



African Union Peace & Security Council



THS MUN 24

THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL

STUDY GUIDE

AGENDA - DISCUSSING THE HUMANITARIAN
CRISIS IN THE TIGRAY REGION OF ETHIOPIA WITH
SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE GRAND RENAISSANCE
DAM

FREEZE DATE :
20TH SEPTEMBER ,2022



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EXECUTIVE BOARD'S ADDRESS

Greetings Delegates!

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to this session of the African Union Peace and Security Council! The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) is a vital organ of the African Union, responsible for promoting peace, security, and stability across the continent. Established in 2004, it addresses conflicts and crises through preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping missions, and post-conflict reconstruction. The AUPSC plays a crucial role in coordinating efforts to combat terrorism, enforce arms control, and support democratic governance and human rights in Africa.

This year, the agenda of the AUPSC committee is to discuss the humanitarian crisis that took place in the Tigray region of Ethiopia with special emphasis on The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The delegates will delve into the conflict that had escalated in Tigray, a situation that had involved ethnic-regional militias, the Ethiopian government, and the Eritrean military. This conflict had not only resulted in the deaths of over 600,000 people in the northern Tigray region but also had sparked a severe humanitarian and refugee crisis, with millions fleeing to neighbouring countries for safety. The situation in Ethiopia deteriorated rapidly, with civilians bearing the brunt of the violence and chaos. The conflict was one of the deadliest in recent world history and drew international attention for a preponderance of alleged war crimes, human rights abuses, and ethnic cleansing in Tigray.

This committee will be fast paced and the crisis will be discussed in great detail. The committee will be focused on the humanitarian crisis, Human Rights Violations, Humanitarian Access and Aid, the Famine Risk, the refugee crisis and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will also be discussed. This war had disturbed the stability of all neighboring countries. The escalation of the war would only lead to destruction and death that is not confined to just the Tigray region but also all the countries around it.



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Delegates should be aware that this committee is scheduled to convene on September 20, 2022. Any events occurring after this date cannot be referenced or mentioned by the delegates during the committee sessions. Furthermore, any political, economic, or administrative changes that occur post-September 20, 2022, will not be considered. Delegates are expected to devise creative, collaborative, and practical solutions to address the crisis the continent is facing. The Executive Board holds the authority to determine all updates and events that occur after this date. We hope this guide offers a comprehensive overview of the agenda and prepares delegates for the committee sessions. In addition to the information provided, further research on the topic and individual country policies is strongly encouraged to ensure that delegates have an enriching experience in the committee.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD,

KRITIKA JHUNJHUNWALA AND ISHITA BOTHRA
(CO-CHAIRPERSON) ,

VINAMRAA DHANUKA AND ARISHYA DUTTA
(CO -VICE CHAIRPERSON)

THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL.



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ABOUT THE AGENDA

On 2nd October 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that “a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes” with more than two million people displaced, and reportedly 300,000 more people displaced in Afar and Amhara. Some 1.7 million people are estimated to be facing food insecurity in Afar and Amhara.

More than 20 million people in Ethiopia, including 5.2 million people in Tigray, are in need of aid due to the conflict that started at the end of 2020. Since the violence began in early November 2020, refugees have been arriving at remote border points that take hours to reach from the nearest towns in Sudan. Many are women and children. Most were left with barely any belongings and arrived exhausted from walking long distances over harsh terrain.

Alongside the Ethiopian government, the Eritrean government is also prevalent in this conflict. Ethiopia’s young new prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, has played the starring role in healing the rift between the neighboring countries. He said Ethiopia would accept a disputed border decision at the root of the current conflict. Then he traveled to Eritrea’s capital, Asmara, to meet with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. The two embraced on the airport tarmac, and later released a joint statement declaring that the war had ended and “a new era of peace and friendship has been opened.”

The freeze date of the committee is September 20, 2022. Any information used in the committee after the freeze date will not be considered. Several African and Western Countries have tried their best to resolve the crisis that is looming over the African continent. A crisis that has the power to destabilize the Horn of Africa if it spills outside the Ethiopian borders.



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HISTORY OF ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA

Eritrea (precolonial and colonial rule):

Eritrea is located on the Red Sea in the Horn of Africa, Eritrea has long been an important center of trade, with many bustling ports along its coast. The land which now constitutes Modern Eritrea was colonized and taken under the control of several African and international powers. The Ottoman Empire was one of them. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Ottoman Turks (15th–19th century) landed on the coast of Eritrea, carving away a region from the Bahre Negash's domain. Then came the rule by Italy. Eritrea had no valuable resources for exploitation and was not a wealth-producing colony for Italy. In fact, the colony was subsidized by the Italians, an extraneous factor that gave the local economy an artificial glow. Investment in education for Eritreans was negligible. There were very few schools for them, and these were limited to the primary level. Also, Eritreans were not employed in the colonial service except as laborers and soldiers. As preparations for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia got underway in the mid-1930s, several thousand Eritreans were recruited to serve in the invading army. Italy's invasion and occupation of Ethiopia beginning in 1935—including Ethiopia's annexation and incorporation into Italian East Africa in 1936—marked the last chapter in Italian colonial history. The chapter came to an end with the eviction of Italy from the Horn of Africa by the British in 1941, during World War II. The following decade, during which Eritrea remained under British administration, was a period of intense political and diplomatic activity that shaped the future of Eritrea.

Adoption of the federal scheme:

In 1950 the United Nations (UN), under the prompting of the United States, resolved to join Eritrea to Ethiopia within two years. The proposed federation would provide Eritrea with autonomy under its own constitution and elected government. Elections to a new Eritrean Assembly in 1952 gave the Unionist Party the largest number of seats but not a majority; the party thus formed a government in coalition with a Muslim faction. The Eritrean constitution, prepared by the UN in consultation with Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, was adopted by the Eritrean Assembly on July 10, 1952, and ratified by Haile Selassie on August 11. The act of federation was ratified by the emperor on September 11, and British authorities officially relinquished control on September 15.



