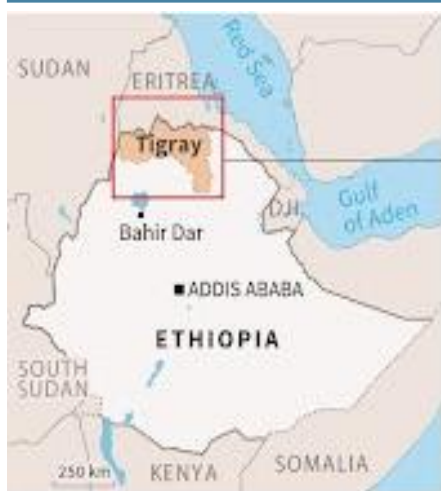




A TIMELINE OF THE TIGRAY CONFLICT



Compiled by Peter Danssaert
21 February 2022



Since 4 November 2020, when conflict erupted, troops fighting in support of the federal government have committed widespread rape against ethnic Tigrayan women and girls. The perpetrators include members of the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), the Amhara Regional Police Special Forces (ASF) and affiliated militia, and Fano, an informal Amhara vigilante group. “Given the context, scale, and gravity of the sexual violence committed against women and girls in Tigray, the violations amount to war crimes and may amount to crimes against humanity” (Amnesty International (2021): [“I don’t know if they realized I was a person”](#). [Rape and other sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, AFR 25/4569/2021, 11 August 2021](#)).

1991: An uprising by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ended decades of repressive military rule by the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia (the Derg) and brought an end to an unequal centralised rule in Ethiopia. The EPRDF was a coalition of four regional political groups, with three representing the major ethnic groups – the dominant Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) – together with the Southern Ethiopian

People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM). The EPRDF championed multicultural federalism and greater autonomy to over 80 ethnic groups of Ethiopia.

1995: After the May 1995 Ethiopia was restructured into a federation of nine regions created along linguistic and ethnic lines, but in the following decades the autonomy of the regions greatly diminished. In years that came perception grew amongst some Ethiopians that the Tigrayans were dominating economic and political life, while the Oromo were perceived to be

marginalised. This gave way to grievances towards the TPLF and Tigrayans in general (The International Institute for Strategic Studies (2020): *The Armed Conflict Survey 2020*, Routledge; see also T. Lyons (1996): "Closing the Transition: The May 1995 Elections in Ethiopia", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 121-142).

This was despite the consistent high performance of economic development Ethiopia achieved for nearly two decades under the EPRD leadership and PM Melese Zenawi in particular (QuartzAfrica (2020): "Ethiopia's economic miracle ride is set to turn into a bumpy road", 4 February 2020).

2 April 2018: Abiy Ahmed (Oromo Democratic Party) sworn in as prime minister. Shortly thereafter began to reform the country. The philosophy behind the reforms are found in his book "Medemer" ("coming together"), being the reconciliation of national unity with ethnic diversity (BBC (2019): "Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed: Inside the mind of this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner", 10 December 2019). In years to come political and economic reforms led to violent unrest. Ahmed's Ethiopian nationalism clashed with regional ethnic nationalism. Violent civil unrest in Oromia Region, Sidama zone, and Walaita zone was heavily handedly suppressed by government forces. (Amnesty International (2020): [Human Rights in Africa – Review of 2019](#), AFR 01/1352/2020; Amnesty International (2021): [Amnesty International Report 2020/2021](#), POL 10/3202/2021)

9 July 2018: Peace agreement signed between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

1 December 2019: The Prosperity Party (PP) launched by prime minister Abiy Ahmed. The PP was envisioned as successor of the EPRDF,

to be a single national political party through the merger of various ethnic/regional parties: the Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP); Benishangul-Gumuz Democratic Party (BDP); Oromo Democratic Party (ODP); Amhara Democratic Party (ADP); Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM); Somali Democratic Party; Gambela Peoples Democratic Movement (GPDM); and Harari National League (HNL). The Tigray People's Liberation Front refused to join. The TPLF saw "the formation of the Prosperity Party as a move to end the Federal form of government and introduce a unitary government". An accusation denied by PP officials. (Ezega News (2019): ["The EPRDF Officially Ends; The Prosperity Party Begins"](#), 26 December 2019).

