

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The question of the Ethiopian Tigray Conflict

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INTRODUCTION

Long-simmering tensions involving the federal administration and the leadership of the northern Tigray territory erupted in a military conflict in November of 2021. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a "law-and-order initiative" against domestic terrorists, yet it included large deployments of Ethiopian National Defense Forces and air strikes, which is far from a domestic law enforcement operation. Although federal troops had gained control of the region's capital and declared victory on November 28, the security situation in Tigray remains uncertain, and many observers are concerned about the likelihood of a long-running conflict. Furthermore, nearly half a million people have been displaced and are in desperate need of aid, essential infrastructure has been damaged, and credible allegations of brutality and war crimes continue to emerge from the region.

Tigray is one of 10 provinces in the region of northern Ethiopia, bordering to the north with Eritrea and to the west with Sudan. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had been the primary party in Ethiopia's ruling coalition for many years, but Abiy's election in 2018 indicated a change in the balance of power. This adjustment was made in an effort to address domestic concerns with political repression, questions about access to opportunities and resources, and the belief that an ethnic minority possessed disproportionate control and authority, as Tigrayans make up around 6% of Ethiopia's total population. However, the TPLF felt threatened by the personnel and political changes made by the new administration, thus it rejected to ally with the party that would have replaced the previous governing party. In spite of a federal decision to postpone elections in part because of the COVID-19 situation, the TPLF decided to hold its own regional elections in September of 2020. Following Tigray's holding of a regional election without the authorization of the federal government, tensions between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF began escalating even more. Since then, troops from the Ethiopian government and fighters from Tigray are engaged in combat over control of the country's northern Tigray province.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Tigray

Located in northern Ethiopia. Tigrayans, although representing the state's fourth biggest ethnic group, ruled Ethiopia politically and militarily for most of its historical past.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is a regional organisation and former Ethiopian governing party that has been classified as a terrorist group by Ethiopia's current ruling party.

Secession

The act of gaining independence and no longer being part of a nation, region, organization, etc.¹

Instability

The situation of turmoil and volatility inside a territory or nation. In this setting, Ethiopia displays political instability, which means that there is no clear set of authorities properly and democratically defending the people, as well as significant levels of corruption.²

Insurgency

A movement within a nation that seeks to overthrow the government; essentially, an insurgency is a rebellion.³

Extrajudicial killings

Extrajudicial killings, also known as extrajudicial executions, occur when someone in a position of authority kills someone without any legal process. Arbitrary deprivation of life, which can be carried out by militias, death squads, or other non-state entities, frequently targets political opponents, activists, or oppressed groups.⁴

¹Secession. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/secession>.

²Definition of INSTABILITY. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/instability>.

³"Insurgency - Definition, Meaning & Synonyms." Vocabulary.Com, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/insurgency>.

⁴"Extrajudicial Killings." OMCT, <https://www.omct.org/en/what-we-do/extrajudicial-killings>.

Federal government

The constitutionally established form of government based on the separation of powers among three branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch.⁵

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical context

Ethiopia, like many other African countries, has a lengthy history. Based on the former kingdom of Aksum, it was one of the world's first Christian states and one of the oldest civilizations on earth. With the monarchy of Ethiopia only temporarily subject to fascist Italy's control until being released by the Allied Powers in World War II, Ethiopia remained one of the few African states that had never undergone extensive colonization. Following the end of World War II, Ethiopia emerged as a significant advocate for the decolonization of Africa. Under the leadership of Haile Selassie I, who reigned as emperor from 1930 until his assassination in 1974, Ethiopia joined both the League of Nations and the United Nations. Additionally, he established the Organization for African Unity in Addis Ababa, making it the focal point of international collaboration in African affairs (now known as the African Union). Even though Ethiopia was once seen as the heart of African prosperity and unification, this ancient country is currently experiencing severe problems. Following the killing of Emperor Haile Selassie II and the installation of a new military regime, conflict erupted in the Ethiopian province of Tigray.