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Failure of the federal scheme:

The federal scheme was short-lived, mainly because the imperial government in Addis Ababa was unwilling to abide by its provisions. First, the Eritrean constitution sought to establish an equilibrium between ethnic and religious groups. It made Tigrinya and Arabic the official languages of Eritrea, and it allowed local communities to choose the language of education for their children. Furthermore, the Ethiopians were anxious to eliminate any traces of separatism in Eritrea, and to that end, they harassed the leaders of the independence movement until many of them fled abroad. With the collaboration of their Unionist allies and in express violation of the constitution, they also suppressed all attempts to form autonomous Eritrean organizations. Political parties were banned in 1955, trade unions were banned in 1958, and in 1959 the name Eritrean Government was changed to "Eritrean Administration" and Ethiopian law was imposed. Eventually, even Ethiopia's Eritrean allies were alienated—by crude intervention in the running of the Eritrean Administration, by financial disputes between Asmara and Addis Ababa, and by mounting pressure on the Eritreans to renounce autonomy. The federation was already dead when, on November 14, 1962, the Ethiopian parliament and Eritrean Assembly voted unanimously for the abolition of Eritrea's federal status, making Eritrea a simple province of the Ethiopian empire. Soon afterward Tigrinya was banned from education; it was replaced by Amharic, which at the time was the official language of Ethiopia.

At the July 1–5 1991 conference that constituted Ethiopia's transitional government, a senior U.S. delegation, and observer EPLF, an agreement was reached in which Ethiopia acknowledged Eritrea's right to organize a referendum. The Eritrean people voted uniformly in favor of independence in April 1993. The UNOVER observing mission confirmed this and on 28th May 1993, the United Nations formally admitted Eritrea to its membership. However, the relations between the two sides continued to be hostile with clashes occurring frequently between the now independent nations. This includes the Ethiopian-Eritrean border aggression that took place between 1998-2000 killing over 70,000 people.



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Ethiopia - Eritrea border relations :

The confrontation began when armed Eritrean troops crossed the de facto border at Badme. According to the Ethiopian government, Eritrean troops entered Ethiopia in violation of an existing agreement that prohibited the crossing of the border by armed military personnel. Ethiopian police reminded the Eritrean soldiers of this agreement and asked them to leave their weapons if they wished to enter Ethiopia. The Eritrean troops refused to comply and opened fire on the Ethiopian police, killing two police officers. The Eritreans claim that Badme is their territory based on maps from the Italian colonial era. Attempts to peacefully resolve the conflict were allegedly met with further territorial aggression and harassment by the Ethiopians until the Eritrean troops were called to protect the interests of the local people. Ethiopia acknowledged that there are problems with the demarcation of the border between the two countries. The bilateral border commission had been established to resolve the border conflicts, but the Eritrean military takeover of Badme moved the dispute from diplomacy to armed conflict. 1998-2000 - Eritrean-Ethiopian border clashes turn into a full-scale war which leaves more than 95,000 people dead. In 2000 Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace accord that envisaged troop withdrawals and UN peacekeepers. A boundary commission is given the task of defining the border; it awards Badme to Eritrea, but Ethiopia's continued occupation of the town is a major source of friction. In 2007, Eritrea pulled out of the regional body IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) as IGAD member states backed Ethiopian intervention in Somalia. In 2009, December the UN imposed sanctions on Eritrea for its alleged support for Islamist insurgents in Somalia.



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Eritrea-Ethiopia relations in 2018:

When Abiy Ahmed was declared the Prime Minister of Ethiopia in 2018, he brought about a complete revolution in Ethiopia's foreign relations. He accepted the commission's 2002 boundary decision and put an end to all animosity between the two nations by signing a peace agreement. He agreed to end the two-decade-old "frozen war" in July and this decision was greeted with tremendous optimism in both countries and by international observers. Prior to this, all previous governments of Ethiopia, including TPLF had rejected any prospect of peace between the two neighbors, thus making this decision by Abiy Ahmed something that had a colossal impact on Ethiopia's politics. It had the potential to boost economic growth and development. An alliance with Eritrea would help Ethiopia politically as well as it may help Ethiopia navigate tense discussions with Egypt on the use of the Nile River waters. Both aspects are critical as the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), and the hydroelectric power that it will generate, could elevate the standards of living in Ethiopia. This alliance is of strategic importance to Eritrea as well. It is a gateway for Eritrea to get away from the isolation they faced due to the United Nations Security Council imposed travel bans, an arms embargo, and economic restrictions against Eritrea in 2009 based on concerns that Eritrea was funding the Somali terrorist organization called Al-Shabab. Abiy Ahmed had filed a report requesting the UN to remove these sanctions.



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ABIY AHMED

Abiy Ahmed (born August 15, 1976, Beshasha, Ethiopia) is an Ethiopian politician who became prime minister of Ethiopia in 2018. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2019 for his efforts toward attaining peace and international cooperation, particularly for his work to end his country's long-running border dispute with neighboring Eritrea.

Early life :

Abiy was born in Beshasha, a town in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. His father, Ahmed Ali, was Muslim, and his mother, Tezeta Wolde, was Christian. Abiy is a Pentecostal Christian.

Abiy fought against the Derg (Dergue) regime, which ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991, and later served in the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, where he achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel. While he was in the military, he earned a bachelor's degree in computer engineering in 2001 from Microlink Information Technology College in Addis Ababa. In 2007 he was made head of the Information Network Security Agency, the Ethiopian government's organization responsible for cybersecurity.