March 2020: The Ethiopian parliamentary elections, scheduled for August, were postponed indefinitely due to the coronavirus outbreak. The delay prompted a backlash from opposition leaders. Many of them suspected that Abiy's Prosperity Party would try to rig or postpone the elections. TPLF said it would press ahead with polls in Tigray as per the Ethiopian Constitution. The PM warned that "illegal elections" would "harm the country and the people". (The Economist (2020): ["Ethiopia is entering constitutional limbo"](#), 16 May 2020) (Voice of America (2020): ["Ethiopian Opposition, Prime Minister Accuse Each Other of Power Grab"](#), 8 May 2020)

7 May 2020: Abiy Ahmed addressed the nation. He harshly criticized the individuals and organizations that suggested the establishment of a transitional government once the term of the current government expired. He warned those who attempted to take hold of power through illegal means. He said, "we will be forced to take action against

those who attempt to hold fake elections." (Borkena (2020): "[Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Warns Opposition Leaders, explained postponed election](#)", 7 May 2020) "Young people," he said, "should not die, mothers should not cry, and houses should not be demolished just so politicians can take power" (Voice of America (2020): "[Ethiopian Opposition, Prime Minister Accuse Each Other of Power Grab](#)", 8 May 2020).

25 July 2020: "The federal government has no intention and interest to attack its own people," the PM said on 25 July. But pro-Abiy hardliners, including former army General Kassaye Chemed, did call for military intervention in Tigray. "The government should plan well, and they should be attacked," he said in an interview with the government-affiliated Walta TV. (BBC (2020): "[Why there are fears that Ethiopia could break up](#)", 5 September 2020)

September 2020: Regional elections were held in Tigray, and over 2.7 million Tigrayans elected the TPLF as a regional government (Reuters (2020): "Regional party wins vote in Ethiopia's Tigray, challenging federal government", 11 September 2020).

25 September 2020: The Addis Standard reported that the Deputy Chief of Staff & Military Operations Division Head of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) had said that the army would be "forced to take actions against anyone who claims to violate the constitution." (Addis Standard (2020): "[Army issues stern warning against anyone planning to violate constitution](#)", 25 September 2020).

2 November 2020: Statement by the EU High Representative: "All parties as well as Ethiopia's neighbours must act to reduce

tension, eliminate inflammatory language and abstain from provocative military deployments" (EU High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy (2020): "[Ethiopia: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell on the latest developments](#)", 2 November 2020).

4 November 2020: The Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), Amhara Special Forces (ASF) and allied militia, and the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) launched, what Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed dubbed a "law enforcement operation", against the Tigray regional government. Reportedly "to restore the rule of law and the constitutional order". The Ethiopian government justified the military offensive in Tigray with claim that TPLF forces attacked the Northern Command in the night of 3 November. The Ethiopian government pointed to a TV interview on Tigrayan media in which a prominent TPLF supporter, said a pre-emptive strike was "imperative". "Should we be waiting for them to launch an attack first? No," said Sekutire Getachew, in the interview. The TPLF denied a "pre-emptive" strike on ENDF's Northern Command, and claimed the story was concocted as a pretext to attack Tigray (France24 (2020): "[The midnight confrontation that helped unleash Ethiopia's conflict](#)", 27 November 2020).

Early November 2020: The Telegraph reported on indiscriminate artillery shelling and rocket fire on Humera town killing numerous civilians. Refugees from Humera said they were attacked by knife-wielding militiamen and vigilante groups from the neighbouring Amhara region, who had joined forces with federal troops and cut people to death as they tried to escape (The Telegraph (2020): "[After the bombs they](#)

[attacked with knives, claim Ethiopians fleeing peace prize winner's war](#)", 23 November 2020; The Associated Press (2021): ["'Our Season': Eritrean troops kill, rape, loot in Tigray](#)", 28 May 2021; OHCHR (2020): ["Provide unhindered access to whole of Tigray to protect civilians, Bachelet urges Ethiopia"](#), 22 December 2020).

9 – 10 November 2020: Mass killing of Amharas in Maikadra by militias loyal to TPLF (Amnesty International (2020): ["Investigation reveals evidence that scores of civilians were killed in massacre in Tigray state"](#), 12 November 2020).

