

TIGRAY

ANALYSIS OF THE **GENOCIDAL WAR**

2020-2022

*Nowhere in the world are we witnessing
Hell like in Tigray*

Tewodros Adhanom (DG-WHO)

YOHANNES ABERRA

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MEKELLE 2023



Dedicated to:

My Mother Milash Desta and All Mothers of Tigray

In 1935 my mother experienced a similar agony the mothers of Tigray endured in the last two years and the years before. Her father was leading the logistics in the long and arduous Tembien War against Italian invading forces. He was barely in his residence in Mekelle when Fascist troops arrived at his door. They tied him up along with his eldest son and his son-in-law; burned his house; slaughtered his animals as my young mother and her mom watched in horror. The detainees were taken to a nearby river valley and executed. I grew up under the tears of my mother. She died at the age of 56; she was never consoled. A few years after her death, homegrown fascists killed her eldest son. Death was kind to her. It took her before she could experience another tragedy in her life. Milash is only one among the hundreds of thousands of mothers of Tigray who suffered through the ages. I ask myself: Why are we unable to stop the misery of our mothers once and for all, misery that resurfaced every few decades for an entire century, and may continue to do so in the future?

Preface

In world history's greatest paradox the Tigray War was started by a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate who at the award ceremony denounced war as "the epitome of Hell". The Tigray War is the Century's most lethal conflict, characterized by extreme brutality: extrajudicial executions, looting, and weaponized sexual violence and mass starvation. All this "*unfolded behind a wall of silence and disinformation*". These are the words of Dr. Alex de Waal. The way Dr. Tewodros Adhanom described the War in Tigray more clearly portrays its true picture: "*Nowhere in the world are we witnessing hell like in Tigray*". The War has very deep roots in history. It was a catastrophic culmination of what has been accumulating for ages. This is the worst but not the first of wars against Tigray. Repetition arises from the unfortunate fact that Tigrayan bravery has never been accompanied by memory. Memories are more lasting if recorded. Tigrayans leave the writing of their glorious history for others to write. The inevitable distortion of narratives strikes Tigrayans back. Getachew Reda is now the President of the Transitional Government of Tigray. In his keynote speech during a book launch he stated the following which summarizes the reason why I authored this book: "*It is crucial that all that happened in Tigray must be documented. We have to write! Unless we write about the brutalities we experienced soon enough our enemies will invert the whole story in their favor. They will write as if what they did to us is what we did to them. This is not new. They did this on several occasions in history. They deny our bravery and tarnish our reputation; they deny our sufferings and accuse us of being the offender. They have done a lot of work in this regard. They take our pains and miseries away from us and tell about it as if it is their own story. This must change now.*" The details of the War are so vast and countless that a single book is far from adequate to cover its entire depth and breadth. Attempt is made in this book to capture the highlights to serve as framework for further writing.

Yohannes Aberra
Mekelle,2023

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Chapter 1

Background: Axum-Tigray and Abyssinia-Ethiopia

1.1. Introduction

The two-year war in Tigray did not happen by accident as it is portrayed by the uninquisitive domestic and global media. As the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary was not the real underlying cause of WWI, attack on the Northern Army Command only served as a golden opportunity to christen the preplanned massive invasion of Tigray as an “emergency law enforcement operation”. According to Jennifer McCormick the main cause of WWI was a combination of military pacts, imperial ambitions, militarism, and nationalism. European powers were already on their toes for a major war, waiting for excuse to start it.

The Tigray War, that started on the 4th of November 2020, has much deeper roots that can be traced back to the years of decline of the Axumite Empire and the subsequent steep descent from its position as a world trading power down to irrelevance in the fold of a deeply traditional and dominantly agrarian Abyssinian society to the south. Although in a different form and social-geographical context the four main causes of WWI were also replicated as causes of the Tigray war. The advanced culture and polity of the heirs of the glorious Axumite Civilization experienced a culture shock within the primeval socioeconomic host of Abyssinia.

The incongruence of the Axumite north to the Abyssinian south remained unresolved to this day, and evolved into chronic mistrust and frequent hostilities throughout the centuries. The

Axumite high culture, solidified in the thousand years of its development, could not be melted in the Abyssinian pot in the thousand years of unsuccessful integration and assimilation. As Abyssinia conquered and incorporated several kingdoms and sultanates in the south, west, and east the Axumite north remained a too hard nut to crack. With the passage of time, Abyssinia was growing in economic power and a diverse but conforming demography around the Amhara-Abyssinian mainstream; the many centuries long internal strife notwithstanding.

The Axumite north, which was militarily more potent than the Abyssinian majority, posed a real or perceived threat to the central power of Amhara-Abyssinia. In the fierce competition for supremacy in political, religious, cultural, and historical spheres the Axumite north continued to be regarded as a source of inconvenience for the Abyssinian consensus against its aloofness. There have been several major encounters, and countless minor ones, between the Abyssinian majority and the unyielding minority in the Axumite north.

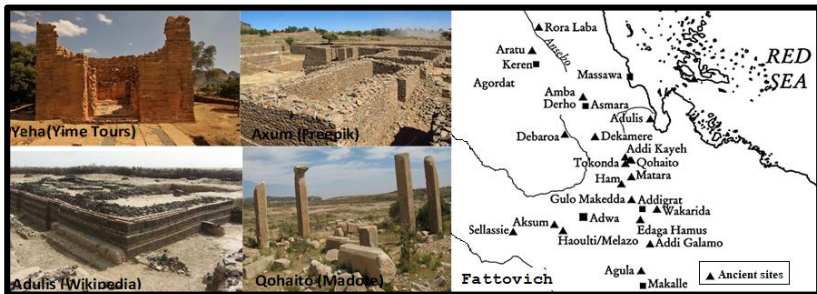
1.2 The Rise and Decline of the Axumite Civilization

Axum emerged in the first century AD and spanned the entire first millennium. It became the most prosperous state in sub-Saharan Africa (Nesbitt 2012) and a dominant African polity (Fattovich 2019). Axumite Kingdom was the hub of regional and international networks of trade that integrated markets in the Mediterranean Basin, southern Arabia, and regions of the Indian Ocean as far as India. Axumite international trade was so advanced that it minted coins in gold and silver (Phillipson 2012).

The Kingdom of Axum was considered one of the ancient world's four great powers alongside Persia, Rome, and China (Munro-Hay

1991). At its height, Axumite Empire extended across present day Eritrea, northern Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, and Southern Arabia (Brewer 2022). There are ample historical evidences that Axum had foreign relations with Egypt, Meroe (Nubia-Sudan), Mecca under the Qureshi, Rome and the Byzantium, Syria, Persia, India, Sri Lanka, the Far East, and South Arabia. Axumites belonged to the same milieu with these states as they were quite strongly influenced by the same cultural traditions (Munro-Hay 1991).

Fig. 1. Daamite and Axumite sites in the core region



Axum declined by the end of the first millennium AD. The main reason for the beginning of the decline was the challenge posed by the rise of Islam in the Red Sea region, which severely threatened its supremacy over the Red Sea trade. There had been stiff competition for the Red Sea trade networks from Arab Muslims beginning from the Seventh Century AD (Cartwright 2019). The weakening of the power of Axum was also accelerated by the decline of Axumite economy in its hinterland and the incursion of the Beja Tribe into the core areas of the Empire.

The coup de grace administered on the already impaired might of the Axumite Kingdom came from a powerful woman who reigned over what was left of the Kingdom (Andersen 2000). She is said

to have been responsible for laying waste the Kingdom of Axum and its countryside, and the destruction of its churches and monuments. What happened in the Century between the downfall of Axum and the rise of the Zagwe rule in Lasta to the south is not well documented. It was a period of chaos and uncertainty; but one thing was unmistakable. Tigrayans, the heirs to the mighty Axumite Civilization and masters of the Red Sea, were sailing into uncharted waters blown by the colossal shift in the balance of power in the Red Sea Region. The change in the geopolitics of the Axumite sphere of influence became irreversible.

Fig. 2. “Respect and protect Axum as well as live in peace with the native Christians:”-Prophet Mohammed (Ofcansky & LaVerle 1991)



1.3 Axum: Cast-away from its historical-cultural milieu

Crippled as the Axumites were, by the economic loss and destruction, their resilience and capacity for switching to an alternative path to continue the great legacy was diminished. Destiny took over the steering wheel of the vessel of history for the Axumites, and they lost control over their own future. It happened to be a sad irony that the Islam Axum helped to survive became the main reason for its doom. According to Nimer (2013), Prophet Mohammed had sent a small group of Muslims that

included his daughter Ruqayya and her husband Othman to Axum, when he was challenged by the Qureshi Clan. The Christian King Armah (614–631) of Axum gave them refuge and protection. Once Islam consolidated and started expanding into the wider Red Sea Region it did not push, from the north into the Christian highlands of Axum/Tigray, to incorporate what was left of the Aksumite Kingdom.

While it was spreading, by conversion and by coercion, throughout the region, Islam spared a huge enclave of Christianity (Axumite Kingdom) so close to its center in the Arabian Peninsula. The impregnable terrain of Tigray Highlands from the Red Sea may have discouraged large enough Islamic incursion into the Axumite interior and Islam remained restricted to the Red Sea coast. However, most don't consider this as a key reason for the failure of Islamic expansion into the Axum Region. Axum was exempted from the Holy War by Prophet Mohammed (Ofcansky and LaVerle 1991). When King Armah of Axum died, it was reported that Prophet Mohammed prayed for his soul and told his followers to leave the Axumites in peace, as long as they do not take the offensive (Henze, 2000).

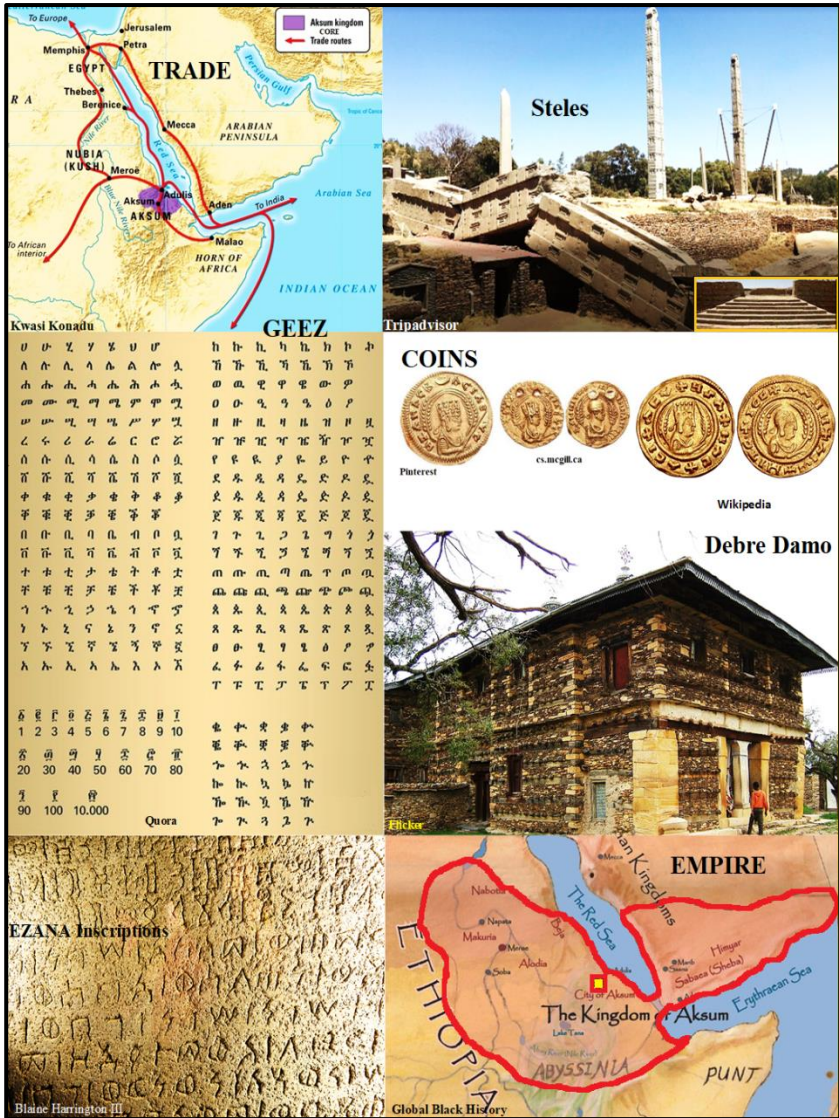
Donald E. Crummy on Britannica.com describes what happened in this period of tumultuous transition: 'As Christian shipping disappeared from the Red Sea the Aksumite state turned southward, conquering adjacent grain-rich highlands. Monastic establishments moved even farther to the south. Over time, the Agau in the southern edge of the Kingdom, learned Geez, became Christian, assimilated the Axumites and transferred the Capital from Axum to Lasta'. The historic trend was analogous to a relay race in which the Axum 'baton' was relayed from Lasta to Wollo, and then to Gondar; finally to Shoa.

The largest portion of present day Tigray in the north, east, west, central, and southeast constituted the core or home region of the Axumite Empire. Tigray makes up over two third of the Region and the remaining third is located in the southeastern plateau of present day Eritrea en route the port of Adulis. (Fig.1) The capital city of the former Axumite Empire is well inside Tigray's central zone. Most of the action, in terms of leadership and cultural development was happening in the Tigray portion of the core region. This is evidenced by the fact that the bulk of the archeological findings of the Axum and pre-Axum kingdoms come from this part of the Region.

There are cities, in the southeastern portion of the Eritrean 'Kebessa', that have served as break of bulk points or transit hubs along the route from the Axumite interior to the port of Adulis. Eritrean scholars have their own version of the post-Axumite story. Regrettably, most of such historiographies, written so late in the second decade of the 21st Century, seem to have been motivated by partisan politics rather than historical objectivity. The bad habit prevalent among Eritrean writers is, besides the rampant verbosity of their historiography there is a general inclination to ridicule, blame, and curse inconvenient ideas rather than disproving them with logical argument and credible evidence.

Much more than the academic merit of Eritrean writings, notably the Dagim article by Mesfin (2018), the quest for a proof that the Eritrea of the present has been a sovereign state known as 'Midri Bahri' since antiquity takes the upper hand. This is in line with the Eritrean ruling ideology which maintains that Eritrea and Tigray have little to do with each other; that they have, through the ages, been adversarial rather than fraternal.