The formation of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in 1975 marked the beginning of the region's prolonged conflict with Ethiopia's then new administration. Today, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo (Coptic) Church, with its headquarters in Addis Ababa, whose religion is practiced by the majority of people who identify as Tigrayans. The Tigray people make up around 6% of Ethiopia's population and 50% of Eritrea's citizen population. And despite the ethnic and religious similarities among Tigrayans and the Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups (which together make up about 60% of Ethiopia's total population, language barriers and political feuds have led

⁵ *Federal-Government - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.Com.*

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/federal-government#:~:text=%2F%CB%8Cfed%C9%99r%C9%99l%20%CB%88%C9%A1%CA%8Cv%C9%99nm%C9%99nt%2F,branch%20and%20the%20judicial%20branch.>

to numerous disputes between the Tigray people and the central Ethiopian government, including the war that began in November 2020.

The Tigray Conflict's Deeper Roots

The foundation of the conflict is significantly deeper and closely linked to Ethiopia's political history. Before 1855, Ethiopia was a divided nation without a strong central government. This era, which began approximately in 1769, is referred in Amharic as the Zemene Mesafint, or "Age of Princes." Ethiopian monarchs were only figureheads at the time, "governing" from the country's capital of Gondar. The aristocrats were always at odds over territory and the right to crown the emperor in the capital. When Emperor Tewodros II (r. 1855-1868) launched a determined attempt to unify the nation under his control and destroy the decentralized Zemene Mesafint, the conflict came to an end.

The final and the most well-known emperor of Ethiopia was Haile Selassie. With his predecessors failing to create a united Ethiopia, Selassie's greatest accomplishment was successfully achieving in forming the unified country that Tewodros had envisioned. Selassie, who ruled the country from the capital Addis Ababa, held a disproportionate amount of power, with the only territory that remained essentially ungoverned by the national government in 1935 being Tigray. In an effort to further strengthen his hold on power and undermine the influence of local leaders, Selassie divided Tigray into eight districts in 1941. Since Selassie concentrated authority in the hands of Shewan and Amhara elites rather than Tigray's hereditary aristocrats, the majority of the population in Tigray was opposed to the reforms.

After the reforms, the first Tigrayan insurgency, first known as Woyane, which stood for resilience and cohesion, started in May 1943. In November 1943, the insurgency was suppressed with the help of the British Royal Air Force (RAF), with Selassie requesting that the RAF strike two Tigrayan towns, Mekelle and Corbetta. A second Woyane evolved into a 15-year struggle conducted by the TPDF against the Derg dictatorship (1974-1991). The present war in Tigray is the third Woyane.

Ethiopia's political structure

Ethiopia's political structure is essential to understanding how the conflict has progressed. The nation is organized as a federal parliamentary republic, with the prime minister serving as the head of government. Regionally, Abiy's priority has been the political adjustments at the heart of the dispute. For over 30 years, the Tigrayans ruled Ethiopian politics as the main ethnic community. That changed when Prime Minister Abiy undertook reforms and began to democratize the state. That was unacceptable for a well-entrenched, aggressive, determined, regionally motivated group. The Tigrayans desired to keep these privileges. They did not want

truce; rather, they sought the removal of the prime minister and the establishment of a federal government that would restore their dominance.

Events that triggered the conflict

Prior to the current prime minister's election in 2018, the state had complete control over national affairs, with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) constituting the majority of Ethiopia's ruling coalition.

Abiy's national election victory in 2018 marked the end of the Tigray People's Liberation Front's (TPLF) decades-long rule. During its rule, the TPLF implemented a series of political reforms that oppressed other ethnic groups while reinforcing its central authority. Abiy's aspirations for a culturally harmonious, undivided Ethiopia facilitated his rise to power, and he originally appeared to represent a significant improvement from the oppressive policies of the TPLF-dominated governing coalition. However, political tensions between the TPLF and the government increased throughout Abiy's first term, as Abiy's government disempowered the TPLF through widely praised liberal reforms.

In September 2020, following several postponements of governmental elections and the prolongation of Abiy's presidency, the Tigray State Council disregarded the national authorities and conducted regional elections, with TPLF candidates securing a majority of votes. Tigray officials warned ahead of the elections that any government intervention would be considered a "declaration of war."⁶ Furthermore, Tigrayan army troops began to resist the national army, subsequently joining the TPLF and, in November 2020, conducting a raid on a national army base to take weapons, sparking a military conflict between Tigray and the national government. The Tigray region's defiance spurred the Abiy Ahmed administration to conduct a complete attack on Tigray and perpetrate atrocities against the region's inhabitants, resulting in violations of human rights. Unlike the Tigrayans, Abiy Ahmed's goal has been to manage Ethiopia with a strong centralized federal government while repressing regional autonomy and/or opposition. Thereafter, Abiy condemned the Tigray local elections and labeled the TPLF a terrorist organization⁷.