12 November 2020: Statement by the United Nations Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect: The Special Advisers observed that ethnic violence in Ethiopia had reached an alarming level over the past two years. The two senior UN officials noted that stigmatization of certain ethnic groups, including the Tigray, Amhara, Somali as well as the Oromo among others has significantly contributed to ethnic intolerance in the country. "The ongoing ethnic rhetoric, hate speech, incitement to violence and attacks prevailing in Ethiopia constitutes a serious threat to internal and regional stability and should immediately be addressed to avert further escalation of widespread violence," the Special Advisers warned. (United Nations (2020): ["UN High-level Officials Express Deep Concern Over Escalating Ethnic Tensions in Ethiopia"](#), 12 November 2020).

13 November 2020: Eritrean soldiers committed atrocities against civilians in Zalambessa (Reuters (2021): ["'Don't shoot,' Ethiopian father begged Eritrean soldiers, daughter says"](#), 26 March 2021).

21 November 2020: The Telegraph reported on mass killings of civilians by Eritrean forces in Idaga Hamus (The Telegraph (2021): ["Eritrea's brutal shadow war in Ethiopia laid bare"](#), 8 January 2021).

21 – 23 (?) November 2020: The Telegraph reported on mass killings of civilians by Eritrean forces in Adigrat (The Telegraph (2021): ["Eritrea's brutal shadow war in Ethiopia laid bare"](#), 8 January 2021).

23 November 2020: Encirclement of regional capital Mekele. **Amnesty International** voiced concern about potential civilian casualties after military spokesman Colonel Dejene Tsegaye appeared on state-run TV and said: "We want to send a message to the public in Mekelle to save themselves from any artillery attacks and free yourselves from the junta ... After that, there will be no mercy" (Amnesty International (2020): ["Protect civilians in Mekelle offensive"](#), 23 November 2020).

24 November 2020: Statement UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: "I remind all parties to the conflict that the obligation to respect international law is not conditional on the other party's behaviour. All parties to the conflict are bound to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law as applicable. The protection of civilians is paramount." Reports continued to emerge of arbitrary arrests and detentions, killings, as well as discrimination and stigmatization of ethnic Tigrays. More than 40,000 people had fled from Tigray province into neighbouring Sudan since 7 November (OHCHR (2020): ["Ethiopia: Threat of major hostilities in Mekelle seriously imperils civilian lives – Bachelet"](#), 24 November 2020).

28 November 2020: After heavy shelling Mekele fell into federal hands. Abiy Ahmed declared victory over TPLF.

28-29 November 2020: Tigrayans massacred by Eritrean forces in Axum (Amnesty International (2021): "[Eritrean troops' massacre of hundreds of Axum civilians may amount to crime against humanity](#)", 26 February 2021).

30 November 2020: Tigrayans massacred in Maryam Dengelat by Eritrean forces (CNN (2021): "[Massacre in the mountains](#)", 22 March 2021).

9 December 2020: Statement UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: "We have corroborated information of gross human rights violations and abuses – and serious violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate attacks that have resulted in civilian casualties and destruction of civilian objects, looting, abductions and sexual violence against women and girls. We are also concerned by reports of forced recruitment of Tigrayan youth to fight against their own communities... Elsewhere in Ethiopia, there are numerous reports of ethnic profiling of Tigrayans, including in Addis. We have reports of dismissals from jobs – including in the civil service – harassment of Tigrayan journalists and hate speech against Tigrayans. Such discriminatory actions are deeply unjust but are also fostering divisiveness and sowing the seeds for further instability and conflict. I urge the Government to take immediate measures to halt such discrimination" (OHCHR (2020): "[Exceedingly worrying and volatile situation in Ethiopia – Bachelet](#)", 9 December 2020).

22 December 2020: Statement UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: "We have received allegations concerning violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, including artillery strikes on populated areas, the deliberate targeting of civilians, extrajudicial killings and widespread looting" (OHCHR (2020): "[Provide unhindered access to whole of Tigray to protect civilians, Bachelet urges Ethiopia](#)", 22 December 2020).