Fig. 3 Legacies of the Axumite Kingdom-Empire 100 to 940 AD



The baseless but perilous narrative is believed to have served as an ideological backdrop for the lead involvement of Eritrean troops in the genocide and destruction of Tigray. By claiming that a ‘wise’ decision was made by the Eritrean Kebessa to distance itself from the integration with the Lasta Agau, Mesfin (2018) accuses Tigray of abandoning “Midri-Bahri” and willingly joining the Lasta Agau. This action is alleged to have left “Midri-Bahri” to remain as an independent sovereign state between the Mereb River and the Red Sea. The truth the Eritrean author tries to conceal is that the Red Sea Coast was blocked by the expansion of Islamic forces and what he referred to as “Midri-Bahri” was just a territory trapped between the Red Sea and Tigray, destined to live in poverty and isolation.

“Midri-Bahri” is not geographically contiguous to the Lasta Agau Kingdom. The latter is adjacent to the southern borders of Tigray. There is no way that we could see what “Midri-Bahri” would decide to do if it were in Tigray’s position. What Mesfin (2018) called Abyssinian invasions of the “sovereign state of Midri Bahri” was just the medieval routine of invasion and counter invasion between local and regional warlords for expanding their respective fiefdoms. This was happening throughout Abyssinia, including the Eritrean Kebessa. It is unfair and dishonest to attribute the invasion on “Midri Bahri” by Abyssinian warlords as an inter-state phenomena.

The conclusion is that “Midri-Bahri” has never been a sovereign state of any sort until the Red Sea coast of the former Axumite territory came under Italian colonial rule. Never was the core region of the Axumite Kingdom divided into two distinct political geographic entities as Mesfin (2018) claims. A governance system of “Endaba”, which is a local form of communal

leadership, does not constitute the governance of a sovereign state. “Midri-Bahri” as an enclave on the southwestern Red Sea coast was ruled by Tigrayan and Abyssinian warlords as part of the Tigray over-lordship.

“Midri-Bahri” was an integral part of the homogenous cultural landscape stretching from southern and western Tigray to the Red Sea Coast. Mereb, as a seasonal river, has never been a natural barrier of any significance to divide societies on both sides of its broad and shallow course. In contrast to the divisive “Midri-Bahri” narrative which negates any attempt to restore the Axumite glory in its 21st Century version, a movement of Axumite restoration is gathering momentum on both sides of the Mereb River. This has faced a stubborn obstacle though. The destruction and genocide committed in Tigray by Eritrean Troops in the last two years has cast a very long and dark shadow on the drive to reunify Axumites. There is no doubt that this was intricately woven by Ethiopian Imperial ambitions to remove any obstruction to its ambitions of recapturing the Red Sea coast for landlocked Ethiopia.

Present day Eritreans were descendants of the great Axumites, which was in-par with Rome. When Italy, the weak heir of the mighty Romans, colonized the Axumite province of “Midri-Bahri” and named it Eritrea, the natives of the province strangely felt more honored than disgraced. When the descendants of the Romans ruled the descendants of the Axumites it was graciously accepted as a ‘civilizing mission’. In contrast, Tigray did not allow its historical equals to rule it let alone shed its own identity and take theirs. This is how nations continue for generations with dignity. Tigray is paying a heavy price for this; but it is worth it. The upkeep of honor is always costly. The identity crisis among

the population of present day Eritrea has evolved from the failure to stick to the pride as Axumites regardless of who the colonial ruler turned out to be.

A unified statehood as “Midri Bahri” and later as Eritrea, distinct from Tigray, is a myth. The division within “Midri Bahri”/Eritrea is much greater and more dangerous than the difference with Tigray. The difference between ‘Kebessa’ and ‘Kolla’ is a reflection of the deadly difference between religions and cultures. The politics of Eritrea under colonialism and during the armed struggle was marred by religious and provincial differences to the extent of prolonging the duration of Eritrean struggle for independence. Currently, Eritreans could not unite against a dictator, who is destroying Eritrea as a viable political unit, because they are so divided into all kinds of groups that they could neither think alike nor act in unison.

1.4. Tigray: Gate keeper’s nasty return to the Red Sea arena

In the second half of the 19th Century Muslim Ottoman dominion of the Middle East and the Red Sea, that had blocked and isolated Axumites from their cultural and historical milieu, declined. This marked the beginning of the second most significant turning point, in the history of Tigray and by extension to the problematic Tigray-Abyssinia relations after the decline of Axum. The Axumites’ role in the Red Sea 900 years ago was with prosperity, but now the return to the Red Sea came to be with a great deal of responsibility. This section describes how the momentous geopolitical developments in the Red Sea region evolved, who the main actors were, and what the long term impacts have been on the Tigray-Abyssinia relations.

By mid-19th Century British imperial expansion in the Red Sea Region was at full swing. Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Somaliland were under direct or indirect British rule. France was in Djibouti and Egypt at the port of Massawa. Italy colonized Assab and later Massawa. This was the alignment of forces with imperial ambitions on Ethiopia that Yohannes IV had to deal without support from the other rulers of the vassal kingdoms in Ethiopia. With the opening of the Suez Canal the old Red Sea route from Europe to India was restored. Britain found a shorter and less costly route to India: its most important colony.

As a matter of miraculous coincidence the return of Tigray to the Red Sea geopolitics happened during the reign of Emperor Yohannes IV: The first ever Tigrayan king of Abyssinia since the decline of Axum. Since the rest of Ethiopia, outside Tigray, considered the new geopolitical developments in the Red Sea region as a strictly Tigrayan affair, Emperor Yohannes IV spent most years of his reign fighting to fend off external aggression from the direction of the Red Sea. He fought with Egypt and Italians in several battles.

This was a godsend opportunity for King Menilik of Shoa to consolidate his economic and military position, shielded by his tactical but reluctant subordination to Yohannes IV. It was a geographical fate of Tigray to be a “gatekeeper” at the only entrance of the Red Sea-Ethiopia thoroughfare. While Tigray was facing the odds head-on King Menilik was expanding his rule to the vast hitherto unconquered lands in the south, southwest, west, east, and southeast. Towards the end of the reign of Yohannes IV Menilik had made an arrangement with the Italians to attack Yohannes: Italy advancing from Massawa and Menilik advancing from Shoa (Marcus, 2002). The treasonous arrangement did not

materialize because Yohannes IV marched to Metema to meet his end as the greatest Ethiopian patriot of all time. The Emperor was probably the first but surely the last king of Ethiopia to die in battle against foreign aggression.

Soon after the death of Yohannes IV, Menilik was crowned as Emperor of Ethiopia and hurried to seal his alliance with Italy by a Treaty. In the Treaty Italians got a freeway to occupy the northern portion of Tigray, from the Red Sea Coast to the Mereb River. The Italian occupation of north Tigray was enshrined by Article 3 of the notorious Wuchale Treaty. Chisholm (1911) recounts: 'Menilik II recognized the Italian occupation of his rivals' (Tigray) lands of Bogos, Hamasien, Akkele Guzay, and Serae in exchange for guarantees of financial assistance and continuing access to European arms and ammunition.'

The ceding of such a critically important territory in the north, to a foreign power, was a myopic move intended to weaken Tigray. The closure of access to the sea would prevent armament imports to rearm and strengthen Tigray against Menilik II. Moreover, Tigray was barred from earning economic benefits as a go-between in the historical trade route from Massawa to the Ethiopian interior. Tigray was caught, in a difficult geopolitical setting, between an aspiring colonial power in the north and hostile compatriots in the south.

With access to the Red Sea in the North sealed Menilik's Ethiopia put its trust for access to the outside world through Djibouti. The latter was a colony of France. Menilik II temporarily avoided collision with European colonial powers by surrendering the littoral to keep the center safe. Imprudently, he presumed that Italy will stick to the Treaty and stay put in what it later called the

“Italian Colony of Eritrea”. Menilik felt that the fate of Tigray, as a source of discomfort for Amhara rule of Abyssinia/Ethiopia was doomed forever. Contrary to the lame calculations of the Abyssinian King Italians had a long-term plan to connect their Red Sea colony with their Indian Ocean colony, by conquering the rest of Abyssinia/Ethiopia. This was done in 1935.

Italy expectedly violated Article 3 of the Wuchale Treaty, invaded the rest of Tigray en route to the Capital of Abyssinia/Ethiopia. So soon, it became clear that the conspiracy to weaken Tigray had a ‘boomerang effect’ on the rulers of Abyssinia/Ethiopia. Despite all the odds against it Tigray did not succumb to Italian rule as a revenge against Menilik II. Their loyalty to Abyssinia overwhelmed them and fought Italian invaders all over Tigray. The battles against Italy in Tigray weakened Italians prior to the victory of Adwa. Almost all of the Italo-Abyssinian wars, in the fifty years until the beginning of World War II, were fought in Tigray and by Tigrayans.

In 1938, Italy compiled the map of Italian East Africa, in which Eritrea and Tigray were merged into a single province. Italy had a point in combining Tigray and Eritrea as a single Italian province of its East African Empire. Rome knows the history of its ancient trade partner in the Red Sea. The creation of a Red Sea province right on the historical location of the Kingdom of Axum was fiercely disapproved by Abyssinian rulers who have always wanted to see the two territories of the Axumite Kingdom apart. Reunification of the old Axumite core remained to be a nightmare for Abyssinian rulers in Shoa.

1.5. Decolonization and Eritrean struggle for independence

The consequences of Article 3 of the Wuchale Treaty did not disappear after Italians left their East African colony. Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia; but later on it was fully unified. The coming back of the Red Sea littoral did not restore the status-quo ante in the North. For Tigray, the northern portion of the former Axumite Kingdom seemed to be lost forever. Colonialism has taken its toll on the social-psychological homogeneity of Tigrigna speakers on the two sides of the Mereb River. First it was physical separation, but with colonial rule the separation was reinforced by political, social, and economic differences.

For well over half a century of Italian colonial rule in Eritrea European culture pervaded almost all spheres of life, including drastic changes in life styles, and the intonation and vocabulary of the Tigrigna language. In Eritrea, Italian and Arabic words were ubiquitous in the conversational Tigrigna language in stark contrast to the unadulterated Tigrigna in Tigray. This gave Eritreans the wrong reason to mock the Tigrigna ‘dialect’ in Tigray contrasting it with their ‘creolized’ version. The brutalities of colonial rule notwithstanding, Eritreans were exposed to a rudimentary form of parliamentary system of government; considered superior to the aristocratic political culture that prevailed in the rest of Ethiopia. The economy in Eritrea had gone capitalist with obvious dissimilarity to the backward subsistence livelihoods in Tigray. Migrant workers flocked from Tigray to Eritrea to engage in mostly menial jobs. Eritreans in contrast had acquired technical skills for employment in the industrial as well as higher skill demanding service sectors. This created an unfortunate chasm between the two Axumites.

The sum total of the social, economic, and technological divergence between Eritrea and Tigray crystalized into groundless and misdirected haughtiness of Eritreans over the people of Tigray. In spite of the derogatory remarks and slurs habitually thrown at Tegarü by Eritreans, Tigrayans never failed to hold the historical bond between the two close to their hearts. Eritreans have never been kind to Tegarü in the political sphere as well. There is a widespread but misplaced resentment of Eritreans on Tegarü related to their re-unification with Ethiopia. However, the charge has not been consistent. Recent years have seen Tigray being blamed for obstructing a possible re-unification of the independent state of Eritrea with Ethiopia.

Eritreans bear an unconventional pride in colonial rule. They criminalize the anti-Italian battles fought by Yohannes IV and Ras Alula in Eritrea. One material expression of the strange accusation is the erection of a monument for Italian colonial troops killed at Dogali (Dogoli) by Ras Alula. No opportunity is lost for Eritreans to burden Tegarü with guilt. Nothing is too trivial for the insatiable appetite of Eritreans to corner Tegarü. They are busy picking the customary rivalry Tegarü lords had with “Medri-Bahri” chieftains as an evidence of deep-rooted hatred of Tegarü on Eritreans.

The 1998 war that was triggered by the Eritrean government ended in the defeat of Eritrea. Although Ethiopian troops, commanded by Tegarü generals, were very quickly withdrawn from Eritrea, defiant Eritreans are bearing grudges against Tegarü regardless. This has become an excuse for ordinary Eritreans to turn a blind eye to the invasion and destruction of Tigray by joint forces of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Amhara in November 2020. In spite of Tigray’s good intentions it is dangerously caught between

Eritrea, which has grown too unfriendly, and Amhara-Ethiopia, which has for centuries been its strange bed-fellow. What evades logic is the Eritrean alliance with the Amhara against Tigray. Eritreans have become politically naïve and imprudently traded a reliable friend in need for a former bitter enemy to serve the destructive ego of a home-made tyrant.

1.6. The end of an era and the beginning of a new one

For seventeen years something was brewing in Tigray that was destined to bring to a close the centuries old polity in Ethiopia based on oppression of nations and nationalities and forced assimilation into the Amhara-Ethiopian mainstream. Tigray People's Liberation Front TPLF was organized and armed struggle was launched soon after the demise of the Monarchy in the hands of a Military Junta. TPLF did not go for a mere change of government but for a new paradigm in political thinking and a structural change in the socio-economic system.

Little wonder that such a towering mission has got its origin in Tigray. For several centuries it has been an arena where the worst attributes of Amhara-Ethiopian rule has been having its most glaring material expression. The relationship between Tigray and Amhara-Ethiopia best typifies national oppression.

Eritrea was fighting for 30 years to liberate itself from Ethiopia, a country that demolished the federal arrangement and reduced it to the 14th province. Although TPLF was founded independently the need for mutual support in the political and military field drew the armed struggle in Tigray and Eritrea together. TPLF full-heartily believed in and supported Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia. Given the historic background of widespread disillusionment in Tigray with Amhara-Abyssinia/Ethiopia arising from the heavy

handedness of the latter on the former, spanning for over a century, the first few years of the TPLF entertained secessionist tendencies. Upon second thought, the idea of secession was made dormant but not dead. Although the highest level of self-determination is to create an independent state, TPLF decided to try for something less in the context of Ethiopia.