Recent developments of the conflict

⁶ "War in Ethiopia." *Global Conflict Tracker*, <https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia>.

⁷ "Ethiopia PM Abiy Ahmed Calls on Civilians to Join Tigray War." BBC News, 10 Aug. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58163641

After unsuccessful cease-fire conversations, Abiy characterized the Ethiopian government's Mekelle operation, which began in November 2020, as a targeted offensive party marking officials in Tigray. Nonetheless, national troops began perpetrating extensive crimes against Tigray residents as soon as the attack began. A communications embargo during the start of the conflict halted reportage of the offensive, but the media has subsequently been able to present a more complete image of the horrors committed in Tigray through personal witness stories. Despite the fact that the attack swiftly grew into a much wider conflict, with civilians suffering the majority of the bloodshed, Abiy's administration refused appeals for mediation. Early in the fight, the Eritrean military joined the Ethiopian government's side, and despite months of denying their involvement, Abiy confessed Eritrean troops were in Tigray in spring of 2021.

Eritrea and the TPLF have a long history of hostility: Eritrea waged a decade-long independence war against Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s, while the TPLF was a core member of Ethiopia's governing coalition. Notwithstanding international pressure, Eritrean troops have shown no signs of departing. In June 2021, eight months after the government operation in Tigray started, Tigrayan armed forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) overthrew and took back Mekelle, asserting total authority while government troops allegedly immediately departed. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed described the government retreat as "strategic,"⁸ and subsequently called a temporary cease-fire in Tigray on humanitarian concerns, despite the fact that supply routes into Tigray remain blocked. After Abiy was re-elected in the national elections in July 2021, the TPLF disregarded the cease-fire and proclaimed the start of a new attack. The government labeled the nationwide elections as evidence of democracy, even though several opposing organizations avoided the elections, causing other member states to raise alarm about serious hurdles to a transparent and fair electoral procedure. As the violence spread into Afar and Amhara regions, the TPLF formed alliances with various armed organizations opposed to the national government. Eritrean soldiers appeared to re-position to Tigray, while Abiy called for all "qualified people" to participate in the combat against Tigrayan forces as a way of preserving Ethiopia's sovereignty and solidarity. Furthermore, in a sudden change of events, Abiy Ahmed was able to get weapons from Turkey, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), reversing the TPLF's victories and contradicting their characterization of their retreat as territorial readjustment. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian administration continues to deny mediation attempts and demands for a cease-fire, despite Sudan's offer to mediate the dispute between the state's administration and the TPLF. In addition, violence against ethnic minority groups seems to be on the rise throughout Ethiopia, increasing concerns about the country's chances for peace in a multiracial and divided state.

⁸"War in Ethiopia." Global Conflict Tracker, <https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia>.



Figure 1: Ethiopian map depicting the conflict's expansion

Impact of the conflict

Impact within the nation

Civilians have suffered greatly as a result of the fighting. Widespread hunger is swiftly spreading over the region as a result of the deliberate use of starvation as a warfare tactic; while communications shutdowns make it difficult to determine the real scope of the humanitarian disaster, with allegations of famine-related deaths already circulating with 400,000 people in the northern areas of the country suffering famine-like circumstances, and vital medication being unavailable to 80 percent of the population⁹. Strikes on innocent citizens and facilities have intensified, including a missile strike on a market in northern Tigray that killed more than fifty individuals. According to ongoing allegations, Ethiopian and Eritrean military units, along with regional military groups, are carrying out extrajudicial killings and sexual assault against Tigray residents. Due to the violence, around 1.7 million individuals are internally displaced across Tigray and the neighboring districts of Afar and Amhara and many more Tigrayans have fled Ethiopia to neighboring nations, particularly Sudan¹⁰. Those who have been relocated live in congested community facilities such as schools and are in need of food, access to healthcare,

⁹ GHRD. The Political Origins and Devastating Consequences of the Tigray Civil War. <https://ghrd.org/the-political-origins-and-devastating-consequences-of-the-tigray-civil-war/>.