5 January 2021: Civilians massacred by ENDF in Debre Abay (France24 (2021): "[Video of Tigray massacre lifts lid on 'war without photos'](#)", 10 March 2021).

8-10 January 2021: Civilians massacred by ENDF in Bora town and surrounding villages (Tghat (2021): "[The Bora Massacre in southern Tigray by the Ethiopian army](#)", 12 March 2021).

15 January 2021: Extrajudicial executions of Tigrayans in Mahibere Dego by ENDF (Amnesty International (2021): "[Tepid international response to Tigray conflict fuels horrific violations over past six months](#)", 4 May 2021).

15 January 2021: Statement by the EU High Representative: "The situation on the ground goes well beyond a purely internal 'law and order' operation. We receive consistent reports of ethnic-targeted violence, killings, massive looting, rapes, forceful returns of refugees and possible war crimes. More than 2 million people have been internally displaced" (EU High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy (2021): "[We need humanitarian access to Tigray as urgent first step towards peace in Ethiopia](#)", 15 January 2021).

21 January 2021: Statement United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict: "I am greatly concerned by serious allegations of sexual violence in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, including a high number of alleged rapes in the capital, Mekelle. There are also disturbing reports of individuals allegedly forced to rape members of their own family, under threats of imminent violence" (United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2021): ["United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, urges all parties to prohibit the use of sexual violence and cease hostilities in the Tigray region of Ethiopia"](#), 21 January 2021).

10 February 2021: Massacre of civilians by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops in Abi Addi town. "Survivors told the Telegraph that civilians, mainly farmers, had been massacred in Abi Addi and the villages of Adi Asmiean, Bega Sheka, Adichilo, Amberswa, Wetlaqo, Semret, Guya, Zelakme, Arena, Mitsawerki, Yeqyer and Shilum Emni - villages about 60 miles from Tigray's capital" (The Telegraph (2021): ["Their bodies were torn into pieces': Ethiopian and Eritrean troops accused of massacre in Tigray"](#), 7 April 2021).

23 February 2021: Civilians massacred near Cheli village by Eritrean forces (Sky News (2021): ["Hundreds executed, thousands homeless - the human cost of fighting in Tigray"](#), 17 March 2021).

4 March 2021: Statement UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: "Deeply distressing reports of sexual and gender-based violence, extrajudicial killings, widespread destruction and looting of public

and private property by all parties continue to be shared with us, as well as reports of continued fighting in central Tigray in particular". A preliminary analysis of the information received indicates that serious violations of international law, possibly amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, may have been committed by multiple actors in the conflict, including: the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, Eritrean armed forces, and Amhara Regional Forces and affiliated militia (OHCHR (2021): ["Ethiopia: Persistent, credible reports of grave violations in Tigray underscore urgent need for human rights access – Bachelet"](#), 4 March 2021).

10 March 2021: The U.S. Secretary of State accused the Ethiopian government of ethnic cleansing in western Tigray. (House Foreign Affairs Committee (2021): ["Secretary Blinken: The Biden Administration's Priorities for U.S. Foreign Policy"](#), Hearing, 10 March 2021).

16 March 2021: Bloomberg quoted the Amhara government spokesperson Gizachew Muluneh who said the Amhara regional government annexed territory in western Tigray by force, including the Welkait, Tegede, Humera, Telemte and Raya districts.

24 March 2021: Civilians executed by Eritrean soldiers in Finarwa (Europe External Programme with Africa (2021): ["Situation Report EEPA HORN No. 114"](#), 29 March 2021).

2 April 2021: International Crisis Group reported that after the fall of Mekele the Tigrayans had regrouped under the banner of the Tigray Defence Forces. The ranks of the Tigrayan armed resistance "are said to be swelling due to popular anger at the intervention, in particular at the atrocities

allegedly committed against civilians" (International Crisis Group (2021): "[Ethiopia's Tigray War: A Deadly, Dangerous Stalemate](#)". Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°171, 2 April 2021).

12 April 2021: Tigrayan civilians were indiscriminately shot by Eritrean forces in Adwa (Amnesty International (2021): "[Tepid international response to Tigray conflict fuels horrific violations over past six months](#)", 4 May 2021).