Nobel peace prize :

The most significant achievement of Abiy and the EPRDF-led government was dramatic progress made in the attempts to find peace with Eritrea. Abiy announced on June 5, 2018, that Ethiopia would adhere to the terms of the 2000 peace agreement that had been intended to end the border war with Eritrea that had begun in 1998. This included accepting and implementing the 2002 ruling that demarcated the border between the two countries, which Ethiopia had previously rejected. The next month, Abiy went to Eritrea to meet with that country's president, Isaias Afwerki. The two leaders agreed to reestablish ties between the two countries in the areas of diplomacy, trade, communications, and transportation as well as to reopen their borders. In 2019 Abiy was the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace for his efforts to resolve Ethiopia's border conflict with Eritrea



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As the prime minister :

Abiy Ahmed became the prime minister in April 2018, the first Oromo to lead his country. The Oromo, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, had never been in prominent positions of power. Grievances of their economic and political exclusion drove anti-government protests across the country.

Women were not left out of his progressive agenda. Abiy showed his commitment to gender equality by appointing women to half of his cabinet. Ethiopia's parliament even appointed the country's first female president, Sahle-Work Zewde, and the nation's first Supreme Court chief, Meaza Ashenafi, was sworn into office. The end of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea catapulted Abiy and Ethiopia into a different status – and redefined the Horn of Africa nation as a regional powerhouse.

Abiy's administration has also faced criticism over its handling of ethnic tensions and political dissent in the country. In particular, the Tigray conflict, which began in November 2020, has raised concerns about human rights violations and a humanitarian crisis in the region. The conflict began after the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the regional political party that had dominated Ethiopian politics for decades, was ousted from power by the federal government. The TPLF launched a military offensive against federal forces, which led to a full-scale conflict.



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TIGRAY PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) holds a significant place in Ethiopian history, particularly in the context of the country's struggles and political transformations. Founded in 1975, the TPLF emerged as one of the key players in the armed struggle against the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam and the Derg government, which ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991.

The roots of the TPLF can be traced back to the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which were fueled by grievances against the central government's neglect of the Tigray region and its people. The TPLF's founding members, including Meles Zenawi, Seyoum Mesfin, and Aregawi Berhe, were driven by a desire to address the socio-economic disparities and political marginalization experienced by the Tigrayan population.

During the Ethiopian Civil War, which lasted from 1974 to 1991, the TPLF, along with other rebel groups, fought against the oppressive regime of the Derg, to establish a more inclusive and democratic political system in Ethiopia. Employing guerrilla tactics and mobilizing support among the Tigrayan peasantry, the TPLF gradually expanded its influence and military capabilities.

Following the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, the TPLF played a central role in the formation of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of ethnically based political parties. Meles Zenawi, a founding member of the TPLF, became Ethiopia's Prime Minister and led the country until he died in 2012. The TPLF continued to govern Ethiopia after Zenawi's passing until 2018, when protests, especially among the Oromo population, prompted the government to appoint Abiy Ahmed Ali as the next Prime Minister. However, by 2020, ethnic relations within Ethiopia once again began to deteriorate.

Multiple delays of long-promised national elections and the extension of Abiy Ahmed's term as prime minister in June 2020 drew indignation from the TPLF. The Tigray State Council's choice to hold local elections in defiance of federal orders further inflamed tensions. The elections ultimately solidified the TPLF's control of the region.

This was followed by the launching of military operations by the Ethiopian Government against the TPLF, which has led to intense fighting, the killing of civilians, and an exodus of refugees into Sudan. The TPLF has conducted missile attacks on Amhara province as well as on Asmara, the capital of neighboring Eritrea, in response to the Government's offensive. The escalation has now brought Eritrea into play, rendering this an international conflict rather than simply a local one, and one which will therefore be all the more difficult to resolve.



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PROSPERITY PARTY

The Prosperity Party is a political entity in Ethiopia that emerged in 2019, following the dissolution of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which had been in power for nearly three decades. The EPRDF, a coalition of ethnically based parties, had governed Ethiopia since overthrowing the communist Derg regime in 1991. The formation of the Prosperity Party marked a significant shift in Ethiopia's political landscape.

The history of the Prosperity Party is deeply intertwined with the political developments in Ethiopia over the past few decades. The EPRDF's rule was characterized by a mix of authoritarianism and federalism, with power centralized in the hands of a few ethnic-based parties. However, growing discontent with the EPRDF's governance, including allegations of human rights abuses and ethnic favoritism, led to widespread protests across the country, particularly from 2015 onwards.

In response to these protests and mounting pressure for political reform, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came to power in April 2018, initiated a series of sweeping reforms aimed at democratization and reconciliation. One of the key steps in this process was the decision to dissolve the EPRDF and create a unified national party, which resulted in the formation of the Prosperity Party in December 2019.

The goals of the Prosperity Party are rooted in Prime Minister Abiy's vision of a united, prosperous, and democratic Ethiopia. The party emphasizes national unity, economic development, and political inclusion as its core principles. It seeks to move away from the ethnic-based politics of the past and promote a more inclusive form of governance that transcends ethnic divisions.

Prior to the Ethiopian Civil War, which began in November 2020, the Prosperity Party faced several challenges in consolidating its power and implementing its agenda. The transition from the EPRDF-led system to the new political dispensation was marked by tensions and resistance from some quarters, particularly from ethnic-based parties that felt marginalized by the shift towards a more centralized political structure.



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Despite these challenges, the Prosperity Party has continued to pursue its goals of national reconciliation and economic development. It has implemented various reforms aimed at opening up the political space, promoting human rights, and fostering economic growth. However, the outbreak of the Ethiopian Civil War has posed a significant threat to these efforts, plunging the country into a protracted conflict that has caused immense suffering and instability.



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THE ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT

Between 2020 and 2022, Ethiopia fought a war with militants from its northernmost region of Tigray, then under the control of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The conflict was one of the deadliest in recent world history and drew international attention for a preponderance of alleged war crimes, human rights abuses, and ethnic cleansing in Tigray. The continued restrictions on humanitarian access forced more than two million people to flee their homes, with thousands fleeing into Sudan leaving at least 2.3 million in need of assistance. Multiple delays of long-promised national elections and the declaration of an extension on Abiy Ahmed's first term as prime minister in June 2020 drew indignation from the TPLF. The Tigray State Council's choice to hold local elections in defiance of federal orders further inflamed tensions. The elections ultimately solidified the TPLF's control of the region.