¹⁰ Ibid

water, sanitation, and security. Nonetheless, several facilities, especially in Tigray, have not received food deliveries since the violence began. Thousands of Tigrayans have fled Ethiopia to neighboring nations, particularly Sudan, with millions more internally displaced.

International impact

With the political adjustments in 2018, the Horn of Africa showed prospects of political stability and peace. Yet, since the region is plagued by disputes and political instability that threaten both frail nations and regional pillars of stability, the possibility of further instability remains real and probable. Due to the Tigray conflict's expansion into the surrounding Afar and Amhara areas and the widespread displacement it has caused, with approximately 50,000 people seeking sanctuary in eastern Sudan, the Horn of Africa's peace and security are in danger¹¹. With a large number of Ethiopian citizens fleeing to Sudan, the nation may find itself accidentally entangled into the conflict. In Ethiopia, attempts to rebuild democratic reforms are at jeopardy, as are aspirations for political peace in the country. A prolonged armed conflict poses a threat to not just the country's political stability but also to the humanitarian situation, sovereignty, and the stability of the Horn of Africa as a whole.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Ethiopia

Since Mr. Abiy took office, significant changes have taken place in Ethiopia, Africa's longest sovereign nation. In his first statement as prime minister, Mr. Abiy called for political reform, national peace, and unity, with the demands of protesters who believed Ethiopia's political class had impeded the country's transition to democracy serving as the impetus for his agenda. For more than two decades, the political environment was dominated by an alliance of four ethnically oriented parties, with Tigrayans, who account for around 6% of the population, wielding dominance. Their party, the TPLF, conducted a conflict against a military dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s in an effort to take back control of the country. As a result of the party's success, it was able to hold the majority in the coalition government that was elected in 1991. While maintaining a firm hold on the centralized administration, the alliance granted independence to Ethiopia's provinces, earning criticism for allegedly suppressing political opposition. The coalition was therefore dissolved by Mr. Abiy in 2019; however, the TPLF declined to embrace his new Prosperity Party.

¹¹ Refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for. "UNHCR Begins Relocation of 50,000 South Sudan Refugees in Ethiopia before the Rains Come." *UNHCR*, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/3/550807656/unhcr-begins-relocation-50000-south-sudan-refugees-ethiopia-rains.html>.

Eritrea

Since the combat began in November 2020 in Ethiopia's Tigray area, the Eritrean military has played a key role in it. Thousands of troops were dispatched by Eritrea to aid the Ethiopian government troops in their battles with the Tigray People's Liberation Front. These initiatives have made the incredibly destructive dispute worse and longer-lasting. The significant improvement in ties between Asmara and Addis Ababa has led to a significant military dedication as well as economic and political assistance for Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Abiy and Isaias Afwerki, President of Eritrea, reached a peace agreement in July 2018 after nearly two decades of conflict resulting in a new period of peace and collaboration. Its decision to join the conflict was influenced in part by the presence of Eritrea's main opponent on the front line. There had been a troubled history of relations between the TPLF, which was Ethiopia's ruling party at the time, and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, since the 1970s which later resulted in a war between the two countries in 1998–2000.

The Ethiopian administration made a number of false claims to dismiss allegations that Eritrean soldiers were illegally present in Tigray. The Ethiopian government maintained its denial for a numerous months as Eritrean troops invaded Tigray and committed a wide range of horrific atrocities and violations of human rights against the citizens of Tigray, along with the destruction of infrastructure and extrajudicial executions of civilians. Eritrean military also made a substantial contribution to the growing starvation in Tigray by methodically starving the local populace by setting fire to farms, damaging water systems and agricultural equipment, and murdering animals.

Eventually, in March 2021, the Ethiopian government acknowledged the existence of Eritrean soldiers in Tigray and the Eritrean administration decided to withdraw its forces from the area after the global community acknowledged overwhelming proof of Eritrean participation and violations of human rights. However, despite American sanctions and the unified approval of a resolution mandating the removal of Eritrean forces from Tigray, this measure has not yet been carried out. Nearly a year after the departure agreement was broken Eritrean forces are still committing crimes in the Tigray.