8 May 2021: Extrajudicial killing of civilians in Abuna Yemata by Eritrean forces (The Guardian (2021): "[Eritrean soldiers killed 19 civilians in latest Tigray atrocity, locals claim](#)", 1 June 2021).

23 May 2021: The State Department's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC) implemented a policy of denial for exports of defence articles and defence services to or for the armed forces, police, intelligence, or other internal security forces of Ethiopia and Eritrea (Department of State (2021): "[International Traffic in Arms Regulations: Addition of Ethiopia and Update to Eritrea](#)" - Notice, 17 September 2021).

22 June 2021: 50+ civilians killed in air strike by Ethiopian army in Togogwa (Addis Standard (2021): "[Dozens of Civilians killed, injured in market airstrike in Tigray; Army officials say combatants, not civilians the target](#)", 24 June 2021).

28 June 2021: The Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) recaptured Mekele. Ethiopian government declared a humanitarian ceasefire which was characterised as a defeat by the Tigray forces.

6 July 2021: The start of a counter-offensive by TDF to retake West and South Tigray.

Amhara security forces and militia mobilized. Special regional forces from Oromia, Sidama region and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region mobilized. TDF clashes with Afar forces when it headed east into the strategically important Afar Region. The road and railway, linking the capital Addis Ababa to the seaport of Djibouti, runs through Afar. Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Harari regions join the conflict (Reuters (2021): "[Three more regions reinforce Ethiopia army, Amhara against Tigray forces](#)", 16 July 2021; Reuters (2021): "[Ethiopia's Tigray forces enter neighbouring Afar region, Afar says](#)", 19 July 2021).

18 July 2021: The Ethiopian Prime Minister declared total war on TPLF. Compared TPLF with "weeds", "cancer" which need to be removed (The Times (2021): "[Genocide fears after Ethiopian PM vows to crush 'weeds' of Tigray](#)", 18 July 2021).

30 July 2021: Statement by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide: The Special Adviser condemned inflammatory statements used by top political leaders and associated armed groups. The use of pejorative and dehumanizing language like "cancer", "devil", "weed" and "bud" to refer to the Tigray conflict is of utmost concern. Hate speech, together with its propagation through social media is part of a worrisome trend that contributes to further fuel ethnic tensions in the country. "Such dynamics in the current socio-political context, characterised by deep-seated ethnic tensions across the country, constitute a dangerous trajectory in the direction of further pulling communities apart" the Special Adviser added. "We have seen, in many places around the world that the commission of atrocity crimes along identity lines has been preceded by hate

speech and incitement to violence.” the Special Adviser stated. She stressed that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited under international human rights law, as well as under national legislation (United Nations (2021): [“Statement by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the continued deterioration of the situation in Ethiopia”](#), 30 July 2021).

11 August 2021: Alliance formed between Oromo Liberation Army and TDF.

12-21 August 2021: **Amnesty International** reported the gang rape of Amhara women by TPLF forces in Nifas Mewcha (Amnesty International (2021): [“Survivors of TPLF attack in Amhara describe gang rape, looting and physical assaults”](#), 9 November 2021).

13 September 2021: Statement UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: “There are continued reports of large-scale arbitrary detentions of ethnic Tigrayan civilians in unofficial sites in Western Tigray. Reports also suggest that people of Tigrayan ethnicity have been profiled and detained by law enforcement officials on ethnic grounds, with hundreds having reportedly been arrested in recent security sweeps, mostly in Addis Ababa, and several businesses belonging to ethnic Tigrayans having reportedly been closed. Incitement to hatred and discrimination, and rising levels of inflammatory rhetoric were also documented targeting people of Tigrayan ethnicity. History has unmistakably taught us the dangers of this kind of rhetoric. De-escalation measures must urgently be put in place. Threats and attacks on journalists have also been reported, as well as the suspension

of media outlets’ licenses and intermittent restrictions and shutdowns of Internet and telecommunications in Tigray. Since gaining control of parts of Tigray and expanding to neighbouring regions, reports have also identified Tigrayan forces as perpetrators of human rights abuses. During the period under review, the Tigrayan forces have allegedly been responsible for attacks on civilians, including indiscriminate killings resulting in nearly 76,500 people displaced in Afar and an estimated 200,000 in Amhara. I also reiterate my call to the Eritrean Government to ensure accountability for alleged widespread human rights violations by their forces in the Tigray region” (OHCHR (2021): [“Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet”](#). 48th session of the Human Rights Council, 13 September 2021).