Fig. 4 Tigray in Perpetual Woyane



It was felt that of all nations and nationalities could cooperate to bring about a structural change in how Ethiopia is governed. A new paradigm which recognizes unity in diversity could be ushered in and all nations and nationalities in the union could live in harmony and mutual respect, managing their own affairs and together attending to their commonalities. Without support of any significance from others in Ethiopia Tigray paid very dearly to bring about a federal arrangement in Ethiopia based on Ethno-linguistic differentiation. Eritrea became independent and Ethiopia was re-regionalized based on the principle of the self-determination of nations and nationalities enshrined in the FDRE Constitution that came into force in 1995.

The Ethno-linguistic federal arrangement kept Ethiopia from falling apart because by the year 1991 there were more liberation fronts than unionist forces who vowed to create their own independent states if something is not done to ensure some agreed level of self-rule for the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. In the first few years all went well as the forces of federation had the upper hand following the devastating military victory by TPLF over the Derg and its unitary system of rule. The appropriateness of the federal arrangement got a material expression in the economic boom, social progress, and enhanced national security.

With the march of time, voices of dissent against the TPLF-led coalition grew louder and proponents of the defunct unitary system were gradually gaining ground. The deadly challenge to federalism was in hibernation. The allegation by the adherents of “One-Ethiopia, One-people, and One-religion” against Ethno-linguistic federalism was that the latter is disintegrating Ethiopia as a logical outcome of the “ill-advised” federal arrangement. They accuse TPLF of “deliberately orchestrating the dismemberment of Ethiopia through the Ethno-linguistic federal arrangement”. The charge against TPLF in particular and Tegraru in general, is wax over the gold. The concealed mission of the aggressive campaign against those upholding the lofty principles of federalism is the restoration of the unitary system with the Amhara polity as the mainstream. Moreover, it was not palatable for the Abyssinian south to see the Axumite north at a center of the effort to resolve Ethiopia’s age old socioeconomic ills: “Everything is fine, but it’s Tigrayan!”

1.7. The Geopolitics of Weakening Tigray

Ceding the Red Sea territory of the old Kingdom to Italy was a major geopolitical blow to Tigray. The decision not only cut Tigray from the critically important access to the outside world, via the Red Sea coast, but also planted a thorn in the flesh of Tigray in the form of a hostile state of Eritrea. That was not the last of the geopolitical conspiracies directed at Tigray. A few years after the first Woyane rebellion in Tigray, against the Monarchy, a punitive measure was taken against the ‘disobedient Province’.

Besides the heavier taxation imposed on the agrarian population huge chunks of territory with productive agricultural land in Welqait-Humera and Raya was taken away from the jurisdiction of Tigray. This was deliberate action to weaken the sources of revenue for the Province. During the Military rule that followed the geopolitical campaign to miniaturize Tigray and render it unviable continued with a new ideological justification. Without returning the lost territory of Welqait and Raya to Tigray more than half of the remaining area of Tigray in the east was made to be part of a newly created “Assab Autonomous Region” of the Afars. The pretext was the principle of self-determination of nationalities in the form of regional autonomy. Military rule was overthrown before it could turn the vicious scheme into practice.

The Federal system in Ethiopia, that followed Military rule, used language as a criterion for regionalization and reinstated Welqait and Raya back to the jurisdiction of Tigray. This was opposed by the newly created Amhara Region and vowed to restore the two territories back to its jurisdiction by all means. The claim is a gross injustice because the claimant became a Regional state by

the same criterion Welqait and Raya were incorporated back into the jurisdiction of Tigray. The age old urge among the Amhara to weaken Tigray did not mind that its claim was a double standard. It would imply that if Welqait and Raya are returned to Amhara, the Regional state itself would have to cease to exist. As impunity against Tigray has always been an unwritten law Welqait and Raya were annexed by the Amhara militia when the Tigray War started: A legalized violation of legality.

The geographic cutting and slicing of Tigray has another more sinister motive. Tigray has never been embraced as Abyssinian and later as Ethiopian; neither was it pushed away towards independent existence as a sovereign state. The geopolitical ambivalence about Tigray in Ethiopia is rooted in the chronic anxiety about the possibility of an independent Tigray. More than it abhors co-habitation with Tigray the Amhara-Ethiopia mainstream dreads a strong independent Tigray as a neighbor. The resort to economically weaken Tigray, by annexing its prosperous agricultural lands and reducing its geographical size to make it unviable, has become a proactive strategy to rule out any success in the existence of Tigray as an independent state.

In the Tigray War a third approach was put into place the adverse effects of which is not as yet fully resolved. The Tigray War enabled Eritrea to annex northern Tigray and the Amhara occupied the western and the southern territories. The partitioning left little more than the Capital City for Tigray. This was considered as the final geopolitical solution to end the “Tigray issue” once and for all.

1.8. Ideology as an opportunity against Tigray

Capitalism and the ideologies associated with it had no part in the cultural and economic history of Ethiopia. Ideological debates in Ethiopia were exclusively religious during the long monarchical rule. Almost invariably, the movements that led to the demise of the Monarchical system in Ethiopia were socialist oriented. Hence the ideological debates were restricted to different versions of Marxism rather than between liberalism and socialism. TPLF fought against military rule although both were adherents of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. All other political parties for or against Military rule were all socialists. It is hypocrisy to curse one as communist in Ethiopia.

When TPLF came to political power as member of the EPRDF-coalition in 1991, the West grudgingly accepted it as an inconvenient anti-capitalist party ruling Ethiopia. USA and its allies have for long been looking for a more liberal substitute; but the balancing tactics of Meles Zenawi have moderated the West's belligerence towards the seemingly socialist oriented revolutionary democracy guiding economic development in Ethiopia. Although none of the politicians in Ethiopia have had an ideological history of liberalism they used TPLF-EPRDF's socialist orientation as an opportunity to appeal to USA and its capitalist allies against the Ruling Party. No one is sure about how Meles Zenawi died; but his death was a blessing in a bad guise for those who hate whatever is Tigrayan and for the wider world of liberalism. Successors of Meles Zenawi were less versed in the diplomatic and econometric skills he possessed. Then the catastrophe!

It is conjectured that the removal of TPLF from power and the subsequent intensive campaign to discredit it enjoyed at least the tacit approval of the West. The liberalist camp had hoped that the Ethiopian economy will now be led along the recommendations of the twin financial institutions: World Bank and the IMF. When the Jinni got out of the bottle, the anti-TPLF crusade got out of hand and turned into a genocidal war against the people of Tigray. USA and its allies realized they had to perform some magic of balancing the morality of ending the genocide in Tigray and their strategic interests in Ethiopia. The ambivalence in the policies of the US, the UN, and the EU resulted in a fatal procrastination of life saving action in Tigray. A million people died as a gruesome testimony to the quest for liberalism without a human face.

1.9. Tigrayans are distinguishable from the host society

If one discusses Tigrayans in Ethiopia there is a tacit agreement that they are different from the rest of the society. The difference ranges from the way they behave to the kind of work they love or are able to do. In stark contrast to the rest of the Ethiopian society Tigrayans are quick tempered, more alert and quick to react. Tigrayans are quick tempered; but many say this is because they are quick witted and get a quicker grasp of things. They are invincible worriers and adept strategists. When it comes to preserving Tigrayan language and traditions they live in a virtual ghetto. Generations of Tigrayans are not easily assimilated in the host societies probably because they feel no culture is superior to theirs.

Tigrayans have the propensity to excel in technical matters, and hence, they are over represented in the building, mining, transport, and manufacturing sectors. Axum that minted gold and

silver coins as far back as 1.5 thousand years is still the “Gold and Silver smith of Ethiopia”. The crafting and selling of jewelry in gold and silver, all over Ethiopia, is the monopoly of Axum-born Tigrayans. In connection with the Tigray War several jewelry shops in the City center of Addis Ababa were robbed by armed personnel. It is reported that this is part of the campaign to impoverish the economic elite of Tigray. The action is reminiscent of the ‘Kristallnacht’ in Germany on the eve of WWII.

Fig. 5 Notable Axumite/Tigrayans: Top: King Ezana, King Kaleb, St. Fremetious (First Patriarch), St. Yared (Great Church Scholar). Bottom: King Yohannes, Raesi Alula, Dr. Tewodros WHO, Prime Minister Meles.



The Tigrayan paradox in Ethiopia is that they have a lower de facto share of the right to citizenship but a much higher sense of responsibility for Ethiopia. They got only two chances to show how wisely and effectively they can manage the complex affairs of the Ethiopian state, in the thousand years after the decline of Axum. Unfortunately, in the two cases in which Tigrayans ascended to political power they were cursed rather than thanked

for their great accomplishments for Ethiopia. Yohannes IV pacified Ethiopia and protected it from multiple foreign aggressions. He finally died defending Ethiopia from Mahdist. Ethiopians have been tarnishing his name ever since. Tigrayans and TPLF were brutalized for building a robust economy and defense in Ethiopia. It was a wasted effort which could have been done in grateful Tigray with best effect.

Fig. 6 The People of Tigray have a rich heritage of music and dance



As brave as Tigrayans are in time of war, they are down to earth softhearted even to their enemies. They are united in time of adversity; but during peace time, they entertain diversity of ideas without reservations. This is typical to civilized societies; but the democratic culture has been the Achilles-heel of Tigrayans. In the Ethiopian political context, which is characterized by conspiracies and the lack of openness, the culture of open debate has been used by anti-Tigrayan politicians as an opportunity to divide and weaken them. As culture is second nature, and so much so for Tigrayans, they have never learnt the self-preserving lesson of remaining eternally united.

1.10. Culmination of the anti-Tigrayan Consensus in Ethiopia

A brutal massacre of hundreds of Tigrayan monks accused of heresy took place by the then Abyssinian King in the 15th Century, with a green light from the Orthodox Church leadership.

Although the movement was meant to modernize church doctrines and remove its backward elements they were flogged, thrown down ravines, their hairs torn out, their faces and bodies lacerated with knives, speared, dragged on the ground until their skins peeled off, tortured by fire, their tongues pulled out, their ears and nose cut, their eyes gouged and hot rods inserted in the sockets, their limbs chopped off, beheaded, their corpses dismembered and burnt (Hagos, 2011).

During the reign of Menilik II Axumite Tigray faced a great deal of marginalization; civil strife was deliberately incited, the people were systematically impoverished, the nobility were detained or killed or wedded to the King's household members as a political trap. He did his best to eliminate any possibility of the restoration of Axumite spirit and/or legitimate claim to the throne of Yohannes IV. The Red Sea province of the former Axumite kingdom was traded to Italy putting an end to any arms import from overseas to Tigray, ensuring its weakening.

The most to be devastated by the Italo-Ethiopian war of the 1935-41 was Tigray. In the 19th Century, the battle of Adwa was only the last of the series of battles fought throughout Tigray from its southern tip to its northern one. This happened because Tigray was where Italy went in and went out fighting all over the land. In 1943 impoverished Tigrayans burdened with taxes and bad governance, as if the devastation by wars was not enough, rebelled against the central government. The insurgency was crushed in November of 1943 with assistance from the British Royal Air Force. Haile Selassie requested the RAF to bomb two Tigrayan towns: the capital Mekelle and Corbetta town (Searcy, 2021). Hundreds of civilians were massacred and maimed by the airstrikes.

Instead of trying to peacefully resolve the problem about the relations with Tigrayans the Amhara-based Monarchy continued with its punitive measures by appointing non-Tigrayan governors or Tigrayans tied up by wedlock; taking away large fertile territories and giving it to other provinces. In the following decades the people of Tigray were exposed to three major droughts and famine. There was severe famine in Tigray in 1958 and 1974 which went without significant government relief. In 1985 starving Tigray, by withholding food from the population, was employed as a strategy by the Military government to penalize the people of Tigray it considered as sympathetic to the TPLF (Africa Watch, 1991).

Few in Ethiopia sympathize with the plight of Tigrayans. The consensus in Ethiopia makes it seem like Tigrayans deserve ill-treatment. In 2018 friends and foes in Ethiopia formed an unholy alliance to overthrow what they considered to be an ‘alien’ Tigrayan government. Time and circumstances through the years have shown that nothing else unites Ethiopians as the hate against Tigrayans does. The grudges Ethiopians harbor against each other is enough to motivate them to exterminate each other; but they seem to have vowed that Tigrayans must die first. Overthrowing TPLF was not the end; it was only the first step to remove Tigrayans from the political and economic picture in Ethiopia once and for all. The culmination came on the 4th of November 2020.



Chapter 2

Profiles: Contexts and Issues Shaping the Tigray War

2.1 Introduction

Conflict is the result of disagreement between actors on the basis of perceived incompatible goals. Hence, it is about power contestation between actors and the shaping and reshaping of institutions for the benefit of some at the expense of others (Herbert 2017). Conflict analysis focuses on the core analytical elements: Profile, Actors, Causes, and Dynamics (Nicaise 2014). The analysis of the Tigray War is framed in these core elements; and this chapter elaborates the first of these elements: Profiles of the war.

Profiles are structural and institutional contexts, and the emergent issues associated with them, that shape and reshape the conflict. Contexts that shape and reshape violent conflicts could be geographic, political, economic, socio-cultural, and historic. Describing the relevant physical geographies, geo-strategic positions, political and economic structures, composition of demographic or social groups, and recent histories provides a useful setting for the analysis (Herbert 2017, Nicaise 2014).

2.2. Geographic and Geostrategic Contexts

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Eritrea are two sovereign states in the Horn of Africa; while Tigray and Amhara are two of the nine regional states of Ethiopia under the federal arrangement instituted in 1995. Ethiopia is located in Northeastern Africa, 3°-14.8 ° latitude 33 ° - 48 ° longitude. It shares borders with Somalia in the southeast, with Kenya in the

south, with Djibouti in the east, with Sudan and South Sudan in the west, and with Eritrea in the north. It is located in the most significant part of the Upper Basin of the Nile Rivers system, having a great deal of diplomatic implications to the lower Nile states of Sudan and Egypt.

Ethiopia is a landlocked state; but being the second most populous African state, added to its proximity to the Middle East, the Red Sea Region, and the Nile System, has put it in the list of states found in strategic location of global significance. Little wonder that global powers are locked in a stiff competition for political and economic influence over Ethiopia. Ethiopia has an area of 1,104,300 km²; twice the size of France and is the largest state in the Horn of Africa. Though located in the middle of a wider arid and semi-arid region Ethiopia has a vast potential for agricultural investment putting it at the center of focus in the economic diplomacy of the prosperous Arab states.