On November 4, 2020, Abiy accused Tigrayan troops of attacking a federal military camp in the Tigrayan capital of Mekelle and ordered Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) troops north. This began a military operation known as the Mekelle Offensive, which escalated quickly as the ENDF pushed further into Tigray, and the Tigray Defense Force, or TDF, ramped up their response. Abiy first framed the offensive as a targeted operation against TPLF leadership. A communications blackout implemented at the outset of the conflict shuttered coverage of ground conditions, but media and UN officials began sounding the alarm about improper treatment of civilians, especially ethnic Tigrayans, by December 2020.

Government attacks and restrictions on the media and free expression increased. In January, government forces shot dead Tigrayan journalist Dawit Kebede Araya in Mekelle. In May, Sisay Fida, a journalist with Oromia Broadcasting Network, was killed in western Oromia. Journalists and outspoken public figures reporting or critiquing rights abuses linked to the Tigray conflict faced intimidation, expulsion from the country, and arrest.

Ethiopia's neighbor and former adversary, Eritrea, intervened in the conflict militarily on the side of the Ethiopian government. After months of denying their presence, in spring 2021, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed admitted that Eritrean troops were fighting in Tigray. Between November 2020 and January 2021, Eritrean forces and Tigrayan militia alternatively occupied Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps in Tigray and committed killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, forcible disappearances, and looting against scores of the 20,000 Eritrean refugees living in these camps.



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In 2021, the United States characterized the war as an ethnic cleansing against Tigrayans, and some NGOs raised concerns about the potential of genocide. During the war, the TPLF army used child soldiers in Ethiopia as a shield, positioning them on the front lines of the war zone. The TPLF denies the proven accusations, stating that the children are only used to collect and gather weapons left behind.

Tigrayan forces retook the regional capital of Mekelle from the ENDF in June 2021. A month later, Addis Ababa announced the results of a national parliamentary election—which Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed won in a landslide. The TPLF boycotted the election, and opposition leadership in parliament accused the Abiy government of banning poll observers in some states.

Later in the summer of 2021, Abiy called on all capable citizens to join the war against Tigrayan forces as the conflict began to spill over into the Afar and Amhara regions, growing closer to Addis Ababa. In November 2021, Tigrayan troops and allied Oromo militants marched within eighty-five miles of the capital but were forced back north by ENDF forces.



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HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL CRISIS

According to a 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Ethiopia published by the U.S. Department of State, both militias and the government are using child soldiers in Ethiopia in the current conflict. Some children are kidnapped; others are threatened or manipulated into joining. Child soldiers are not only those on the front lines; they are also cooks, spies or most recently suicide bombers. Girls who are recruited are subject to gender-specific vulnerabilities such as sexual assault, sex trafficking and unwanted pregnancies.

Refugee crisis

Ethiopia hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations, including approximately 800,000 refugees from South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Eritrea. Most refugees live in camps managed by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Ethiopia's Refugee and Returnees Services (RSS). Eritrean refugees, fleeing severe human rights abuses in their home country, largely settled in Tigray due to its proximity to Eritrea and cultural similarities. However, since the conflict in Tigray began in November 2020, these refugees have faced severe challenges and abuses.

Eritrean forces crossing into Ethiopia targeted Eritrean refugees, viewing them as traitors for fleeing conscription. In January 2021, Eritrean troops attacked and destroyed the Hitsats and Shimelba camps, which housed about 20,000 refugees. Many refugees were killed, kidnapped back into Eritrea, or scattered. Tigrayan forces also attacked Eritrean refugees in retaliation for atrocities committed by Eritrean soldiers, resulting in killings, rapes, and looting. Human Rights Watch reported that these attacks constituted evident war crimes.

The conflict and associated humanitarian blockade have exacerbated the refugees' suffering. Camps like Mai Aini and Adi Harush have frequently been cut off from food, medicine, and clean water, leading to starvation and preventable deaths.

Humanitarian agencies often face blockades that prevent them from delivering essential supplies. In January 2022, UNHCR reported being unable to reach these camps for weeks, finding refugees in dire conditions upon arrival, with more than 20 preventable deaths due to a lack of medicine and health services. Multiple displacements have further complicated the situation. After the destruction of the northern camps, many refugees moved repeatedly within Tigray or sought refuge in Addis Ababa, only to be forcibly returned to conflict zones.



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Those who managed to reach other camps, like Mai Aini and Adi Harush, continued to face precarious conditions, including intimidation, harassment, and lack of assistance. Even in new camps being established in the Amhara region, refugees face continued risks of violence and discrimination, as they are often mistaken for Tigrayans or associated with Eritrean soldiers.

Some Eritrean refugees have fled to Sudan, joining a larger refugee population. However, the journey is perilous, with increased risks of trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. Sudan's capacity to assist refugees is also strained by its political and economic challenges. Refugees in Sudan face risks of trafficking, armed recruitment, and sexual violence, with some camps prone to severe weather risks like flooding and windstorms.

Many refugees, desperate to escape the dire conditions, risk dangerous smuggling routes to reach northern Africa and Europe, facing further dangers of rape, torture, extortion, and enslavement.

Famine

Introduction

"There's famine now in Tigray." The world's most senior humanitarian official, UN emergency relief coordinator Mark Lowcock, said these frank words on the situation in the northern Ethiopian region on Thursday.

His statement - at a roundtable discussion ahead of the G7 summit - drew on the authoritative assessment of the crisis by the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

In a report, it estimated that 353,000 people in Tigray were in Phase 5 (catastrophe) and a further 1.769 million were in Phase 4 (emergency).