Sudan

In less than a month since it began, the internal conflict in Ethiopia has forced close to 50,000 people into Sudan, triggering a complicated relief effort in a destitute area of the country. Concerns of instability in Ethiopia's northern Tigray area spilling over into Sudan were heightened, when five Sudanese troops were killed in what Khartoum officials described as an "attack" by Ethiopian troops within its territory. Since the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Ethiopian federal forces began battling, Sudan has increased its military deployment along its eastern border. However, Amharas ethnic group troops in Ethiopia, who support Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration, have also increased their involvement. These events have

occurred in long-disputed farms close to the frontier where refugees have been entering Sudan illegally. In 2020, Sudan's Prime Minister traveled to Ethiopia with what senior Sudanese representatives claimed was a mediation offer after security concerns prompted him to do so. Ethiopia deemed the offer unneeded after declaring victory against the TPLF on November 29, 2020, while the TPLF had declared that it would keep resisting the country's government. The fact that the offer of mediation was rejected and that an ambassador was subsequently called back only serves to highlight how complicated the ties in the area are, particularly those between Sudan and Ethiopia.

The United States of America

As a P5 member of the Security Council and one of the world's most influential nations with military strength all over the world, the United States' attitude has likely had and will continue to have an impact on the greater problem of instability in Tigray and its future. In 2021 the Biden administration called for a cooling down of tensions and a decrease in violence, while simultaneously denouncing the TPLF for launching missiles towards Eritrea's capital in an attempt to "expand the slaughter in Tigray."¹² In addition, the US government has established bilateral connections with key countries like Kenya to further examine the circumstances in Tigray and its impact on neighboring territories, after having previously expressed "great concern" about the humanitarian catastrophe in Ethiopia. Although the US has historically displayed Ethiopia as an essential ally in the Horn of Africa, the current government has publicly expressed its disapproval of the dispute in Tigray. In March 2021, the US Secretary of State denounced the "unraveling ethnic cleansings,"¹³ and in May further impose visa restrictions on Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders believed to be behind the conflict.

United Arab Emirates

Since the outbreak of the Tigray Conflict in November 2020, there have been reports of the UAE sending out combat drones to support the Ethiopian military. However, there is no proof to back up the frequently reported allegation that the aforementioned drones conducted flights over Tigray in November 2020 out of the Assab air station in Eritrea. That being said, it is possible that their operation explains a series of precise bombings targeting Tigray locations. The first indication that the United Arab Emirates had sent combat drones to Ethiopia surfaced in the summer of 2021, when aUCAV of the Emirati manufacturer was spotted being used in the Maychew region of Ethiopia's Tigray territory. A significant enhancement in the quality of the UAE's aid for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration would take place in November 2021, as the UAE delivered at least six UAVs with Emirati pilots to Harar Meda air force base. Indications

¹² Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "The Exemplary U.S. Sanctions Regime for Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict and Its Limitations." *Brookings*, 1 Oct. 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/10/01/the-exemplary-u-s-sanctions-regime-for-ethiopia-s-tigray-conflict-and-its-limitations/>.

¹³CNN, Jennifer Hansler. "Blinken: Acts of 'ethnic Cleansing' Committed in Western Tigray." *CNN*, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/10/politics/blinken-tigray-ethnic-cleansing/index.html>.

that the Ethiopian administration may surrender to the danger presented by Tigray troops may have been the motive for the United Arab Emirates Air Force's (UAEAF) quick dispatch of UAVs to Ethiopia.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

Médecins Sans Frontières or Doctors Without Borders is a non-governmental, global public health care humanitarian organization that has a distinction for providing healthcare in vulnerable and conflict-affected areas. Since 2021, teams from MSF have been nursing some of the afflicted individuals in Tigray. Increasing numbers of displaced individuals are sheltering in empty buildings and on construction sites in the northwest, close to the cities of Shire, Dansha, and Humera, where MSF workers could reach out and assist them. Together with employees from the Ministry of Health, MSF crews are operating health centers in southern Tigray and have resumed certain treatments at medical clinics in the towns of Hiwane and Adi Keyih. MSF staff in Hiwane and Adi Keyih offered 1,498¹⁴ health evaluations in December of 2021, and is providing help to the health facility in Adigrat, the second-largest community in eastern Tigray. The hospital, which serviced a community of more than a million¹⁵ people had largely halted operations due to the conflict at hand. In addition to their work in Tigray, MSF workers have been providing hospital services to hundreds of displaced persons along the Amhara region's border since November. Additionally, they have helped various healthcare institutions with essential aid and are additionally attending to the necessities of refugees from Ethiopia who have fled to Sudan.