Eritrea is located to the north of Ethiopia, sharing the longest border with Tigray. It is a Red Sea state sharing a third of the coastline on the southwestern side of the Sea. No doubt, Eritrea is in the diplomatic spotlight by the superpowers as well as Arab states of the Middle East. Eritrea shares borders with Djibouti in the southeast and with Sudan in the west. It has unresolved borders issues with Ethiopia to the south. With a history of exit-entry-exit of Eritrea Ethiopia got its current geographic size and shape in the first half of the 1990s. Ethiopia is the outcome of a history of conquest and incorporation of sultanates, kingdoms and other polities in the east, south, and west during the reign of Menilik II by the turn of the 20th Century. Hence, Ethiopia's present day administrative geography is not thousands of years old as it is often claimed. Internal administrative divisions in

Ethiopia have also been transitory. Frequent changes depended on criteria set by rulers to fit power politics.

Through the centuries, new provinces were created and the older ones eliminated, reduced or increased in size. The only administrative unit that remained more or less intact is Tigray. As a core territory of the Axumite Kingdom its areal extent is well known and has been accepted for centuries. With the rivalry between the Amhara and Tigray intensifying the former has been taking punitive measures in terms of territorial re-division adversely affecting Tigray. This got its final solution with the advent of the Federal Constitution in which Tigray got its current size and shape. The Constitution also created the Amhara Regional State as an amalgam of four former Amhara provinces. This marked the beginning of Amhara claim of territory from Tigray which disregarded constitutional provisions.

Tigray shares border with Sudan in the west and with Afar Regional State in the east. Its southern border shared with Amhara Regional State is the most problematic. Tigray is located over 800 kilometers north of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian Capital. It does not have direct access to the sea except across Eritrea and Sudan. This has put Tigray in a difficult geopolitical situation which became a critical issue during the War. An unfriendly government in Eritrea and an ambitious expansionist state of Amhara sealing its borders with Sudan Tigray was in complete encirclement during the War.

2.3. Political and Economic Structures

Abyssinia-Ethiopia had been ruled by absolute monarchies for several centuries until 1974 when feudalism came to an end as political and socioeconomic system by a coup d'état. The

centuries of feudal order kept millions under serfdom with a backward subsistence agriculture. In the aftermath of WWII, as a result of some leftovers from brief Italian occupation and influence from the west, a nascent capitalist economy had existed in Ethiopia which was nipped in the bud by a socialist revolution. A hardline socialist political economy prevailed for 17 years under a tyrannical military government. It was an economy in which state ownership and the equalization of poverty was glorified and capitalist investment was criminalized as bourgeois and imperialist.

In view of the fact that Marxist military rule had eliminated all the pockets of early capitalist development in Ethiopia it became a challenge for the TPLF-led EPRDF government (1991-2018) to allow a fully liberalized economy in a situation where the social and economic rawmaterials for capitalism did not exist. When a new left-inclined approach to economic development was adopted in Ethiopia the influence of the World Bank and IMF became minimal to the dissatisfaction of Western Capitalism. The rebellion against TPLF-led EPRDF government that ended its rule in 2018 was partly a concealed expression of the dissatisfaction. Currently, Ethiopia finds itself in a wrecked economy in which neither the previous policies continued nor liberalism introduced as it was hoped to be.

Ethiopia had constitutions during the Monarchy and during the Military regime; but both were not based the universal jurisprudence and served as tools for the consolidation of power by the ruling class. A constitution was adopted in 1995, which was far from being perfect but catered for the age old problem of the quest for the self-determination of nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. Political power before the Federal Constitution failed to

pay due attention to the principles of unity in diversity. The vast majority of the ethnic groups in Ethiopia loved the new Constitution, but the Amhara elite called it the “The book of TPLF”. In the last 30 years, and more so in the last four years, political antagonism in Ethiopia is centered on for and against the Constitution.

When Eritrea was a province of Ethiopia its economy was in many respects similar but not the same as Ethiopia’s. Over half a century of colonial rule had introduced a relatively strong capitalist element into its economy in contrast to Ethiopia’s. The hope of attaining the level of a tiger economy in Eritrea was dimmed when independent Eritrea turned into a garrison state in which its less than five million people could not eke out a decent living. It shaped its economic policy as a predatory state with ambitions on the vast resources of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a counter ambition on Eritrea to control its ports.

Eritrea has utterly failed to cater for itself by harnessing its own human and natural resources. Eritreans had put all their hope in their ports; but they are too engrossed in damaging military interventions in many African countries to use the ports for economic progress. The upkeep of the Red Sea coastline seems to have become a white elephant burden for Eritrea; but a strategic site for a competitive superpower military encampment. The failure of democracy in Eritrea has turned its leader into a regional strong-man whom Eastern and Horn of African leaders dread. In contrast to Eritrea, Ethiopia has a federal system of government in which administrative regionalization is based on its 80 plus ethno-linguistic identity. Although Eritrea has nine distinct ethnic identities and deserve to have some form of self-rule the government has ruled out administrative regionalization

based on such identities. Eritrean government considers federalism in Ethiopia as a bad example for Eritrea that should not be emulated.

2.4. Demographic/Social Groups

The latest population figure of Ethiopia is 120 million. It is the total population of Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti combined. The absolute number is important; but more crucial is the composition of the population as a context for conflict analysis. Ethiopia's ethnic diversity has shaped its political history through the centuries. Many analysts and politicians consider ethnic diversity as an obstacle to unity and national progress; but this would be like turning a blind eye to the elephant in the room. Ethiopia's future is uncertain if it does not duly attend to ethnic diversity as an opportunity rather than as a challenge to national unity.

Fig. 7 Ethnic Composition in Ethiopia

Group	%	Group	%	Ethiopia-Tigray-Eritrea share Ethnicity across their borders
Oromo	34.4	Hadiya	1.7	
Amhara	27.0	Afar	1.7	
Somali	6.2	Gamo	1.5	
Tigray	6.1	Gedeo	1.3	
Sidama	4.0	Silte	1.3	
Gurage	2.5	Kefficho	1.2	
Welaita	2.3	Other	8.8	

There are over 80 ethnic groups in Ethiopia; but only seven groups account for over 85 percent of the total. The majority are

ethnic Oromos; a third of the total population. However, until recently that did not matter in the power politics in Ethiopia. For many centuries, until the advent of federalism in Ethiopia, political power was concentrated in the hands of the Amhara elite.

The only and the strongest rival to the perpetual incumbency of the Amhara elite has been the political elite of Tigray. Although the latter is a demographic minority, most analysts call it the “political majority”. Its more advanced polity as the heir of the Axumite Civilization gives it the upper hand; but it is often trivialized as resource poor minority. This has had little effect on morale though. Tigray as an ethnic identity stretches well into the densely populated highlands of Eritrea (See Fig.7). This is the northern Axumite core in present day central, southern, and southeastern Eritrea.

The fact that the people on both sides of the border have been ruled differently the former kins have grown apart and their relationship has gone acrimonious to the extent of ethnic Tigrayans from Eritrea massacring their ethnic kins in Tigray and destroying their economy in the last War. The Afars in the northeast share borders and ethnicity with Eritrea making that part of Ethiopia and Eritrea a hot spot for tension between Eritrea and Tigray. Since the change of government in Ethiopia in 2018 there has been shift of the center of political power from the Amhara to the Oromo elite. The Oromos claim that justice has happened and the majority are at the helm. The Amhara elite are referring to the trend as “power by turn, not by election”. The Amhara elite are most vocal about electoral democracy free from ethnic politics; but keen observers and sober analysts consider this as a ploy of the Amhara elite to maneuver themselves onto the top in the guise

of Ethiopian nationalism or universalism. Oromos are strategic allies of Tigrayans because they share federalist values.

The rest of the ethnic groups in Ethiopia don't seem to be decided whether they have to forge alliances with the majority Oromos, who also command vast natural resources, or stick to their loyalty to the old masters. For this reason over seventy ethnic groups in Ethiopia have become virtual spectators or onlookers when a few of the ethnic groups dominate the bloody political arena in Ethiopia in recent years. Self-rule in the regional states has been abused to the extent that regional governments are using armed ethnics to fight their personal wars in other regions. This has played a significant role in the Tigray War in which members of the minority ethnic groups were deployed to fight against Tigray: People who fought for 17 years to institute the right to self-determination of these ethnic minority groups.

The population geography of ethnic composition in Ethiopia is not only central to the rivalry for political control but also the competition for resources and territories. There has been a lot of geographical shifts in population from south to north, north to south, central to south, southeast, east, and west in the last centuries. The most demographically significant have been the massive settlement of the northern Amhara in the conquered lands of the Oromos, Sidaamas, and others. The population movement was motivated by land resource scarcity in the north and central and did not involve significant assimilation in the host societies.

The cultural contacts were not friendly or accommodative. In-migrating people, dominantly Amhara, were considered by the native host populations as supremacist. When land proclamation in 1975 ensured land ownership for the Oromo and Sidaama

tenants serving the Amhara landlords the balance of power tilted in favor of the natives of the areas in which the Amhara had settled. The second was the establishment of the Federation which brought about self-rule for the Oromos and Sidaamas making business as usual for the Amhara residents of urban and rural Oromia almost impossible.

The Amhara have lost the economic power they had enjoyed in the past which was based on the firm political control they exercised during the Monarchy and the Military regime. However, the Amhara, demographically significant as they are, were also empowered in the academic sphere. Using the initial advantage as advanced standing they were able to regain economic leverage in large scale and multi-sectoral investment. This triggered a new wave of Amhara politics for “lebensraum” and thus, the advent of neo-expansionist tendencies.

The new Amhara bourgeoisie politicized the demand for land resources for investment as Amhara nationalism in the guise of Ethiopianism. Rather than assert itself through peaceful economic competition it resorted to militancy and extensive media warfare and clashed head on with Tigrayans, Oromos and Gumz. The claim for control of the prosperous sesame farmlands in Welqait and Humera in Tigray, the virgin lands in Metekel (Benishangul), the City of Addis Ababa the Oromos call Finfine, and the Oromo heartland of Welega has brought down Ethiopia to the edge of collapse.

2.5. Recent History of Conflict

Of all the contexts that directly or indirectly shaped the Tigray War the Ethio-Eritrean War of the late 1990's has had the most

influence. The intractable problems Tigray suffered from that are associated with the Red Sea state of Eritrea, which has its roots that can be traced back to the turn of the 20th Century when Menilik II ceded the coastal strip and the adjacent highlands to Italians in exchange for weapons, cash, and security assurance. The historical blunder by the Monarch that had planted the thorny seedling continues to bleed Tigray white.

The historical backdrop remaining important, the Tigray War is in the most part an extension of the Ethio-Eritrean War. The question is, what issues were not resolved by the Ethio-Eritrean War that extended and complicated the Tigray War as a result? First and foremost, the Eritrean war for independence against Ethiopia was wrongly taken at face value by the friendly politicians of Tigray. There were Eritreans who were honestly freedom loving without dangerous political strings attached. However, Eritrean political elite and the leadership of the freedom movement had hidden motives they hinted but never revealed. Told in black and white, Eritrean politicians were fighting not to free their land from what they called “Ethiopian colonizers” but to weaken the power of Ethiopia to the level where it can be counter-colonized by Eritrea.

TPLF politicians in Tigray, both during the armed struggle and in the few years after Eritrean independence, did not realize that Eritreans took them as worse enemies than their former second “colonizer”: Ethiopia. For as long as the armed struggle in Tigray lasted, TPLF politicians in Tigray were getting some big and small signals hinting what was concealed behind the seemingly cordial comradely/ brotherly relations between the two former Axumite Kins. As honest and philosophical most of the politicians of Tigray have been they did not take the warnings seriously.

Even those who took the warnings seriously fell short of nipping them in the bud to the long term benefit, safety and security of the people of Tigray.

Less than a year after TPLF was founded Eritrean freedom fighters were at loggerheads with the TPLF leadership they helped to arm. They desired to control the leadership of TPLF directly or indirectly; and there was some degree of success. With no end of the struggle in sight Eritrean leaders were raising serious but premature border issues on Tigray along the Badme land strip as early as in the 1970s. Such claims did not need to be priorities for EPLF and ELF at the time; but it was a manner of telling TPLF leaders that Eritreans were not honest about the struggle for independence without a hidden agenda. In January 1982 the Asmara Manifesto was issued to launch the Red Star Campaign the objective of which was “to annihilate and destroy the EPLF army and crushing all dreams for independence by Eritreans once and for all.” TPLF sent a contingent of its fighters to help EPLF in Sahil where the latter was encircled by Ethiopian forces. The encirclement was broken with a decisive support from TPLF fighters.

Fig. 8 EPLF Fighters: Thirty years of arduous struggle for what?



In a typical gesture of ungratefulness for the great Sahil-rescue of EPLF by TPLF combatants, a couple of years later EPLF blocked Tigray famine victims from crossing its borders to the relief sites in Sudan. TPLF leaders and members lament the cruelty of EPLF leaders but kept the gruesome secret under the carpet until the Ethio-Eritrean War started. The endless forbearance of TPLF leadership towards EPLF was used against them and against Tigray plunging it into the gravest danger in its long history.

When TPLF and EPLF reached Addis Ababa in 1991 they had different plans up their sleeves. EPLF led by Isaias Afewerki had a strange roadmap which sought political independence for Eritrea, based on the economy of Ethiopia. Ruling from Asmara EPLF expected TPLF to serve it as a proxy to access the economy of Ethiopia to realize its ambitions of creating another Singapore in the Horn Africa. In an interview with ETV's Tsehaye Debalkew as early as 1991, Isaias Afewerki expressed his readiness to re-unite Eritrea with Ethiopia when the time is ripe. By doing so he was either rendering the 30 years of armed struggle for independence worthless effort or was trying to appease Ethiopians so that they will turn a blind eye to his ambitions to plunder the resources and the economy of Ethiopia.