The famine devastating Tigray, a region in northern Ethiopia, stands as a stark reminder of the catastrophic consequences of conflict and political instability. As the war between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rages on, millions of people are on the brink of starvation, trapped in a dire humanitarian crisis. Despite the international community's mobilization to address food shortages in other conflict-affected regions, such as Ukraine, the plight of Tigrayans has largely gone unnoticed. This essay delves into the multifaceted dimensions of the famine in Tigray, shedding light on the deliberate weaponization of hunger, the complex political dynamics fueling the conflict, the inadequate international response, and the urgent need for long-term solutions to address the root causes of the crisis.



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Starvation as a Weapon of War

The conflict in Tigray has seen the deliberate use of hunger as a weapon by the Ethiopian government and its allies. Beginning in November 2020, the Ethiopian government laid siege to the region, restricting the flow of essential goods, including food, in an attempt to force the Tigrayan population to surrender. Reports have emerged of Ethiopian forces, along with Eritrean troops, blocking food aid deliveries, destroying farmlands, and impounding critical agricultural resources. The result has been a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with 4.6 million Tigrayans, or 83% of the population, facing food insecurity as of January 2022.

Humanitarian Crisis and International Response

Despite mounting evidence of famine and widespread suffering in Tigray, the international community's response has been woefully inadequate. Limited access for humanitarian organizations and government restrictions have hindered efforts to deliver lifesaving aid to the region. In August 2022, the United Nations managed to deliver humanitarian cargo to Tigray, but the aid fell far short of meeting the population's needs. Meanwhile, attention and resources have been disproportionately focused on other global crises, such as the war in Ukraine, leaving Tigrayans to suffer in silence.



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WAR CRIMES

Introduction:

The conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, has unfolded amidst a backdrop of profound human suffering and egregious violations of international humanitarian law. Since its outbreak in November 2020, the region has been engulfed in a maelstrom of violence, characterized by widespread atrocities perpetrated against civilians, including massacres, sexual violence, and the deliberate destruction of infrastructure and basic services. Armed actors, including the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), Amhara forces, and Tigrayan rebel groups, stand accused of committing grave war crimes and crimes against humanity, with reports detailing a litany of abuses ranging from indiscriminate killings to systematic sexual violence.

The conflict has exacted a heavy toll on Tigray's civilian population, resulting in untold loss of life, displacement, and profound trauma. Despite mounting international condemnation and calls for accountability, the violence shows little signs of abating, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis in the region. As the conflict persists, urgent action is needed to halt the bloodshed, protect civilians, and facilitate the delivery of life-saving assistance to those in need.

In this context, a comprehensive examination of the war crimes and atrocities perpetrated in Tigray is imperative to shed light on the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe and galvanize concerted efforts to address its root causes. This report seeks to provide a detailed overview of the most egregious violations committed during the conflict, drawing on credible sources and eyewitness accounts to underscore the urgent need for immediate action to end the suffering and hold those responsible to account.

Crimes Against Humanity:

The conflict in Tigray has seen widespread attacks on civilians, constituting crimes against humanity. Innocent people have been targeted with violence, resulting in immense suffering and displacement. Reports indicate that hundreds of civilians have been killed, and many more have been subjected to various forms of violence, including sexual assault and torture. The scale and severity of these crimes underscore the urgent need for accountability and justice.



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Wartime Sexual Violence:

Reports of wartime sexual violence have surfaced, implicating multiple armed groups, including the ENDF, EDF, Amhara forces, and Tigrayan rebel forces. Women and girls have been subjected to rape and other forms of gender-based violence. According to testimonies, sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war, causing profound physical and psychological trauma to the survivors. The extent of such atrocities highlights the urgent need for protection and support for survivors.

Ethnic Cleansing:

Allegations of ethnic cleansing have emerged, with targeted attacks against the Tigrayan population. Forced displacement and destruction of livelihoods have contributed to the removal of Tigrayans from their lands. Thousands of Tigrayan civilians have been forcibly evicted from their homes, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the region. Such actions constitute grave violations of international law and demand immediate attention from the international community.

Massacres and Killing of Civilians:

The conflict in Tigray has been marked by numerous massacres and indiscriminate killings of civilians, resulting in staggering loss of life and widespread devastation. The Axum massacre, which occurred in November 2020, saw Ethiopian and Eritrean forces allegedly killing hundreds of civilians in a brutal assault on the city. Similarly, the Debre Abbay massacre in May 2021 and the Mahbere Dego massacre in July 2021 resulted in the deaths of scores of innocent people, including women, children, and the elderly. These massacres constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law and demand urgent action to bring the perpetrators to justice. The deliberate targeting of civilians and the use of excessive force against unarmed populations must be condemned unequivocally by the international community, and those responsible must be held accountable for their actions.



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Removal of Basic Services:

The conflict has led to the removal of basic services, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Tigray. Access to essentials such as food, water, and healthcare has been severely restricted, leaving civilians vulnerable to dire conditions. The deliberate targeting of infrastructure essential for the delivery of humanitarian aid violates international humanitarian law and constitutes a grave breach of human rights.

Bombings:

Bombing raids and airstrikes have targeted civilian areas, causing civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure. Such attacks constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law and endanger the lives of innocent civilians. The indiscriminate nature of bombing raids and airstrikes underscores the urgent need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution to the conflict.



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TIMELINE OF THE CONFLICT

November 4, 2020: Prime Minister Abiy orders troops to respond to an attack on federal army camps that he blamed on the TPLF, which denied this. The fighting was an outcome of months-long tensions between the sides. In September 2020, Tigray had held regional elections in defiance of Addis Ababa which postponed the polls until August due to COVID-19. As a result, the federal government called the vote illegal and started withholding social welfare funds from Tigray.

November 9: The war intensifies as at least 600 civilians are killed in a massacre in the town of Mai Kadra. With telephone and internet communication lines cut, information was hard to obtain and verify. Abiy says the operation will be over “soon” as the fighting escalates with thousands of people killed so far and tens of thousands displaced.