African Union

Ever since the African Union (AU) took over from its predecessor, the Organization of African Union (OAU), in 2000, its main goals have been to promote democratic procedures and establish better leadership and economic growth in the African region. The African Union is the major regional body in charge of all African nations' relations and, along with other organizations such as the United Nations, they have worked hard to resolve the conflict. Formally, the African Union is continuing to support the Ethiopian governing party because it adheres to the principle that national governments should keep borders as stable and consistent as possible. The African Union also thinks the Ethiopian government's action is a move in the right direction to maintain the country's cohesion. Despite numerous attempts to hold peace discussions and negotiations,

¹⁴ *Tigray, Ethiopia: MSF Provides Medical Assistance to Vulnerable*. 11 Jan. 2021, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/article/tigray-ethiopia-msf-provides-medical-assistance-vulnerable>

¹⁵ *Tigray, Ethiopia: MSF Provides Medical Assistance to Vulnerable*. 11 Jan. 2021, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/article/tigray-ethiopia-msf-provides-medical-assistance-vulnerable>

the majority of the reconciliation and mediation plans put out by the members of the African Union were unsuccessful since neither side was ready to accept the peace proposals.

Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

The IGAD is a regional organization consisting of eight major East African nations -Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda- that is responsible for the coordination of corporations among member states regarding economic, political, and security matters. In December 2020 in Djibouti, the member states of IGAD including Ethiopia met up in Djibouti to discuss the instability in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and unanimously declared their supports for the Ethiopian government to maintain its constitutional orders, and also to grant border access for humanitarian aids, thus concurring the legal and political justification for the military actions carried out by the Ethiopian federal forces.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
18 February 1975	The Tigray People's Liberation Front is established as the primary force in opposition to the Derg administration.
April 2018	After months of anti-government rallies, Hailemariam Desalegn resigns, and Abiy Ahmed is appointed by the EPRDF for the next two years, until August 2020.
August 2020	The much awaited general elections in August 2020 are postponed by Abiy.
September 2020	Tigray conducts its own elections to choose its regional governors, in which 2.7 million people ¹⁶ voted.

¹⁶ Council, Pan-African. "Understanding the Tigray-Ethiopia War & Its Impact on the Horn of Africa and the African Union." *Pan-African Council*, 2 May 2021, <https://www.panafricancouncil.org/understanding-the-tigray-ethiopia-war-its-impact-on-the-horn-of-africa-and-the-african-union/>.

October 2020	Abiy reduces the funding for the Tigray Region and accuses the TPLF of having its own elections in defiance of the law.
3 November 2020	Northern leadership is taken over by the Tigray Defense Force.
4 November 2020	Abiy declares that a military operation will be launched since the TPLF has "gone too far"
7 November 2020	Eritrean forces entered Tigray after the Tigrayan administration was declared unconstitutional by parliament.
28 November 2020	While combat is still going on, Abiy proclaims military operations are "finished."
23 March 2021	Abiy acknowledges the existence of Eritrean forces after months of denying it, and authorities claim they murdered more than 100 residents in Axum.
2 July 2021	According to the UN, 400,000 individuals in Tigray are on the verge of famine.
October 2021	Tigrayans seize control of two significant Amhara regions, just some thousand kilometers north of Addis Ababa.
November 2021	Ethiopia announces a national emergency across the country.
20 December 2021	The insurgents claim to be retreating from Amhara and Afar and relocating to Tigray.

22 December 2021	Hopes for a potential truce are increased by the government's declaration that its soldiers won't move any farther into Tigray.
25 January 2022	Rebels from Tigray claim they are "obligated" to start fighting again in Afar.
24 March 2022	The government proclaims a "indefinite humanitarian ceasefire" to assist accelerate the supply of vital aid into Tigray.
1 April 2022	According to the UN, the first foreign assistance delivery in three months has arrived in Tigray's capital, Mekele.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Security Council press announcement regarding the situation in Ethiopia