Isaias was not as enthusiastic for the independence of Eritrea as much as the politicians of Tigray, at the helm in Ethiopia, strangely were. Here lies the wide chasm between Eritrean and Tigray politicians. Tigray politicians, either out of the love for freedom or to remove stubborn competitors out of Ethiopian politics advocated for Eritrean independence and facilitated its referendum. Isaias, the Eritrean leader had for long harbored the ambition to become the President of Ethiopia by tabling Eritrean independence for negotiations. The secret was disclosed by two

senior leaders of the EPLF and TPLF: Mesfin Hagos and Sebhat Nega respectively. Unfortunately, the revelation was too late to help reverse the adverse trend leading to the Ethio-Eritrean War. Sebhat Nega, a TPLF veteran and one of its founding fathers, had become more Catholic than the pope as he blamed Eritreans leaders as unpatriotic and undemocratic for showing preference to join Ethiopia.

The strange truth told about Isaias' aspirations were loved by Ethiopians who hoped for regaining access to the Sea; Isaias as president or otherwise. More bizarre was, in spite of the enthusiasm for independence displayed during and after the referendum, countless Eritreans did not feel much discomfort with the idea of moving back into the Ethiopian fold. For most Eritreans independence has turned into a celebration for the advent of poverty under a "post-independence dictatorship". The softening of relations between anti-TPLF Ethiopians and Eritreans was gradually evolving into a strong political alliance against TPLF rule in Addis Ababa. The government of Isaias went as far as providing refuge and military training for anti-TPLF parties.

Bridging the gap between Eritrean and anti-TPLF politicians in Ethiopia had several facets that fed into each other to reinforce the alliance and make it more complicated for TPLF. Isaias hankered for dominance over East Africa via political and economic control of Ethiopia; the Gondar-Amhara elite needed the support of Eritrea to recapture Western Tigray, acquire a shared border with Eritrea facilitating Eritrean investment in Humera-Welqait, and access to Eritrean ports. Opposition to the Federal Constitution in Ethiopia, introduced by TPLF-EPRDF was also a point of convergence for Eritrea and Amhara politics. Isaias hated the Constitution as a bad example for his rule in Eritrea and the

expansionist and supremacist ambitions of the Amhara elite were also frustrated by the Constitution. This laid a solid foundation for the alliance between Amhara-Ethiopia and Eritrea against TPLF-Tigray.

The decade between the Ethio-Eritrean War and the victory of TPLF and EPLF on the Military regime (1991-2000) were years in which the irreconcilable difference between TPLF in Ethiopia and EPLF in Eritrea was evolving. Although Eritrea became independent in 1994 this did not prevent it from full scale parasitic involvement in the Ethiopian economy. There was little official regulation over the covert and overt activities of Eritreans plunging Ethiopian economy into chaos. Probably out of fear of retribution from the lawless dictator in Asmara on the TPLF leadership the latter turned a blind eye to the Wild West economic scenario in Ethiopia in the hands of Eritrean politicians, business people, and security personnel.

When the going got tough, the tough TPLF-led government in Ethiopia had to get going to regulate the activities of Eritrea in the Ethiopian economy. In defiance, and with an intent to provoke TPLF into war, Eritrea triggered a chain reaction that was to last for two decades and reach its peak in November 2020. Eritrea might have felt that its parasitic ambition over Ethiopia was frustrated by TPLF at Arat-Kilo and ending TPLF rule would be a remedy. For a starter, Eritrean troops scratched a very old wound of border dispute around Badme and annexed the small village with a disproportionate mechanized army division. Isaias hoped his action would look like a regular border skirmish while it was just the tip of the iceberg.

Neither could Isaias survive as a leader of Eritrea nor would Eritrea be an economically viable sovereign state if the initial road-map of “Eritrea for Eritreans; but Ethiopia for both” is not converted into practice. In the decade between 1991 and 2000 it became quite clear that Eritrea did not have Plan B for its existence as political economic unit catering for the dreams of its millions who bled for 30 years in the brutal war for independence. The failure of Eritrea to exist as a peaceful and thriving nation is the logical outcome of its leaders’ unrealistic dreams of leading Eritrea as a predator state. TPLF was able to mobilize Ethiopians against the Eritrean aggression although Isaias hoped that Ethiopians would allow him to crush his arch detractors in Tigray.

Contrary to the calculations of Isaias Eritrea was defeated by the Ethiopian Army led by former TPLF commanders. Eritrean leader could not bear the humiliation and vowed to take revenge. Two decades later he got the opportunity to rain his fury on Tigray. For 20 years after the Ethio-Eritrean War, known popularly as “the Badme War:” Isaias kept himself, his generals, and the top civilian political leaders in the ruling party, degrading the economy and society in Eritrea to the level of a medieval age. Isaias fashioned a hellish garrison state from the vibrant former Italian colony. Its robust manufacturing sector was weakened and its cities turned into virtual ghost towns. The youth were marched into military camps for an indefinite military service. Hundreds of thousands of young Eritreans were flocking on dangerous routes to Europe and the Middle East. A hundred thousand more were trapped in refugee camps in Tigray, the Sudan and in the hot Afar desert.

Whatever was left of the Eritrean economy was run by consensual and/or coerced remittances from those in the diaspora who got

there pushed by the miserable life inside Eritrea. The fate of Eritrea as a sovereign state became a source of mercenaries to fight in the neighboring countries in wars that were none of the concerns of Eritrea. Eritrean troops, largely composed of national service men and women, were conscripted long before the age of 18. This made it easier to brainwash them, during their long stay in the remote camps, turning them into human killing machines. Eritrean troops in Tigray since 2020 have not been behaving like normal human beings.

When Ethiopian troops defeated Eritrean troops during the Badme War the former recaptured Badme and made an incursion deep into Eritrea. Ethiopian troops and some of their commanders are alleged to have desired to use the opportunity to retake Eritrea and end its independence. The TPLF facilitated independence of Eritrea had reduced Ethiopia into the most populous landlocked state in the world. Contrary to expectations TPLF Prime Minister of Ethiopia-Meles Zenawi-ordered Ethiopian troops to withdraw from Eritrean territories as a gesture of diplomatic goodwill. Unfortunately, this did not get him gratitude from Eritrea in return. Key TPLF leaders later on challenged Meles Zenawi for not using the victory to remove the Eritrean regime. TPLF and Tigray paid dearly in 2020 for the oversight of the then Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

The withdrawal of Ethiopian troops and the establishment of a buffer-zone inside Eritrea was translated by Isaias as a symbol of constant threat from TPLF and convinced the people of Eritrea that they will be under threat for a long time to come. Yosef Gebrehiwot, an Eritrean analyst, thinks that the establishment of the buffer-zone was a historic mistake that helped consolidate a totalitarian regime feeding on the false narrative of a threat of

invasion on Eritrea by TPLF. This helped Isaias to silence the people in constant fear of an invasion. He created a state of war to his own advantage and justified the absence of a constitution and elections.

Isaias convinced Eritreans and eliminated opposition as a threat and created a reason for his failure in the economy by replacing it with an economy in a state of war. He accused the G15 (opposition) as traitors. The opposition thought the people will support them against Isaias; but people did not care and left the opposition to the discretion of Isaias. People were tricked into believing Isaias; they did not know the real character of Isaias and trusted him with the dissidents. Isaias knows how to eliminate his opponents since the years of the armed struggle. The attention of the people of Eritrea was effectively diverted, away from the serious internal political, economic, and social problems, to Tigray which was portrayed to the Eritrean people as prospering while keeping Eritrea under threat and poverty.

Isaias waited for an opportunity to destroy TPLF. He was training anti-TPLF political forces like OLF, Ginbot 7, Demhit, and Arbenoch. Isaias also financed the anti-Tigray media: ESAT TV. While Eritrea was buzzing with activity against Tigray TPLF reassured itself that sanctions were weakening Isaias. Sanctions affect people and Isaias does not care about that. TPLF also thought it could contain Eritrea forever. This was angering Eritreans and turning them wild against Tigray. Isaias could see a ray of hope with the passing away of Meles Zenawi. TPLF leaders after Meles were not in a position to put a check on the moves of Isaias to collaborate with Ethiopian politicians. Yosef Gebrehiwot asked several questions to the enigmatic Eritreans: Do Eritreans want to live as an independent state? Do they think they have an

independent state? Do they really care about Eritrean statehood? Do they think they are a sovereign state? How could they be a sovereign state without even a nominal constitution? The earliest human states like Sumerians, Hammurabi had written rules.

2.6. Emergent Issues Influencing the Tigray War

During Military rule in Ethiopia the war in Eritrea and Tigray was eating deeply into the demography particularly the middle portion of the population pyramid. The depletion of the young and adult population was negatively affecting the rate of population regeneration, as a blessing in a bad guise, matching it to the nose diving economy. The war ended in 1991 and was followed by three decades of calm in which the population in Ethiopia shot up from 50 million in 1991 to 117 million in 2020 according to figures from Macro Trends. During the war (1974-1991) the average was one million net increase per year; while during peacetime (1991-2020) the rate was an average of two millions per year.

Economic, social, and political implications of the drastic population increase is enormous. Politically speaking, TPLF-EPRDF government can be considered as more unfortunate than its predecessors who presided over sluggish economy and demographic change. However much economic growth is boosted it is no match for the population explosion that characterizes the period of peace. Instability and the ubiquity of death become the order of the day during wartime. The social crisis that emanates from youth unemployment during peacetime has the potential to breed conflicts soon degenerating into bloody civil wars. The unemployed youth become analogous to oxygen blown into the raging fire of violent conflicts perpetuating wars in a spiraling

causality. In a recent public speech the Prime Minister of Ethiopia is quoted to have considered the unemployed youth of Ethiopia as an abundant raw material for war-making.

Its geography has endowed Ethiopia with vast quantities and varied qualities of natural and economic resources. The clash of economic development theories in Ethiopia have denied continuity in the way the economy is run. Every time there is a change of government the entire economy is shaken to its foundations and unhelpful ideas of starting all over again from the scratch fill the air. For the last half a century the Economy of Ethiopia has been returning back to square one with every change in the ruling political ideology. The pre-war four years in Ethiopia saw a quick and dangerous unraveling of the economic structure intricately woven by the TPLF-led coalition government of Ethiopia. The US backed aspiration to fully liberalize the economy failed utterly and the entire economy hit the ground with the drums of war getting louder and louder. Economic downturn and wars feed into each other leading to an irreversible catastrophe.

Election in Ethiopia and Eritrea is more of a luxury than a convention. Free and fair elections, from the national level to the grassroots, is not something that people hold close to their hearts. Ethiopians have for centuries in the past and for generations in the last century got so used to autocracies and dictatorships that the tolerance for undemocratic governance knows no limits. A simple election fraud or a few days election postponement may trigger rioting in some world states; but in Ethiopia and Eritrea even transgressions as huge as the refusal of incumbents to hold elections is waved as tolerable and understandable.

Election issues have been central in the run up to the Tigray War, taking a big chunk of the share of the causal factors. There is little talk about elections in Eritrea. Hence, any issue related to elections, is irrelevant in the analysis of profiles of conflicts. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office not with a finite election term in mind. On the day of his inauguration, first as party chief and as prime minister next in Parliament, he told the audience in black and white that he is there to stay. He shared his mother's prophesy about him being the "seventh king of Ethiopia". Those who were for various bad or good reasons fed up of TPLF-EPRDF rule in its 27 years of incumbency didn't mind whether or not Abiy Ahmed will run for periodic elections henceforth.

Abiy Ahmed did not fail to take advantage of the leniency of tens of millions in his moves to consolidate his power base. He expanded his constituency into religious institutions, opposition parties, and the politically illiterate using his talent to hypnotizing his fans. When the Day of Judgment arrived and the expiry of the term of office of the Parliament and the Prime Minister drew nearer, there was a lot of tension in the political community for and against extension of the term. The eve of the election coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, a blessing in a bad guise for the Prime Minister. In the name of voter safety he proposed indefinite extension of the national election.

Opposition parties were ambivalent and no serious threat came to Abiy Ahmed from that direction. TPLF which was operating from Tigray's Capital posed the only daunting challenge for the postponement of the election. Earlier, TPLF rejected Abiy Ahmed's request to join his new party. This has angered the Prime Minister because TPLF had been at the helm for 27 years and it is the staunchest defender of the Federal Constitution.

Support from the TPLF for the Prime Minister could have turned out to be the most critical for his success as an autocrat.

The lofty constitutional principle of Self-determination or self-rule of regional states was a pin in the butt for Abiy Ahmed's ambition to reverse to unitary system which allows a highly centralized system of government. In a federal system the center is only a coordinator, not a dictator. The wall is very high and very strong, a bridge is absent between federal and unitary systems. Any reconciliation between TPLF and Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party would mean doing the impossible of demolishing the wall and building bridge. To the utter dismay and frustration of the Prime Minister TPLF braved the Pandemic and held regional election rendering the federal government illegitimate. Although holding elections is one of the most Godly of human actions politicians from all over Ethiopia and Eritrea condemned it as an act of treason and an open rebellion against central authority. Election in Tigray got to the top of the "shopping list" for a criminal case against TPLF and the people of Tigray. Ancient Athens must have turned in its grave at the news of democracy on the gallows.

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Chapter 3

Actors on the Federal Government Side

3.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework for the analysis of actors in conflict is elaborated by Herbert (2017) and Nicaise (2014). Actors are individuals or groups or institutions that are engaged in conflict or contribute to it or are affected by it. They could be at local, national, regional or global levels. Actors in a conflict possess differential powers or capacities in the forms of political power, political ties, political ideologies, political constituencies, economic resources and access to the resources, business relations, population sizes, spiritual leadership, religious values, traditional customs, social networks, ethno-nationalist affiliations, information generation and dissemination, external relations, and global networks.

Actors have differing interests, positions, goals, and needs; and have negative or positive relationships. They can be connectors, dividers, or spoilers with incentives and disincentives to be so. Actors also have vulnerabilities depending on their possession of power in a conflict. The conceptual framework shows conflict analysis is best presented with the help of visualizations. Actors, their roles and relationships, are depicted by ‘Actor Mapping’ as described for instance by Nicaise (2014) and Yuji (2021). Actor power or capacity, determining its role in the conflict, is represented by the size of the circle. There is no single measure of power or capacity of actors as there could be countless sources of power having differing parameters. The Actor Map compiled in the analysis is based on the analyst’s perception of power of the respective actors. The focus should be not so much on the sizes of

the circles but on the nature of the relationship. Relationships between the actors are represented by varied geometric symbols. Graphic representation of actor relationships is preceded by actor inventory, classification, and description.