November 14: The TPLF fires rockets into Asmara, the capital of neighboring Eritrea that has been supporting the federal government. TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael also says his forces have been fighting Eritrean troops “on several fronts” in the days before. The 10-day conflict leads to tens of thousands of refugees fleeing into neighboring Sudan, describing the horror of intense fighting, including horrific killings. The United Nations warns of possible war crimes in Tigray. The relations between Ethiopia and Sudan are on edge with the incoming refugees as long standing territorial claims between both sides are deadlocked.

November 28: Abiy announces that military operations in Tigray have been “completed”. However, fighting continues in parts of Tigray.

January 27, 2021: The US calls on Eritrea to “immediately” withdraw its troops who have been fighting in Tigray. But Ethiopia’s government denies their presence in the country.

February: Amnesty International says Eritrean soldiers killed “hundreds of civilians” in November in the holy city of Axum in Tigray. More reports of atrocities emerge, with civilians accusing Eritrean forces of carrying out massacres and systematic rape.

March 10: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemns acts of “ethnic cleansing” in Ethiopia’s embattled Tigray region, as he calls for “full accountability” and the departure of troops from neighboring Eritrea and other fighters.



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March 23: After months of denying Eritrea's involvement in the war, Abiy finally admits that neighboring troops entered Tigray, suggesting that they may have been involved in atrocities against civilians. The next day, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) says Eritrean soldiers massacred more than 100 civilians in Axum in November. The findings by the government-affiliated but independent body corroborate separate investigations by Amnesty and Human Rights Watch.

March 26: Abiy says that Eritrea had agreed to withdraw its forces from Tigray.

April 15: The UN's top humanitarian official, Mark Lowcock, says there is no evidence of Eritrean troops' withdrawing from Ethiopia.

April 22: The UN Security Council finally issues its first joint statement on the continuing crisis, expressing "deep concern" about allegations of human rights violations, including reports of sexual violence against women and girls. It also calls for "a scaled-up humanitarian response and unfettered humanitarian access" to address humanitarian needs, including for people in the embattled region who need food assistance.

May 24: The US State Department announces it is imposing economic and security sanctions on Ethiopia, as well as visa restrictions on current or former Ethiopian and Eritrean government officials and members of their security forces, as well as Amhara regional forces and TPLF members.

May 26: US President Joe Biden calls for a ceasefire and an end to "large-scale human rights abuses" in Tigray.

June 10: The UN and international aid groups say more than 350,000 people in Tigray are facing famine, with millions more at risk.

June 21: Ethiopians vote in a crucial parliamentary election taking place against the backdrop of war and famine in Tigray.

June 28: Ethiopia's government declares a unilateral ceasefire in its northern Tigray region as the TPLF reportedly takes control of more territory after recapturing the regional capital, Mekelle.

July 3: More than 400,000 people in Ethiopia's Tigray are now suffering the effects of famine and 1.8 million others are on the brink, acting UN aid chief Ramesh Rajasingham says.



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July 10: Ethiopia's governing Prosperity Party wins the most seats in the country's parliamentary election, assuring Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of a second five-year term in office.

August 10: Abiy issues a call for all eligible civilians to join the armed forces amid the ceasefire his government declared in June, as fighting raged in multiple regions of Africa's second-most populous nation.

August 13: Biden sends his special envoy for the Horn of Africa to Ethiopia to push for an end to increased fighting that has worsened fears of an unfolding humanitarian disaster.

August 26: As fighting continues in the Tigray region, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission says that more than 210 people have been killed across several days of ethnic violence in Ethiopia's tense Oromia region.

August 27: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says "a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding before our eyes" as he warns the Security Council the conflict in Ethiopia has spread beyond the Tigray region.

September 30: Ethiopians in three regions where elections had been delayed head to the polls to vote for their representatives, with one area also voting on whether to form its own regional state. On the same day, Ethiopia's government orders the expulsion of seven senior United Nations officials from the country for "meddling" in its internal affairs.

October 4: Abiy is sworn in for a new five-year term as Ethiopia's prime minister as his government faces a host of challenges, including a months-long conflict in the northern region of Tigray.

Month of October: Fighting between both sides intensifies as the Ethiopian federal government launches air raids for several weeks throughout the Tigray region.

November 2: Ethiopia declares an immediate nationwide state of emergency, telling citizens to prepare to defend the capital, as fighters from Tigray threaten to march towards the city.

November 4: One year since the conflict started, regional and Western powers call for an immediate ceasefire as the fighting continues.



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November 12: Ethiopia's conflict-torn Tigray region is under a "systematic blockade", Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the World Health Organization (WHO) director-general says, warning that people were starving to death and dying from a lack of access to medicine.

November 17: Since the state of emergency started two weeks earlier, at least 1,000 people, mostly ethnic Tigrayans, have been imprisoned in cities across Ethiopia, the United Nations says.

November 24: Prime Minister Abiy goes to the front lines to lead his troops in the battle against Tigrayan forces, promising victory.

November 28: Police arrest a freelance video journalist working for the Associated Press after his return from a reporting trip.

December 16: Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch report that armed forces from Ethiopia's Amhara region have stepped up killings, mass detentions and expulsions of ethnic Tigrayans in neighboring western Tigray.

December 20: Tigrayan forces say they have withdrawn from neighboring regions in northern Ethiopia, a step towards a possible ceasefire after 13 brutal months of war.

January 7, 2022: The Ethiopian government announces that it will pardon and release some of the country's most high-profile political detainees, including opposition figure Jawar Mohammed and senior Tigray party officials.

January 13: "Nowhere in the world are we witnessing hell like in Tigray," WHO's chief Tedros says, as a blockade prevented medicines and other life-saving supplies from reaching the northern region.

January 28: More than a third of people in the embattled Tigray region are suffering from "an extreme lack of food" following 15 months of fighting, WFP reports. It also sounds an alarm about rising hunger in the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions.

February 15: Ethiopia's parliament votes for an early end to a six-month state of emergency, declared when rebel Tigrayan forces were threatening to march on the capital, Addis Ababa.



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March 11: At least 750 civilians were killed or executed in Ethiopia's Amhara and Afar regions in the second half of 2021, the EHRC says.