The UN Secretary General's attempts to address the crisis in Ethiopia were applauded by the Security Council members. In the programmed press announcement regarding the ongoing situation, the Security Council demanded the upholding of worldwide humanitarian principles, risk-free and unrestricted humanitarian accessibility, the restoration of essential services, and further recommended the expansion of humanitarian aid. Further demands included ending violence, negotiating a durable truce, and establishing the foundations for the beginning of extensive national negotiations in Ethiopia in order to address the issue and provide the groundwork for unity and prosperity across the whole nation. Finally, the Security Council participants reaffirmed their support for the African Union's responsibility in settling disputes and preserving continental security and stability. In this regard, they noted the African Union Council Chairperson's remark from November 3rd of 2021 about the circumstances in Ethiopia and additionally voiced their approval for Olusegun Obasanjo, the African Union's High Commissioner for the Horn of Africa, by praising his approach and endeavors to negotiate a truce and a speedy, humane end to the hostilities.

Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia (A/HRC/47/L.20/REV.1)

In a resolution on the condition of human rights in Ethiopia's Tigray area, the Council voices deep concerns over allegations of severe abuses of human rights, breaches of global humanitarian law, and violations of international refugee law reportedly perpetrated by all stakeholders in the territory since the commencement of the military conflict on November 4, 2020. The document also demands for the immediate and transparent withdrawal of Eritrean forces from the Tigray region. Additionally, the Council emphasizes the necessity to hold those responsible accountable and acknowledges the significance of record preservation in achieving accountability. The Council calls on all participants to uphold their commitments under global humanitarian law to defend and help safeguard all civilians, including relief workers, residential property, and all healthcare staff and aid workers solely engaged in medical responsibilities, along with their forms of transportation and supplies and to take all necessary measures to provide and enable safe, prompt, and unhindered access to aid for those in need.

3 MAY 2016: 7685TH MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL S/RES/2286 (2016)

The Security Council reaffirms its main duty for maintaining international stability and security, as well as the importance of promoting and ensuring adherence to the principles and regulations of international humanitarian law. Keeping in mind that under global law, strikes on health facilities and locations where the sick and injured are gathered, given that they are not military targets, as well as missile strikes on structures, supplies, medical units, transport, and employees using the recognisable symbols of the Geneva Conventions in accordance with international law are all considered war crimes. The resolution, which was co-signed by more than 80 Member States, strongly condemned violent acts, assaults, and intimidation against those who are injured or ill, medical professionals, humanitarian workers who are only engaged in providing medical treatment, as well as attacks against their form of transport and other equipment as well as healthcare facilities. It also noted the long-term effects of such attacks on the general population and the healthcare systems of the nations involved.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Sanctions imposed by the USA

The Biden administration has made it a top priority to stop a civil war from spreading and its regional repercussions as well as to end the humanitarian situation in the Tigray area. In order to achieve a ceasefire, U.S. officials have spent several months pressing both Abiy and the TPLF in close-quarters negotiations. However the supposed "humanitarian truce" that Abiy announced in June following the defeat of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) in Tigray, was anything but that. Following the supposed truce the U.S. administration declared progressive policy on September 18; further sanctions will be imposed on the involved parties in the next weeks until they provide unrestricted humanitarian entry and start a peace negotiation. The

sanctions regime's impressive design stays clear of common flaws. First off, it provides legal justifications for the distribution of humanitarian aid. This critical provision realises the errors of the Obama government, which was preoccupied with restricting terrorist groups of material and financial assistance, which discouraged humanitarian NGOs from delivering food during Somalia's 2011 famine, resulting in tens of thousands of fatalities.

European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2021 on the humanitarian situation in Tigray (2021/2902(RSP))

The European Council remarked that despite the Ethiopian government's announcement of a ceasefire on June 28, 2021, fighting has persisted as a result of the parties of the dispute continuing to launch new assaults. As a result, the conflict has extended to the regions of Afar and Amhara. The European council also noted that the tremendous tragedy that has come from this conflict is completely preventable, while also emphasizing that it has sparked a crisis that could have severe implications in the Horn of Africa. Keeping all relevant factors in mind, the European Council demanded an instant end to armed conflict from all parties, which is a requirement for improving the humanitarian crisis in Tigray and other areas, particularly Afar and Amhara; it also requests for an immediate restoration of constitutional order and the creation of a framework for observing the ceasefire. The European Council also highlights the significance of Ethiopia for the stabilization of the Horn of Africa and the entire continent, and it notes that despite offers from the EU as well as other foreign organizations to help de-escalate the conflict, Ethiopia has declined. Additionally, it calls for a comprehensive national political discussion to be led by Ethiopia and include participants from all the troubled areas, which include Tigray, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, Oromia, Sidama, Somalia, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), and Gambella, in order to find a resolution to the crisis.