As there are thousands of actors directly or indirectly, actively or passively involved in the War as individuals and/or as institutions the inventory is far from being exhaustive. The selection is based on author’s informed perception about who have been playing key roles in the War on all sides. Information about what roles the actors played and how significant to the War their respective roles had been is obtained not from participant observation but from the extensive media coverage the War has had. The Tigray War was covered by countless media outlets worldwide, including YouTube channels (Annex I).

Table 3.1. Classification Scheme of Actors in Tigray War

First		Second		Third	
Alliance	TIG	FDRE,AM, ER	TIG	IND, INS	IN, EX
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDRE-Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, AM-Amhara, ER-Eritrea, TIG-Tigray, IND-Individual, INS-Institutions, IN-Internal, EX-External • Allied- FDRE + AM+ ER 					

Classifying actors as primary, secondary, or tertiary is hugely beneficial for the analysis. However, boundaries between the categories shifted rapidly before and during the War. Hence, the listing and categorization of actors in the analysis is limited to the broad categories of actors as belonging to the two sides in the War in the first tier. Each side is categorized by difference in identity in the second tier. Within each exclusive category of actors individual or institutional and internal or external categories are identified.

3.2 Allied-FDRE- Individual-Internal (A-FDRE-IND-IN)

It is not easy to distinguish between actors who are acting individually or acting on behalf of institutions. This is particularly true in Ethiopia and Eritrea where individual and institutional roles or powers have blurred or non-existent boundaries. The Tigray War has seen a substantial number of individuals who dominated the media coverage as civilian and military leaders, as politicians and party leaders, as leaders of religious institutions and civic organizations, and as analysts, activists, and propagandists. There may not be a consensus in part or in whole among stakeholders about the list of individual actors selected for this category (A-FDRE-IND-IN).

FDRE and Amhara actors in the Tigray War do not make mutually exclusive categories. Individual actors on the FDRE category include appointees at various levels of the Federal Government apparatus, residents of the Federal Capital and Regions other than Tigray and Amhara, and top regional officials other than in Tigray and Amhara who are allied to the FDRE. Quite a few actors included in the FDRE category play double role as FDRE as well as Amhara actors. In fact, they are working to realize the Amhara agenda from within the Federal Government state apparatus in which they are placed highly enough.

Non-Amhara actors listed in the FDRE category have some but not all agenda shared with the Amhara actors. The structural causes of the Tigray War are exclusively owned by the Amhara actors in the Alliance. Most of the FDRE actors, who are also victims of the structural issues central to the Amhara agenda, don't subscribe to Amhara quest for supremacy. The only bond that held the FDRE and Amhara actors together was to neutralize the political might of TPLF and to commit genocide in Tigray.

Table 3.2. Selected Allied-FDRE-Individual-Internal Actors

Dr. Abiy Ahmed	Demeke Mekonnen*
Prof. Birhanu Nega	Adam Farah
Andargachew Tsegie	Amb. Taye Atsekeslassie
Redwan Hussien	Gedu Andargachew*
Meaza Ashenafi*	Nigusu Tilahun*
Temesgen Tiruneh*	Yohannes Buayalew*
Tagesse Chafo	Gen. Abebaw Tadesse*
Muferiat Kamil	FM/Gen. Birhanu Jula
Amb. Sahlework Zewde	Gen. Bacha Debele
Birtukan Midekssa	Gen. Yilma Merdassa
Dagmawit Moges*	Gen Birhanu Bekele
Gideon Timotewos	Dr. Daniel Bekele
Ahmed Shidie	Daniel Kibret*
Mustefe Umar (Somali)	Shimeles Abdissa (Oromia)
Awol Arba (Afar)	Adanech Abebe (Addis Ababa)
Dr. Abraham Belay	Dr. Aregawi Berhe
Dr. Liya Tadesse	Prof. Hargewoin Assefa
Dr. Mulu Nega	Zadig Abrha
Gen. Yohannes GM	Arkebe Ukbay
Dr. Dagnachew Assefa*	Worku Aytenew*
Tingirtu Gebretsadik*	Haile Gebreselassie
Seyoum Teshome	Gen. Kasaye Chemedda
Debebe Eshetu*	Eskendir Nega*
Hailemariam Desalegn	Abrar Abdo
Suleiman Dedefo	Chrotaw Kelkay*
Taye Dende'a	Feyisa Lelisa

* Federal actors with mostly Amhara roles

3.2.1 Selected Federal Government Actors

ABIY AHMED

At the top of the FDRE category of actors is the Prime Minister of Ethiopia sworn into office in 2018: Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali. Given the essentially structural nature of the cause of the War, it was only a matter of time that a war could have been triggered at any point in the near or distant future. However, the possible future war was fast-forwarded by Abiy Ahmed motivated by the overwhelming personal desire to perpetuate his rule over Ethiopia. Abiy's myopia did not allow him to realize that by his "brief law enforcement operation" he was pulling the Jinni out from the bottle: Imperial ambitions of the Amhara elite and the Tigrophobic hordes from Eritrea.

Fig. 9 Which of these has Abiy Ahmed remained faithful?



Aljazeera on 2 April 2018 reported that Ethiopian Parliament elected Abiy Ahmed as a new leader a week after his nomination as chairman of the ruling coalition: Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). While Merara Gudina of the Oromo Federalist Congress expressed cautious optimism, Ahmed Adam of the University of London considered the designation as a very historic moment for Ethiopia. Most scholars in Ethiopia and in the diaspora, including many Tigrayans, were optimistic. "*In his inaugural Address*" Hassen Hussein, reports

3 April 2018, *“Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that the day is a historic one for the Country, expressing regret about such previous opportunities wasted.”* Abiy promised to hold firmly with EPRDF’s development path; called for peace with Eritrea appealing for the blood relations to be taken into consideration; promised to facilitate for the Diaspora to participate; and referred to the opposition parties as brothers and sisters. The Prime Minister’s alluring address was what tempted many to consider him like a Messiah. Alula Iyasu, in a New Africa article 1 April 2018 asked if *‘Abiy Ahmed can be Ethiopia’s new Messiah’*.

Salem Solomon of VOA was inspired by what Abiy Ahmed did in less than four months in office that led to a dramatic turnaround: *“Sweeping reforms have quelled dissent, boosted civil liberties and begun to heal wounds from decades of ethnic tension and marginalization”*. On 15 October 2019 La Croix Africa reports that The Ethiopian Catholic Church is elated by the election of Abiy Ahmed to leadership. Bishop Gebre Ghiorgis said: *“We consider him a prophet sent by the Lord. He has a language very rich in humanity; he speaks of love, forgiveness, dialogue and the importance of avoiding wars. In his opinion, the use of weapons is always a defeat.”* Taye Bogale Arega is a pro-Amhara activist and considers himself as a historian. He is one of the hate-blinded Amhara politicians who think anything other than Tigrayans is better. He was all praise for Abiy Ahmed. His hyperbolic statements were intended to please Abiy:

“Your supremacy in ideas is amazing. You always keep on flying high like the eagle; you never stopped even for a moment. An army officer, a superior writer, and researcher; you impressed world leaders. You are a leader in times of great difficulties. You are a lot, you are a lot our Abiy! You are working tirelessly going low in order

to take us high. You are teaching us on Facebook; god bless you. You don't feel tired until we understand."

The scorn Ethiopians felt towards Tigrayans as people created an atmosphere of extreme jubilation with the coming of Abiy Ahmed. Not many people know Abiy. The millions of people who have gone crazy waving a kilometer long tri-color flag and chanting Abiy's name had no idea whether Abiy would deliver them or would plunge them into deeper darkness. Above everything else, they trusted him because he was not a Tigrayan. Abiy used this as a springboard and piled on it a huge heap of glittering promises mesmerizing the hypnotized fans.

Gondar stood out above all others in Ethiopia and took the lead in the pro-Abiy craze. The elites of Gondar dream of restoring the medieval glory of their city. They harbor the feeling that they are the bravest of the Amhara and their culture and history is more superior. Gondar reinstated Tewodros II from the dustbin of history into which it dumped him as cruel and anti-church tyrant. By doing so Gondar benefited from the symbolism of the name of Tewodros II as a 'unifier-king' of Gondar origin. Gondar built a reputation from a King who died lonely after the people of Gondar abandoned him.

Gondar has also been ungrateful to Tigrayans whose bones are strewn in Metema. Yohannes IV and his Tigrayan army marched from present day Eritrea to Gondar and Metema to save Gondar from Mahdist massacres. Instead of canonizing him for the great sacrifice, they blamed him for fighting the Mahdists in Gondar rather than preventing Italains from occupying the Red Sea Coast. Gondar does not want to tell the truth that the Coast was traded for armaments by Menilik II not by Yohannes IV. What Yohannes IV did was save people as a leader before trying to save

land while Gondar was burning in the hands of Mahdists. Anti-Tigray movement in Gondar started much earlier; but it took a violent form in 2016. William Davidson shared his reflections about the evolving danger on 22 December 2016 in *The Guardian*:

“Today, the city is facing new tensions that have a complex history. A territorial dispute between Amhara region and the neighboring Tigray has been simmering for at least 25 years. In recent months, these and other grievances have led to protests, strikes, vandalism and killings in Gondar; and an exodus of fearful Tigrayans. Tigrayan businesses were being targeted and Tigrayans attacked.”

The quest for the restoration of Gondar over Ethiopia has been preparing political, social, and economic ground for its realization. The most aggressive campaign Gondar led in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Synod has been the central act in the entire drama. A former Patriarch of Gondar origin set up a rebel synod in the United States while another synod and a Patriarch existed in the Ethiopian Capital. Gondar claimed its leadership of the Church as God-given. When this brought Gondar into conflict with the TPLF-led government and the Synod in Addis Ababa led by a Tigrayan Patriarch, the disagreement evolved into a Gondar-Tigray confrontation.

Gondar aggressively pursued its anti-Tigrayan campaign by rallying scholar, business people, and politicians of Gondar origin behind it. It can safely be conjectured that Gondar may have used the nuptial string for the big catch. The sympathetic son-in-law seems to have become a windfall for the ‘Gondar-Renaissance’. Caesar doomed the Roman Empire and as a result doomed himself because Cleopatra used his might in the interest of Egypt. The Ethiopian diaspora in the United States is predominantly from Gondar and led by the Gonderian Tamagn Beyene. That was

the reason why all of the Ethiopian and Amhara agenda were combined into a Gondar agenda. With Abiy Ahmed's good will to intervene Gondar won the synod case and brought its rebel synod and former Patriarch from USA to mix with the Synod and Patriarch in Addis Ababa. The central figure in the Gondar agenda, Tamagn Beyene, has celebrated Abiy Ahmed during his visit to the USA in 2018.

In fact, at the top of Gondar's to-do list for Abiy Ahmed was not bringing home the synod in exile but to solicit his full military support for the annexation of Western Tigray. For Gondar, Abiy first grossly violated EOTC Canons by pairing Patriarchs for the first time in the two thousand years of Church history. Although the first contravention was successful the second transgression of the Constitution in favor of Gondar, in which Abiy Ahmed helped Gondar to annex and devastate Western Tigray, turned out to be a nightmare. Gondar had its own style of swaying Abiy Ahmed to take the catastrophic action it wanted him to do. Fasil Demoz is a vocalist native to Gondar. The lyrics of his single released in 2018 was all praise for Abiy Ahmed, elevating him to the level of a deity:

“Abiy came at last and the sun rose for us; the crowd stretches into the horizon, life has become smooth and the market is full. A scholar born out of wisdom brought our life of stress to an end. Let us join him in his formula of national unity. The sun had remained set in the skies of my land; but now I can see a new day. I was deep in depression until yesterday; Abiy came and gave me the insurance to live. Abiy has come as the advocate of the people, the pain ended and the torment is over.”

Hailemariam Dessalegn was the Prime Minister of Ethiopia who abdicated in favor of Abiy Ahmed. His resignation was initially

considered as a noble gesture in response to the political instability that prevailed in Ethiopia in 2018, not as a prearranged transfer of power to Abiy Ahmed. At the time of his resignation he was quoted to have said “Ethiopians will elect a better leader”, as if who would replace him was upto Ethiopians to decide. After instating his fellow Protestant as Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn ‘spilled the beans’ in an interview in the following revelation (Video retrieved by Zara Media: 1 April, 2023):

“When God wants to introduce change He doesn’t descend from the Heavens by Himself. He does it through humans. I knew from the outset that God has chosen our Prime Minister to lead the transformation. I knew not only that he will be the Prime Minister but also that he was chosen”.

Long before the former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn ‘got the word’ from God about Abiy Ahmed’s Premiership, Abiy Ahmed had prophesied for himself that he will be the king of Ethiopia not as low as a Prime Minister. In a public speech (Video retrieved by Zara Media: 1 April, 2023) Abiy was all smiles when he said the following:

“Some twenty years ago I avoided posing for photos with people I knew at the time. If they are in possession of a photo with me on their side, I was afraid, they will show the photo to others when I become king boasting that they were together with me in the past. During the Badme War I was with Samora. I was telling him how he should be when I become king. He is around now; you can see him. First, people thought I was joking and they did not take me seriously. When I was in Rwanda there was a French lady who fell in love with me. She proposed to elope and take me to France. I cried! I felt bad by her belittling proposal. She didn’t know that I was the future king.”

The Nobel Prize knows scientists like Albert Einstein and economists like Amartya Sen. By and large, the Award has been

fair enough, although pressure from the West cannot be ruled out. By deception or by intention the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Abiy Ahmed has only given him a VIP visa to lead a destructive war. Other reasons for their support remaining the same Ethiopians were excited by an Ethiopian awarded a Nobel Prize for the first time. Since no other Ethiopian leader reached that high Ethiopians hastily concluded that he must be the best leader recognized by the whole world.

Table 3.3. World states, regional, and international bodies endorsed the Ethio-Eritrean “peace agreement”

United States	United Kingdom	United Nations
China	Germany	Vatican
Russia	Egypt	Japan
European Union	Turkey	Kenya
France	United Arab Emirates	Rwanda
Spain	African Union	

Why did world states, regional and international bodies endorse the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Abiy Ahmed and were embarrassed for doing so a year later? Instead of taking enough time to investigate the real motive behind the sudden resumption of Ethio-Eritrean relations world states, regional, and international bodies did not care to look into possible diplomatic tricks they are familiar with. Table 3.3 is a list of world states, regional and international bodies that endorsed the “peace agreement”. When the War started and spiraled out of control those who congratulated Abiy Ahmed for the Prize were literally handcuffed and disabled to stop the genocidal war. Mesfin Woldemariam, a retired professor (now deceased), expressed his skepticism about Abiy Ahmed’s ascent to political power in Ethiopia in these words (In Salem Solomon-VOA):

“While there is fire burning within the country from four directions, the prime minister is going to a different country. I don’t know what he is going to find or what he is looking for there. Engaging with the diaspora may not bring the benefits Abiy hopes to reap, until the country becomes more stable over time.”