17 September 2021: The United States imposed economic sanctions on Ethiopia and Eritrea targeting certain individuals (Executive Office of the President (2021): Executive Order (E.O.) 14046) - Imposing Sanctions on Certain Persons With Respect to the Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in Ethiopia, Federal Register, 86 FR 52389).

3 November 2021: The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) by the **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the UN Human Rights Office** released report which claimed “Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), Eritrean Defence Force (EDF), and Tigray Special Forces (TSF) are implicated in multiple reports of gang rape, although the gravity and brutality of the reported cases vary... The JIT found that the ENDF committed acts of sexual violence in Mekelle, Wukro, Bora, Mekoni, Shire, and Bizet; the EDF committed acts of sexual violence in Ahferom Samre, Werie-Leke (in Edega

Hamus), Shire, Tembien, Adet, Humera; the TSF committed acts of sexual violence in Adi Hageray, Mai Laha (in Shimelba), and Mekelle. The JIT also found that the parties committed acts of sexual violence in other locations in Tigray. Additionally, there are reasonable grounds to believe that some of the acts of sexual violence committed by the EDF were marked with extreme brutality. The JIT also obtained reports which implicate the Amhara Special Forces (ASF) in acts of sexual violence" (Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2021): [Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia](#), 3 November 2021).

4 November 2021: Joint report by EHRC and OHCHR heavily criticized. **Human Rights Watch** said that report made "scant mention of the abuses committed by Amhara regional forces and militia against Tigrayans in western Tigray. It documents brutal sexual violence by all warring parties, but fails to acknowledge the scale of abuses, including sexual slavery, by Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Amhara forces targeting Tigrayan women and girls. And it glosses over the deliberate and extensive destruction and pillaging of health infrastructure, and the intimidation and killing of humanitarian workers" (Human Rights Watch (2021): ["International Investigation Needed into Abuses in Ethiopia"](#), 4 November 2021).

5 November 2021: Amnesty International reported "alarming rise in social media posts advocating ethnic violence, and government

officials have implored civilians to take up arms against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), which have recently joined forces against the central government" (Amnesty International (2021): ["Sweeping emergency powers and alarming rise in online hate speech as Tigray conflict escalates"](#), 5 November 2021).

5 November 2021: Nine armed groups opposing the Federal government joined forces in a new alliance called the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces.

9 November 2021: Human Rights Watch reported "(S)ince Tigrayan forces retook control of most of the region in late June 2021, the Ethiopian government has effectively besieged Tigray, raising concerns that it is using starvation as a weapon of war, which is a violation of the Ethiopian criminal code and a war crime under international humanitarian law (Human Rights Watch (2021): ["I Always Remember That Day'. Access to Services for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Ethiopia's Tigray Region"](#), 9 November 2021).

November 2021 - 2022: Counter-offensive by Ethiopian government aided with unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) from Iran, Turkey and U.A.E. Airstrikes against TDF positions and civilians intensified (RFI (2021): ["UN reports record number of civilians killed in airstrikes across Ethiopia's Tigray region"](#), 31 December 2021; DW (2022): ["Ethiopia at crossroads as drone attacks worsen Tigray crisis"](#), 14 January 2022; Politico (2022): ["Evidence from civilian bombing in Ethiopia points to Turkish drone"](#), 25 January 2022). CNN obtained documents that Ethiopia had shuttled weapons to and from Eritrea (CNN (2021): ["Ethiopia used its flagship](#)

[commercial airline to transport weapons during war in Tigray](#)", 8 October 2021). It was reported that the U.A.E. had supplied the Ethiopian army with military aid. The Oryx website reported more than 100 flights, between the U.A.E. and Ethiopia, with IL-76 cargo aircraft had been registered between September and October. (Oryx (2021): "[UAE Air Bridge Supports Ethiopian Military in Tigray War](#)", 8 October 2021; Oryx (2021): "[UAE Air Bridge To Ethiopia Continues Unabated - Surpassing 100 Flights](#)", 19 November 2021) On November 27, 2021 the regional government of Tigray, in a letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General, accused Iran, Turkey and UAE of supplying arms to Ethiopian government. Turkey and the UAE are, as signatories to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), accused of having violated the provisions of the ATT (Government of National Regional State of Tigray (2021): "[Concern on the meddling of non-African countries in the genocidal war of Ethiopia](#)", Letter to Secretary-General of the United Nations, 27 November 2021).