African Peace and Security Architecture efforts

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is an internationally recognized and sponsored African Union organization. It is made up of five sections that work together to address and control conflicts: the Peace and Security Council, the Panel of Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the Standby Forces, and the Peace Fund. However, the effectiveness of the APSA has been called into doubt as a result of the ongoing violence in Ethiopia and the African Union's disregard for the Tigray conflict. Days after Abiy declared war on Tigray, the Tigrayan administration pleaded with foreign leaders, notably AU Chairperson Cyril Ramaphosa, to assist Ethiopia in finding a diplomatic settlement. A special envoy was suggested by the African Union to facilitate negotiations among the federal government and the regional administration of Tigray around two weeks into the violence. Soon after, they dispatched Joaquim Chissano, the previous governor of Mozambique, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the former leader of Liberia, and Kgalema Motlanth, the former leader of South Africa, to Addis Ababa in an effort to find a peaceful settlement. However, Abiy was unwilling to make concessions to end the murderous conflict in

Tigray, therefore their attempts at negotiation were unsuccessful. Abiy issued a command for "the last phase of rule of law enforcement operations"¹⁷ barely a few days before the three arrived in the capital, completely rejecting the mediation efforts and undermining the African Union's guiding principles. Later that month, in August 2021, the African Union renewed its past failed mediation attempts using another special envoy, previous Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo. However, the African Union's measures remained completely ineffective, much like its prior ones, demonstrating the institution's weakness.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Resolving the humanitarian crisis at hand

As the federal administration refuses contact with the deposed Tigrayan administration, it should at least take precautions to prevent alienating Tigrayans anymore. That means, first and foremost, preventing a further humanitarian disaster that would aggravate local feeling and narrow the window for political settlements. In order to provide complete access to life-saving aid, the government should immediately give in to international requests that have been reiterated by temporary officials in Tigray. In addition, following the EU's example, other nations, including the U.S., ought to come together to demand that aid organizations be granted complete access to Tigray, by reaching an agreement with Tigrayan forces.

Ensuring transparent media access

Diverse accounts of what happened and the reality on the ground are presented by the federal government, Tigray's exiled leaders, humanitarian organizations, and activists, which widens rifts and prevents coordinated action. To address this issue, the national government should enable media to cover from inside Tigray and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to conduct additional investigations into all alleged crimes, while also allowing the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to undertake its own investigations. The central government should also give free access to Ethiopian civil community organizations, in order to hold those responsible accountable.

Preventing direct military involvement from other member states

Another crucial problem that has to be handled is the Amhara and Eritrean soldiers. The conflict is being exacerbated by the Amhara's occupation of land within Tigray and Tigrayan resentment at Eritrea's involvement. Addis Ababa should weaken Amhara control over south and western Tigray in order to make room for Tigray's interim government while limiting Eritrea's

¹⁷ Support, Tech. "How the African Union Failed Tigray." *Omna Tigray*, 26 Apr. 2022, <https://omnatigray.org/how-the-african-union-failed-tigray/>.

involvement. In order to facilitate Amhara-Tigray discussions on this matter, a federal boundary panel should speed its work evaluating Amhara territorial claims. This strategy should be supported by African and international stakeholders, with the EU adding pressure on Asmara and perhaps reducing funds if Isaias does not evacuate his forces.

De-escalation procedures that could be carried out during a temporary cease-fire

Civilians must be protected, and the regulations of conflict must be followed, by all sides to the confrontation. A suitable ceasefire agreement should list the activities that are permitted, relying on the fundamental international commitments but also providing additional guarantees to show a commitment to peace since breaches of these laws and apparent crimes had been committed by both sides. Many cease-fire agreements call for both parties to report any planned military movements and resupply operations, pledge to demilitarize certain areas, and disclose the condition of specific military equipment and their locations in order to increase credibility between belligerents. Combining many of these actions can help define a wider ceasefire and give the parties more assurance about one another's intentions.

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