future of Bilin society depends upon the outcome of the Eritrean war, which in turn depends upon global strategic considerations beyond the ken of the average Bilin. (s. 166)

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