Beyond Mesfin Woldemariam’s reservation is a revelation that caught off guard Abiy’s friends and foe. It is alleged in Tony Magana’s revelation on 11 August 2021 that Abiy Ahmed and his Prophet believed God was telling him all sin is allowable to achieve his destiny, including defeating Tigray and making Ethiopia great. Abiy was not just an ordinary person. His conversation with Sebhat Nega, a TPLF veteran, proved that Abiy’s ambition was mindboggling. Arising from what Abiy said to him Sebhat Nega characterized him as having “multiple Jinni”.

Birhanu Nega-Andargachew Tsegie: Linchpins of the Alliance

Professor Birhanu Nega is an extremely ambitious man. During the TPLF-EPRDF years he could not bear the idea that the TPLF leaders he knew personally are at the helm not him. This was Birhanu’s personal agenda. TPLF had endorsed him to be the Mayor of Addis Ababa (Finfine); a position he was elected to in the 2005 general elections. Unfortunately, the Capital was too small for him and he could not bear the idea of PM Meles Zenawi as his superior.

Instead of pursuing peaceful politics with the hope of success in future elections he decided to take the ‘bull by the horns’ and founded a militant party he named ‘Ginbot-7’. He went into exile to USA and found himself in the mountains of Eritrea next. He knew he could not defeat TPLF singlehandedly; he was weaving something more sinister. Time revealed what that was. Birhanu Nega returned to Ethiopia in 2018 and founded the EZEMA

Party, a merger of eight parties. He had Eritrean Passport when he founded the Party. The law does not allow a foreign citizen to involve in politics. The Eritrean Passport was issued on 9 November 2015 and the date of expiry was 6 November 2020; two days after the Tigray War started.

Expiry of the passport does not imply Birhanu ceased to be an Eritrean Citizen. The passport can be renewed anytime as long as registration is not cancelled. Technically, Birhanu Nega is still Ethiopian-born Eritrean; a leader of the biggest opposition party, and Minister of Education in Ethiopia. This is the extent Constitution can be violated in Ethiopia for the sake of forging alliance against Tigray.

Fig. 10 Isaias’ two hands in Ethiopia with Eritrean and British Passports



Andargachew is a British citizen who cannot justify his so deep involvement in the politics of Ethiopia. He was detained by TPLF and released by Abiy in 2018. He was not only grateful to Abiy but also decided to turn the burning ambition of Abiy into his own political arsenal. Andargachew and Birhanu were also busy with the propaganda war against TPLF. They had founded ESAT

Television to do the job from Washington DC. It was reported on June 20, 2013 by Daniel Berhane of Horn Affairs that an audio was leaked proving that Eritrea was funding ESAT Television. By associating himself with the political brokers- Andargachew and Birhanu- Abiy drove straight into the skillful manipulative hands of Isaias Afeworki; smiling broadly he was doomed forever. It was impossible for Abiy to escape from clutches of Isaias.

Andargachew and Birhanu were getting full political and financial support and military training in Eritrea to fight against the incumbent: TPLF-EPRDF. It was not so difficult for the veteran politicians to convince Abiy to their side. At a time of uncertainty, when the political giant Abiy feared the most was sitting in Mekelle, Abiy would go for any support against TPLF from wherever it comes. Andargachew was acting as an individual, but Birhanu had a bigger political muscle to help him exert a great deal of influence on Abiy. Abiy's vulnerability, inexperience, and ambition combined were exploited to seal his doom.

Later on, Andargachew Tsegie revealed the secret that he and Birhanu were the motive force behind Abiy: *"We gave him the road map; that is what he (Abiy) turned into practice."* After the War started Andargachew in military uniforms addressed troops in the war front (Translation the Telegraph 28 Nov. 2021): *"I tell you, you must not hesitate from resorting to the most barbaric of cruelties when you face them (Tigray forces), You must be merciless, you must act beyond what our Amhara or Ethiopian cultural values permit".*

The difference Abiy had with TPLF was not as dangerous and chronic as it was for Isaias Afeworki. After all, senior TPLF officials treated Abiy like their son and groomed him into reaching that level of political significance without any

reservations. His political experience, unmatched with his political ambitions, threw him into an intricately designed trap and took a better of him. After so much destruction in Tigray, and him considered by the world as a ‘war monger with a Nobel Peace Prize’, he must be nostalgic about the speech he delivered in a conference room in Mekelle April 13, 2018. The approval he got from the people of Tigray was wasted forever. That was a golden opportunity for Abiy to save Ethiopia from the abyss he threw it into. He directed his attention in the wrong direction.

AWOL ARBA

Of the regional presidents there were few who lost their track and served as stubborn proxies of the Amhara extremist politicians, Eritrean dictatorship, and the Federal Government under a de facto control by the Amhara political elite as much as Awol Arba did. Mustefe Umer of the Somali Region and Shimeles Abdissa of the Oromia Region were engaged in anti-TPLF rhetoric and sending a few thousands of their regional forces to the Tigray War. Nevertheless, they were doing this not out of hate for the people of Tigray but as per expectations from their Federal bosses. Awol Arba did the same, but more. He was not only conforming to the Prosperity Party guidelines pertaining to the conduct of the War but also excelling in brutality against the people of Tigray by blocking humanitarian aid access to the starving millions. Afar President-Awol Arba- and his team of corrupt officials wanted to ensure their political survival by the most inhuman methods. Awol Arba also oversaw the massacre and ethnic cleansing of Tigrayan residents in Afar Region who had put all their trusted in him for their lives.

AREGAWI BERHE

A number of politicians of Tigray origin sided with the Alliance in the Tigray War against the people of their home Region. Although it was clear that the War targeted the ordinary people of Tigray the traitors buried their heads in the sand like the metaphorical ostrich and took comfort in the idea that it was an inter-party conflict. Notable Tigrayans had defected to the Federal Government's side; but none of them compare to the role Dr. Aregawi played during the run up to the War and during the height of the War. The former co-founder of the TPLF, exiled for four decades, was more Catholic than the pope to wish his brainchild wiped out from the face of the earth.

Fig. 11 Ruthless Elders in the Tigray War



Aregawi Berhe was appointed to the GERD as a reward for his support to the Federal Government's position against Tigray. He fell short of calling for an invasion of Tigray but he proposed something close enough to that: Sanctions. He was old and educated enough to understand that sanctions kill people not political parties.

ABEBAW TADESSE

General Abebaw Tadesse is the deputy Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Force; but he is more strongly affiliated with the Amhara Regional Force and the Fano Militia. He was the most transparent about the mission the invading army was sent to Tigray for. Most try to conceal the destruction as collateral damage, not deliberately done to harm the civilian infrastructure or economic life of the people of Tigray. In contrast, General Abebaw Tadesse was unequivocal when he listed down the accomplishments of the War: *“The political center is destroyed; the economic center is destroyed; all the infrastructure is destroyed... that was the objective of the War.”*

MEAZA ASHENAFI



“In America a state refused to abide by the law and the American president at that time sent the army directly to that state, put the state under control then he was able to restore law and order in that state. In Ethiopia there is one state that refused to sign the modified laws and for the sake of justice we the Ethiopian government should take similar military action against the only one state refusing to sign the modified Ethiopian laws.” (3 August 2019)

Chief Justice Meaza failed herself when she sat on the throne of justice in Ethiopia. She was a celebrated women’s right advocate and a successful business woman. The least expected of her was a call for the invasion of Tigray; unfortunately, she was the first to make such a heartless proposal in public. When her wish became Abiy’s command a year later she turned a blind eye to the

massacres of civilians in Tigray, including the widespread gang rape of women and girls.

DANIEL KIBRET

Daniel Kibret is a Deacon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). By every Church Canon he is not allowed to think of bad things let alone utter them. His entire vocabulary is expected to be one or the other word of God. Moreover, Daniel Kibret is a social affairs minister in Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Cabinet. This adds another burden of responsibility on his back as a protector of social harmony. However, Daniel stands in stark contrast to the virtues embodied in the religious title he bears and the portfolio he runs. Deacon and Minister Daniel is a genocide preacher. The horrific statements he made in a public gathering is translated by Martin Plaut. The crowd cheered him for every word:



Full Version: <https://martinplaut.com/2022/01/24/ethiopian-prime-minister-abiy-ahmeds-social-affairs-adviser-in-public-call-for-genocide/>

“Weyane [Tigray] is not something we can understand. We can only erase it. For instance, Australia... there is an island called Tasmania which is found in southern Australia. They have destroyed Tasmanian tribes until only one person remained. There was only one person left for [continuity of] the race. Only one person! They have completely wiped them out. It is only by wiping it out. As I had said before, it is only by wiping out [of existence] the disease called Weyaneness...Firstly, so that it may not exist physically...Secondly,

the [very] idea. The idea of Weyaneness must never exist. Even in the form of an idea...When people say 'Weyane' one ought to say 'in the name of the father'! [a common Ethiopian orthodox reaction uttered against wickedness while crossing oneself]. Everyone [should say that]! [Applause]. Never! This is what we ought to tell our kids; we shouldn't say 'they [Weyane] did this because of this'. Since there is a disease called Weyane that has infected Ethiopia in a very severe way, even when its name is mentioned, say 'in the name of the father' and get far away from it. Don't go anywhere near where its name is mentioned. Don't read a book which is written about it. Don't see a picture which is written about it. Don't see its photo. Never [do it]! It will infect you. Without you knowing it, It will spread within you. So get away from it'. The third one is from history. Under any circumstances, its history shouldn't continue and have a place in Ethiopian history. It had had enough. From now onwards it must not have history. Under any circumstances! In the future, when the country changes, when things come, all traces of it that would make it to be remembered must be made to not exist. The statues it erected [applause], the names [of places, institutions] it has given, the ones it named, ones which makes it become remembered [must be erased]... so that we may never remember it."

Ethiopians were not alarmed by Daniel Kibret's statement. While Ethiopians paid scant attention to what the highly placed official and religious man uttered in public, reaction came from an unexpected direction. Ahramonline (AFP) 20 Sep 2021 reported that the 'US blasted the dangerous rhetoric by the ally of the PM of Ethiopia':

"The United States on Monday condemned a recent speech by a prominent ally of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed: 'Hateful rhetoric like this is dangerous and unacceptable'. Simon Adams, executive director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect said: 'Daniel's remarks were truly disturbing and reckless. Given the surge in deadly ethnic violence in Ethiopia it is hard to

take at face value the claim that he was only talking about the TPLF rather than Tigrayans in general.”

Ethiopians who did not utter a word about Daniel Kibret’s genocidal edict as a social affairs advisor of the Prime Minister were angered by the US Department of State’s denunciation. Borkena on 23 September 2021 put its support for the genocidal rhetoric in these words:

“Barely a week after announcement of Biden Administration’s sanction over Ethiopia, US is targeting Daniel Kibret. The United States seems to have taken its meddling in the Ethiopian affair a step further. The views of the absolute majority of Ethiopians towards the Tigray rebels is not different from that of Daniel Kibret’s. It could even be harsher. U.S. criticism of Daniel Kibret has triggered anger among Ethiopians. Those who value his writing on social, historical and political issues saw U.S. criticism as inappropriate.”

3.2.2 Selected Federal Government Associated Actors

Individual actors in the Tigray War, from the Ethiopia side, are not only office holders who by conviction or fear of eviction live up to the job description they signed for when hired or appointed.

SEYOUM TESHOME

Activist and analyst Seyoum Teshome appears almost every day on ‘Yeneta Tube’. One would take him for a comedian at best and a lunatic at worst. His distinctive body language makes him look like a robot gone crazy. The name of his YouTube channel is associated with church education. In church education moral values are preached but in Yeneta Tube war is promoted.

HAILE GEBRESELASSIE

Who would imagine that athletics legend Haile Gebreselassie would cheer war against peace in the same pitch as he was

cheered by the fans in the packed stadium of Sydney? Athletics brought him wealth but not the wisdom he needed to be a sensible and responsible public figure. In November 2021 BBC News reported that:

“Ethiopian Olympic heroes Haile Gebrselassie and Feyisa Lelisa say they are ready to go to the front line in the war against rebel forces. Earlier, Haile Gebrselassie had said that he is ready to do whatever is required of him including going to the front line. Lelisa Feyisa said that he was ready to draw inspiration from the gallantry of his forefathers and go to the front line to save his country.”

HAILE MARIAM DESALEGN

The former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn, was a member of the EPRDF; a coalition of regional parties that overthrew Mengistu’s Military Regime. Mengistu, in absentia, was sentenced to death for the massacre of civilians in his 17 years of brutal military dictatorship in Ethiopia. His conviction was awaiting extradition from Zimbabwe to Ethiopia for 30 years. Soon after Hailemariam abdicated in favor of Abiy Ahmed he used the opportunity of his trip to Zimbabwe and visited Colonel Mengistu in his Harare residence. A convict is visited by a former Prime Minister of the Country where the conviction was made. It is hard to imagine that Hailemariam Desalegn’s visit to Colonel Mengistu was not private. Abiy must have consented.

The former Prime Minister won’t dare visit such a high profile convict living abroad in exile without a green light from Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The fact that now both have a common enemy (TPLF) the visit could render the conviction null and void de facto. The visit was a serious offense on justice to the victims of ‘Red Terror’. Mengistu would be delighted to see what he started in Tigray successfully completed by a next generation of

leaders. The photo op was a pat on the back of Hailemariam, by extension of Abiy, to destroy TPLF-Tigray. The worst of our fears about Hailemariam's visit to the former dictator in Harare got their expression in the remarks Hailemariam made about the Tigray War: "*The Tigray War is an unfortunate necessity*" (Paulos Irgau, Aiga News, 2/22/2022).

