

**Delegation:** Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**Forum:** GA4 Special Political and Decolonization

**Issue:** Attempting to re-stabilize the horn of Africa, particularly the region of Tigray in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is Africa's oldest independent country and has been a provider of economic, peace involvement, leadership, and overall security on the horn of Africa. Since November 2020, a mass civil war including involvement from other countries has impacted severe humanitarian crisis and international relationships have been influenced as a result of the Tigray crisis.

Ethiopia has had a federal system in which different ethnic groups control the affairs of 10 regions. For more than two decades, Tigrayans, or Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) have remained the dominant political party, making up about 7% of the population. The coalition form of government in Ethiopia was important in keeping the country stable and flourish, however concerns of human rights and democracy rose, leading to protest, eventually resulting in ethnic Oromo Abiy Ahmed being elected prime minister of Ethiopia in April 2018. His first appeals as Prime Minister showed political reform, unity, and restoring friendly relations. In addition, Abiy won the Nobel Peace Prize for "his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighboring Eritrea" in 2019. Ahmed believed in reforming the government, but Tigray refused to yield local control to the federal government. Tigray's leaders viewed Ahmed's reforms as an attempt to centralize power and destroy Ethiopia's federal system. Ethiopian government has taken all measures to isolate Tigrayan citizens and have them viewed as foreigners throughout the country (Semhal 2022).

After the political tensions within Tigray regions in Ethiopia, conflict began in November 2020, where Abiy Ahmed ordered a military offensive against regional forces in Tigray. This military order was titled a "law-and-order operation" and involved large deployments of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces targeting Tigrayans (Gavin 2021). War proceeding until present day has so far resulted in 900,000 Tigrayans experiencing famine, with millions more on the verge, human rights abuses taking place, atrocities, sexual violence, massacres, as well as 60,000 Ethiopians consequentially fleeing into neighboring Sudan.

The civil war crisis has multiple impacts on bordering countries as well as an international scale. The Ethiopian army has been provided assistance from China, Eritrea, Iran, Somalia, Turkey, as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Reports have stated unlawful presence of Eritrean forces in Tigray, the Ethiopian government repeatedly denying Eritrean involvement. Eritrean troops have been the root of many war crimes taking place including destroying infrastructure, mass executions of civilians, looting, and systematic rape. Furthermore, Eritreans have contributed to widespread famine by burning farmlands, destroying farming tools, and killing livestock in hope of causing systematic starvation (Semhal 2022). In March 2021, Ethiopian government admitted their presence and Eritrean government stated they would retreat military forces from Ethiopia. Additionally, the United States passed a resolution to call for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray (Elbagir 2021). Despite this, even one year after the withdrawal agreement, Eritrean troops continue to commit horrors in Tigray, some troops even wearing Ethiopian military uniform to disguise their presence (Semhal 2022).

Turkey has become involved by agreeing to sell military drones to the Ethiopian army. This deal has threatened Turkey's relationship with Egypt while also considering the existing tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia due to disagreement over a River Nile Dam (Zane 2021).

Along with this, Ethiopian army has purchased weapons from China and Iran, with the help of United Arab Emirates flights transporting them to Ethiopia (BBC 2021).

In terms of their relationship with the United States, Ethiopia and the US relations are bilateral, and Ethiopia is a strategic partner of the United States specifically in the global War on Terrorism. Despite this, Jeffrey Feltman, Former US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, has shown criticism of the federal government of Ethiopia, stating that policies have resulted in mass starvation. Tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan and their allies have increased due to disagreement over territorial possession. This tension has further resulted in threat towards the safety of refugees fleeing across the border (Semhal 2022).

The consequences of the Tigray civil war crisis have shown multiple signs for need of international assistance. The Ethiopian government welcomes foreign involvement if it supports the destruction of Tigray, but for Ethiopia as whole to stabilize, deterioration of the severe impacts of the Tigray civil war crisis will require international humanitarian aid is needed as well as peacekeeping efforts to support ceasefire and retreat of troops.

## **References**

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