12 November 2021: the **U.S. Department of the Treasury's** Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four entities and two individuals pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14046 in response to the growing humanitarian and human rights crisis and expanding military conflict in Ethiopia (U.S. Department of the Treasury (2021): "[Treasury Sanctions Four Entities and Two Individuals in Connection with the Crisis in Ethiopia](#)", 12 November 2021).

7 December 2021: Statement UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict: "Extreme brutality and sexual violence have been hallmarks of the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Amid increasing and spreading

hostilities and a worsening humanitarian situation in Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions, I am deeply concerned by continuing reports of targeted attacks against women, girls, boys, and men, including the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, a form of retaliation, punishment, humiliation, and also to stigmatize individuals based on their real or perceived ethnic identity." (UN Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2021): "[United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Chair of UN Action Network, Ms. Pramila Patten, urges the Government of Ethiopia to promptly sign onto an agreement with the United Nations to prevent and re](#)", 7 December 2021)

19 December 2021: In a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General the regional government of Tigray proposed a ceasefire and withdrawal of TDF forces from Amhara and Afar. Demanded imposition of an immediate no-fly zone for hostile aircraft over Tigray and for an arms embargoes on Ethiopia and Eritrea (Vatican News (2021): "[Tigrayan forces announce withdrawal from neighbouring regions](#)", 21 December 2021).

21 January 2022: In an interview ENDF General Abebaw Tadesse on state-affiliated broadcaster FANA said "Ethiopia would not be able to enjoy peace until the enemy is eliminated" (Reuters (2022): "[Ethiopia army vows to 'eliminate' Tigray forces](#)", 22 January 2022).

28 January 2022: The Tigray Emergency Food Security Assessment, by the **World Food Programme**, found that 83 percent of people are food insecure, and 40 percent of Tigrayans are suffering an extreme lack of food, after 15 months of conflict. Across northern Ethiopia's Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions estimates that 9.4 million people

are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance (WFP (2022): "[Severe hunger tightens grip on northern Ethiopia](#)", 28 January 2022).

8 February 2022: The **Legal Action Worldwide** (LAW) and its counsel Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, as well as the **Pan-African Lawyers Union** (PALU) submitted a complaint against Ethiopia before the **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights** for serious and massive human rights violations against Tigrayan civilians. The complaint alleges that Ethiopia is responsible for a wide range of human rights violations under the African Charter, including military targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure; mass and extra-judicial killings; gender-based sexual violence; arbitrary arrest and detention; mass displacement of civilians; destruction of property, foodstuffs, and religious and cultural heritage sites; ethnic discrimination; and enforced information blackouts (Legal Action Worldwide (2022): "[LAW and Partners File Landmark Case Against Ethiopia for Human Rights Violations in Tigray](#)", 8 February 2022).

16 February 2022: **Amnesty International** accused Tigray forces of murder, rape and

pillage on Amharan civilians (Amnesty International (2022): "[Ethiopia: Tigrayan forces murder, rape and pillage in attacks on civilians in Amhara towns](#)", 16 February 2022).

17 February 2022: The **Government of Tigray** responded to Amnesty International's accusations: "The Government of Tigray reiterates that Tigray's Army does not condone the deliberate targeting of civilians... If our investigation finds that Tigrayan fighters have in fact deliberately targeted non-combatants, the Government of Tigray will bring the perpetrators to justice... It is our belief that only an independent investigation by an impartial international body can get to the bottom of all of atrocities... The Government of Tigray, therefore, fully cooperate with the International

Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia as it undertakes its independent investigation into any and all atrocities committed during the war on Tigray." (Tigray External Affairs Office (2022): "[Response to Amnesty International's report on the alleged human rights violations in Amhara towns](#)", 17 February 2022).

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