March 24: Ethiopia's government declares "an indefinite humanitarian truce effective immediately", saying it hoped to hasten the delivery of emergency aid into Tigray.

March 25: Tigrayan fighters agree to a "cessation of hostilities", a turning point in the nearly 17-month war in northern Ethiopia.

April 1: Trucks carrying aid enter territory controlled by Tigrayan forces for the first time since December 15, the WFP says on Twitter.

April 25: Tigrayan rebels leave the neighboring region of Afar, a TPLF spokesperson says, as the Afar police commissioner reports that rebels remain in several districts within the region.

May 17: Ethiopia and the World Bank sign a pact for a grant of \$300m to assist reconstruction and recovery in conflict-hit areas, the finance ministry says, as the unilateral ceasefire continues.

May 20: Tigrayan rebel forces say that they will release 4,000 prisoners of war as part of an amnesty.

August 2: The US and European Union envoys for the Horn of Africa urge Ethiopia's government to resume essential services in Tigray which is struggling to cope with food shortages and no access to basic utilities since June 2021.

August 17: The federal government proposes a formal ceasefire agreement be reached as soon as possible to continue basic services to the northern region.

August 24: The ceasefire ends as fighting erupts between both sides around the town of Kobo. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says he is shocked by renewed fighting and appeals for an immediate ceasefire.

September 1: As fighting intensifies again, Ethiopian and Eritrean government forces launch an attack on Tigray, targeting rebel forces.

September 11: Tigrayan rebels say they are ready to take part in peace talks led by the African Union (AU), removing an obstacle to potential negotiations with the government to end almost two years of fighting.



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GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), formerly known as the Millennium Dam, is located in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia, on the Blue Nile River, which is located about 40 kilometers east of Sudan. The project is owned by the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCO). Construction of the dam started in April 2011 after the \$4.7 billion engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract was awarded to Italian contracting giant Salini Impregilo (currently Webuild).

The Ethiopian government had claimed the dam will offer major benefits to Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan—however, there has long been a conflict over water rights among these three riparian countries of the Eastern Nile Basin, and tensions seem to have escalated in 2011 when Ethiopia began construction of the GERD, in the absence of any agreement with downstream Egypt. A series of talks since then have largely failed to produce a consensus among the concerned countries, with tensions rising again after Ethiopia announced its intention to begin filling the dam in July 2020.

The Eastern Nile Basin is of critical geopolitical importance to the Nile's overall hydro-political regime. The Blue Nile is Ethiopia's largest river, with high potential for hydropower and irrigation. Ethiopia argues that developing this resource is crucial to its economic development, and to overcoming poverty and famine; which have plagued the country in the past. Ethiopia has the basin's most suitable locations for hydropower production, and its damming of the Blue Nile would significantly increase Sudan's potential for irrigated agriculture.

The unilateral decision taken by Ethiopia to build the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in 2011 represented a major political challenge to the 1959 Agreement. It signifies that Egypt's de facto veto power on major upstream dams has been broken. Furthermore, political instability in Egypt played an important role in Egypt's inability to resist—as the announcement of the project coincided with the resignation of President Mubarak during the Arab Spring.

The GERD has the potential to act both as a driver for conflict, but also for cooperation. It provides clear benefits to all three riparian nations, such as flood control, reduced flood damages and sediment control. Moreover, with GERD, Ethiopia opts for a “hydropower” expansion strategy on the Blue Nile, and not an “irrigation strategy”. This is good news for Egypt and Sudan as hydropower means little actual water withdrawal.



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However, the filling regime and operational methods of GERD will affect Egypt, in particular through its impact on the operation of its Aswan High Dam (AHD) which aims at mitigating the high variability of the Nile River flow. Egypt could run short of water if the operation of the GERD is not carefully coordinated with that of the AHD. Over-year storage facilities upstream in Ethiopia will allow Sudan to increase its water use—while this means new opportunities to develop extended irrigation-based agriculture for the Sudanese, it also represents a new threat for Egypt's current Nile water utilization.

All three countries have a vested interest in a properly operated dam. Egypt wants control and guarantees for its share of Nile waters. Ethiopia needs regional customers for its hydropower to ensure the economic feasibility of the GERD. Sudan's agricultural and hydropower interests align with those of Ethiopia while it has a strong interest in not alienating its 'big brother' and northern neighbor, Egypt.

In March 2015, a 'Declaration of Principles' was signed by the leaders of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, setting the foundations for an initial cooperation. However, this nascent hope for a mutual understanding was short lived; trilateral talks mediated by the United States and World Bank from November 2019 to February 2020 collapsed as Ethiopia rejected a binding agreement with Egypt and Sudan on the filling and operation of the GERD.

In June 2020, tensions escalated when Ethiopia declared its intent to fill the dam in July without an agreement, which again led to Egypt and Sudan requesting UNSC intervention on the matter. In response, Ethiopia threatened military force to defend the dam and protect its interests. A more recent trilateral meeting mediated by the African Union in mid-July, however, appeared to diffuse the situation with all three countries reaching a major common understanding.



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FINANCIAL AID

The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the northern Ethiopia response efforts. The U.S. has provided more than \$995 million in humanitarian assistance to northern Ethiopia since the crisis began, including more than \$885 million through USAID and nearly \$110 million through the U.S. Department of State. The UK has been an overseas development assistance (ODA) donor to Ethiopia over the last four years. Our overall ODA allocations have been: £300 million in 2019-20, £254 million in 2020-21, £134 million in 2021-22 and £75 million in 2022 in humanitarian assistance.

HUMANITARIAN AID

Before the Tigray war started, the Tigray Emergency Food Security Assessment by the UN World Food Programme found out that 15% of the Tigrayans were food insecure. Within 15 months of the conflict, a rise of 68% was noticed resulting in 4.3 million Tigrayans facing malnutrition.

Locals say food prices have risen between 200 to 400 percent, eroding the purchasing power of households and making food even more difficult to access. The world witnessed one of the biggest famines ever faced without foreign aid. For months the Ethiopian government continued blocking major access points to Tigray, leaving the population without needed access to international food assistance.

The United Nations was only able to deliver humanitarian cargo on August 22 and 23, and the aid was woefully insufficient; at the time, more than four million people were facing severe hunger in Tigray. Prime minister Abiy Ahmed stated that aid was being transported to the Tigrayans during the war but the TPLF denied such statements mentioning that no resources were provided. As of September 20th, TPLF members said that no aid had reached the Tigray region and that the four main road corridors remained blocked. The flow of aid into the Tigray region became problematic after fighting broke out in November 2020.

There were periods when international aid agencies had access - between July and December 2021 and between April and August 2022.



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But there have been months when there's been very limited or no access for humanitarian aid and staff into the region as the flow was affected by fighting along delivery routes, multiple roadblocks and vehicle checks, and damage to key infrastructure. Foreign actors supporting aid including The United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the Ethiopian Government were the most important and contributed the most of all. +1 million death toll, +5.4 million people in need of aid currently in Tigray.



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INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONS

USA- The United States of America will be present in the committee as an observer nation. The United States and Ethiopia share a long-standing and important partnership based on mutual interests in promoting peace, stability, and economic development. The United States has maintained diplomatic relations with Ethiopia since 1903. The United States is the largest bilateral donor in Ethiopia. Since 2020, the United States has provided an estimated \$3.16 billion in humanitarian assistance in response to the conflict as well as an ongoing drought. The United States spent approximately \$1.93 billion in FY 2022.

In September 2021, the US announced that it was prepared to bring sanctions against any parties responsible for prolonging the conflict or obstructing humanitarian access.

Eritrean forces joined the war on the side of the Ethiopian government and have been accused of some of the conflict's worst abuses. They were sanctioned by the US in November 2021.

The United States was one of the first non-African countries to criticize Ethiopia for involving Eritrea in the conflict and allowing them to commit several war crimes against the civilians back in December 2020.

CHINA- China will be present in the committee as an observer nation. China and Ethiopia share bilateral and diplomatic relations with China supporting Ethiopia in playing a greater role in its regional and international affairs.

Strong Chinese economic engagement has resulted in Beijing becoming Ethiopia's top trading partner. However, concerns exist about the sustainability of Ethiopia's estimated \$13.7 billion of Chinese debt. This debt liability further heightens China's stake in Ethiopia. Chinese economic, political, and security efforts appear to have paid off, with Abiy describing China as "the most reliable friend and the most cherished partner of Ethiopia."

Ethiopia is on a path that would certainly damage substantial Chinese economic interests both within the country and beyond its borders.

China has been a key supporter of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government in the face of pressure from Western countries over alleged human rights violations committed by Ethiopian forces in Tigray.



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China essentially also voted against a probe by a UN team, stating that this action would be a violation of Ethiopia's sovereignty and intervention in Ethiopia's internal affairs.

However, reports of China selling chemical weapons to the Ethiopian Government have also surfaced.

FRANCE- France will be present in the committee as an observer nation. The diplomatic relations between France and Ethiopia were strengthening before the onset of the civil war.

In Ethiopia, France is divided between business and defense of human rights. France calls on the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to unconditionally resume peace talks under the auspices of the African Union. Ensuring access to humanitarian aid to populations affected by the conflict and restoring basic services in the northern part of the country are priorities.

The urgent thing now is to ensure that humanitarian access routes and basic services are restored in all the regions affected by the conflict, particularly Tigray. France stands ready to facilitate aid delivery and support for the people affected by the conflict.

UK- The United Kingdom will be present on the committee as an observer nation. Over the centuries, Ethiopia has enjoyed close economic, diplomatic, and cultural relations with the United Kingdom.

The UK urged all parties to the conflict to guarantee unfettered humanitarian access by immediately ceasing hostilities. The UK also called on the Ethiopian Government to urgently restore services to Tigray and the TPLF to enable the seized fuel to be used for aid distribution and critical services.

The UK believed that the only way to resolve this conflict is to reinstate the cessation of hostilities and immediately begin political negotiations. They support the African Union's mediation efforts to this end and urge a redoubling of these efforts to avert further escalation.



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RUSSIA- Russia will be present in the committee as an observer nation. In 1943, Ethiopia and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations. Since then, great power competition and evolving political and economic interests have shaped the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union, and now Russia.

Russia's presence in Ethiopia is scant compared to other countries.

As the Tigray war continued, Russia signed a security partnership with Ethiopia.

Ethiopia abstained from voting on the U.N. resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March.

ERITREA'S INVOLVEMENT

Reports that Eritrea was involved in the war started circulating early in the conflict.

On 29 November 2020, the Times reported claims by the TPLF that Eritrea was "wading into the conflict by deploying troops against them". The involvement of Eritrean troops operating in late November 2020 in the Ethiopian city of Axum, Tigray. It identified a series of human rights and humanitarian law violations, including the killing of hundreds of civilians, in which it said the Eritrean troops had been involved.

In March 2021, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed confirmed the involvement of Eritrean troops in the conflict, having previously denied their role over several months.



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POINTERS TO DELEGATES

To conclude the Executive Board expects all delegates to be versed with the basic conflicts and stakeholders in the situation along with knowledge of the intricacies of foreign relations. We expect the delegates to strictly adhere to their respective foreign policies and refrain from violating it over the course of the committee.

We expect the delegates to go through the entire study guide as an overview and research deeply into the conflict with other reliable resources.

The executive board will be looking forward to unique solutions throughout the committee as well as fruitful debate .

Possible mod caucus to be discussed in committee :

- Discussing and implementing humanitarian aid as soon as possible.
- The conflicts arising due to the GERD possible ways to solve this .
- The ongoing war in the tigray region and discussing on foreign involvement
- Discussing the overspill of refugees in the neighbouring countries .
- Solutions to curb the crisis .