Fig.12 Former PM visits convicted former dictator in Harare



ARTISTS ON PROPAGANDA BUSINESS

Men and women in the theatre and cinema are famed for their skills in acting. They may be successful in representing the character assigned to them. Unfortunately, the social recognition misleads them into the unfamiliar world of politics. Such people are dangerous because the public follows their words without hesitation. A case in point are artists Abrar Abdo, Chirotaw Kelkay, and Debebe Eshetu.

Abrar Abdo

Most in the Ethiopian Capital know the Roman figure who is fond of representing Italian Fascist Officers for the dramas he often stars. Abrar Abdo was carried away by this particular character he has become habituated to in the drama and spoke harshly about Tigrayans in a public

gathering. Abrar and Chirotaw are no doubt in a chilling genocide propaganda business. Their public statements are intentionally staged to refute the massacres reported from Tigray; the likes of Mahbere Dego:

“I am sick inside me. I have many things that I don’t want to talk about. What is it? When they (Tigray Forces) come to destroy us, when they come to destroy Ethiopia and ruin it they have two options: one is to kill us and destroy Ethiopia; second is if they are defeated they will surrender and we will be fed; we will feed them. When our troops surrender they (Tigray Forces) strip them naked, wear their uniforms and summarily excute them. They take videos and tell the world that this is how Ethiopian soldiers kill. How can we be sorry for them? How can we consider them again and again as Ethiopians, as our fellows? This should not never happen! They are not! What they want is to destroy Ethiopia and eliminate Ethiopia. There are some who cooperate with them. There is a group that is waiting for some slice of Ethiopia when it is destroyed. There is nothing we should go back and forth about the matter. We have only one option: To die for Ethiopia.”

Chirotaw Kelkaw

Chirotaw Kelkaw is well known for family drama. He represents a traditional fatherly figure. In another drama series he played the role of a notorious rapist and elopist. People who know him wonder how he turned from a ‘poor player that struts and frets his hour upn the stage and is heard no more’ to a wealthy businessman during TPLF-rule of Ethiopia. It is the very Party of his bread and butter he is equating with Satan. Turncoats are most dangerous people on earth.

“These are people (Tegray Forces) who desecrated churches and nuns. They massacre people inside the sanctuary of the churches. Destroying this Country means destroying everything it posseses including its values and traditions. How can these be our own fellows? It is mind boggling. Why are we sorry for them and waiting? Until they come here and slaughter us? No humanity; I

think, the Satan must be green with envy. The Satan must be feeling that they (Tigray) have outwitted him and have become smarter than him. These are the kinds of people. The fire there (battle field) could burn here as well. My neighbor worked as embroider, and lived ordinary life with us like our brother. You would hold your head and scream if you could see what was found when his house was searched. Who did he want to kill with all that he collected? How could we live if our right leg is killing our left? Therefore, nothing comes before the Country. We are breathing air polluted by sin. We treat their POWs, feed them, and provide them with bed, blanket, and bedsheets. But our POWs are tripped, slaughtered, and thrown in the open for hyenas and other wildlife. We never heard of such inhumanness”


Debebe Eshetu is considered to be the father of drama and comedy in Addis Ababa. He bears deep grudges against Tigrayans. The elderly bigot had these words for Tigray in November 2020, soon after the invasion of Tigray started: *“They (Tigray) are burning, I am not sorry for them, let them burn, they deserve it.”*

TINGIRTU GEBRETSADIK

Tingirtu Gebretsadik is Assistant Professor of sociology at Jijiga University. He is selective in his love and hate for society. For him some societies are more human than others. He is not loyal to the discipline he attained a level of professorship. Sociology wants more of societies not less of them. The academic discipline loves diversity not bigotry. His name nearly means something unusual; it is God given to fit. A person who hates other people so much should not be even a hired hit man let alone a politician.

Tingirtu’s hate for Tigray and Tigrayans is pathological. His distinctive body language portrays the fire of Tigrophobia raging inside him. On 19 November 2021 Amara Media Corporation

hosted Tingirtu Gebretsadik at the time when the war to break the Tigray siege was raging in the Amhara and Afar Regions. This was all he had to say overwhelmed by emotions and waving his hands frantically. (Translation by Author):


	<p><i>“Unless you are proactive now, to shape the next thousand years, and defeat this generation (Tigray) and neutralize it permanently; unless it is engineered so that it does not become a danger for the country and our people ever again. A lot of work must be done to defeat the dangerous creed (Tigray). A lot of hard work indeed! Even the name Tigray itself; we have to think about it. For instance, the Nigerian Government declared the name ‘Biafra’ illegal. The Government of Ethiopia may decide to criminalize the name: Tigray. In view of the destruction that they (Tigray) did we should not continue idolizing the name. We can also revisit not only the nomenclature but also re-delineating its administrative geography. In order to eliminate the crime enterprise (Tigray) permanently it can be re-divided into four or five regional and zonal administration.</i></p>
<p>Tingirtu Gebretsadik</p>	

BEKELE WOLDEKIDAN

Until an atheist political leadership overthrew the Monarchy power was for many centuries strongly influenced by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It was unthinkable to enthrone a non-Orthodox king. A civil war was triggered when King Susenyos of Gondar converted to Catholicism. Ever since the demise of the Monarchy in Ethiopia in 1974 all governments have become secular.

This was more so during EPRDF rule in which religious equality prevailed as it never happened before. Very low percentage notwithstanding, in the last thirty years there was one Protestant president and two protestant prime ministers of Ethiopia. Muslim or Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia paid little attention to the denominations political leaders in Ethiopia belonged.

Since Abiy Ahmed was sworn into Office the color of the secular political landscape seems to have been blemished by signs of erosion. Protestant Churches became hyperactive and are sailing into dangerous waters of political religion. To many in some Protestant denominations Abiy Ahmed is judged not by what he does in his administration but by what he worships. For Protestant Pastor Bekele Woldekidan the Tigray War was Abiy’s war to be supported however unjust it may be. The statement he delivered to hundreds of congregants does not hint any interest to check what was happening to millions in the War.

	<p><i>“It is not justice; as we said earlier the enemy has come with injustice. This is not what God says; He is saying they (Tigray) are my verdict. War, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts. All these four problems exist in the world especially since the year 2016. We say ours is justified; our war is justified. There is an enemy that has come upon us with injustice. We are out to fight for justice. We are forced to do this; we are dragged into this. It is not our desire; it is not our choice. We have exhausted all options. Everyone was considering us as behaving strangely. Our own people considered us as good-for-nothing; insulted us and mocked us. For all this we remained patient. Everyone was asking why we are allowing aggression . We are for justice; it pleases God that we are. We believe that God is on our side”</i></p>
<p>Pastor Bekele Woldekidan</p>	

3.2.3 Warrior Archbishops on FDRE Side

When discussing medieval bishops and priests, one envisions saintly individuals in ecclesiastical robes, providing prayer or preaching to their flocks. However, bishops and archbishops could be seen leading their own retinues into battle, sometimes in full armour (Sneddon

2013). Eric Luis (September 24, 2021) relates the story of warrior bishops on the medieval battlefield who were a ferocious fighting force. The concept of a warrior bishop may seem counterintuitive; Eric Luis wondered: A churchman who fights? Just as reality is often stranger than fiction, medieval clergies were notorious for taking their political involvement to a new level: Some commanded vast land forces, while others stood on the front lines themselves.

We cannot be shocked by the warrior bishops of the medieval period; there were plenty of them in the Tigray War in the 21st Century. Archbishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church traveled to war fronts, blessed troops, and even picked binoculars to scan the front on the other side. They converted church ceremonies into war rituals where slogans were hailed in support of the War. Orthodox faithful, attending Churches for prayer, were ridiculed for not picking arms and going to war. Sensitive cultural values about bravery were manipulated to embarrass those who hesitated to go to war. Meles Zenawi, the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia was quoted to have said the following about the danger to Ethiopia of Church leaders associating themselves with politics: *“If a politician smells incense and the servants of the church shuttle to the palace that will be the time when the end of Ethiopia becomes a reality.”*

It was not the EOTC as an institution that was de jure involved in the War effort. The EOTC Holy Synod is led by a Patriarch of Tigrayan origin. After the War started the Patriarch was in virtual house/office-arrest unable to regulate the behavior of the individual Archbishops in the Synod he nominally leads. Many of his associates in the Synod were hands-in-gloves with the Federal Government that invaded and brutalized his home

Region. When he preached peace and exposed the atrocities committed in Tigray he was branded as a champion of the ‘terrorists’. When the Tigray resistance became successful and pushed the invading troops back deep into the Amhara interior EOTC Archbishops in North America lobbied in the US Congress for the US Government to put pressure of the Tigray Forces. For the Archibishops the War in the Amhara Region was a war, but the war in Tigray they blessed was not. (Borkena 17 September 2021).

Fig. 13 EOTC Archbishps in US Congress, With Isaias in Asmara, With ESAT, Blessing troops, using binoculars in a war front



On the 9th of February 2021, in less than three months after the Federal Government declared end the War in Tigray and set up its own Prosperiy Party administration, a delegation of religious leaders and elders from the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia unashamedly travelled to Tigray for a ‘peace conference’. The delegation invited heads of churches and elders as well as regional government officials and security forces to discuss the ‘challenges faced during the law enforcement operation’. (Eritrea Hub, 9 February 2021, [Martin Plaut](#)).

According to [Martin Plaut](#) (EEPA-HORN, 10 February 2021), the delegation included Daniel Kibret who had proposed to throw ten

heavy bombs onto each town in Tigray to shorten the War (See also on P. 64: Call for genocide in Tigray by Daniel Kibret September 2021). The delegation was not endorsed by the Patriarch Abune Mathias who had declined invitation to meet with them. A day before the delegation arrived in Mekelle President Sahlework Zewde visited Mekelle and offended the victims of sexual violence in the hospital by insisting on bringing armed escort to enter the shelter where the traumatized women were staying for rehabilitation. The sanitary pads she brought as donation were rejected. (Meron T. Gebreanaye, TGHAT, 14 Feb. 2021).

Fig. 14 ‘Mekelle speaks truth to messengers of false peace’ (Meron)



It was hard to understand what sense the delegation thought it would make in Tigray only a day after the Head of State faced the embarrassment of rejection by the victims of sexual violence perpetrated by the Ethiopian army and the Eritrean army invited by the Ethiopian state she is the head of. The delegation also

included businessman and former athlete Haile Gebrselassie. The former athlete turned elder not only trivialized the death and destruction in Tigray caused by the invasion but also insulted millions by suggesting to “*let bygones be bygones because what is needed now is bread*”. (Meron T. Gebreanayye, TGHAT, 14 Feb. 2021).

Religious institutions under normal circumstances are expected to be neutral. Nevertheless, they were vocal about their support for the war. “*The media controlled by the Ethiopian state and later on the social media, was inundated with pictures of priests, pastors, sheiks, and notable persons expressing their support for the military forces that were at the time carrying out armed attack on a constituent part of the Ethiopian federation.*” (Meron T. Gebreanayye, TGHAT, 14 Feb. 2021). Tigrayan religious leaders declined the invitation to meet with the delegation; so were most other invitees. The reaction of the people of Tigray was not limited to boycotting the meeting.

The delegation of religious leaders and elders were challenged by protests against the visit including street blockades and burning tires: “*All shops, hotels, and transport are closed to show opposition to the delegation. Some youth are burning tyres on the streets.*” (Eritrea Hub, 9 February 2021, Martin Plaut). As if their support for the War, and the thousands of people who died as a result, was not enough the visit of the delegation did nothing else but add to the death toll of Tigrayans. *Ethiopian army responded by indiscriminately shooting at civilians and by mass arrests. There are multiple reports of people having been shot and killed, AFP confirmed one death; other sources claim at least four people have been killed.* (Martin Plaut, EEPA-HORN, 10 Feb. 2021).

Some people, largely drawn from the Federal Government's own offices in Mekelle, attended the meeting. While Dr. Mulu Nega (PP representative in Tigray) defended Federal Government's handing of the humanitarian aid by blasting the: "*rumor that humanitarian aid has not reached the people*" as "*completely false*", a Tigrayan lady attending the meeting criticized the delegation in these words: "*What you are doing now is tantamount to deliberately breaking someone's leg and then donating wheelchair to aid with his/her mobility.*" (Meron T. Gebreananaye, TGHAT, 14 Feb. 2021). Meron TG concluded that "*it is impossible to make true peace by making a mockery of ongoing suffering and trying to erase lived experiences with meaningless assertions of benevolence and superficial publicity jaunts.*"

Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOTC) was created in Axum, Tigray in the early 4th Century. After seven hundred years of expansion in the Axumite Empire the decline of Axum forced the center to drift southwards to the Amhara Highlands. For the next thousand years it was turned into an institution where political and economic power is centered. The church was engrossed more in political maneuvers rather than in the service of God. The only challenge to the Amhara-rooted Orthodox Christianity was the original home of the Church. The fear emanated not from competition in the service of God but the power implication of the control of the Church authority. The Amhara-based Orthodox Church became a hatchery of anti-Tigray sentiments which intensified through the centuries.

The unwritten law that Tigrayan archbishops and Patriarchs are unacceptable has become a norm. With the passage of time and the lack of stiff resistance from Church leadership in Tigray the

custom turned into a de facto canon. The Church was rocked by crisis in the last 30 years because the ‘impossible’ happened: Two consecutive Tigrayan Patriarchate. With TPLF in political power in Addis Ababa the grievance about Tigrayan Patriarchs was subdued. It flared up disastrously when TPLF was removed from power and replaced by what was considered to be a friendly government to the Amhara-centered tradition of the Church.

Some toxic bishops and archbishops conspired to alienate the Tigrayan Patriarch, tried several times to replace him, and the Church is now in deep crisis. Earlier, there had been cases of open mutiny against the Tigrayan Patriarch in the Amhara heartlands of Gondar and Gojjam. In September 2016 Priests and Monks from Churches and Monasteries in Gondar and Gojjam (Amhara Region) sent a written declaration to ESAT TV (Washington DC) and was read by Mesay Mekonnen. The video of Mesay reading the declaration was retrieved by Time Media and translated by the Author. The strongly worded declaration looks more like a political manifesto rather than a religious statement:

Statement from rebel Priests and Monks of Churches and Monstries in Gondar and Gojjam against the Patriarch Abuna Mathias September 2016 (Read by Mesay Mekonnen on ESAT TV)

“We the Priests and Monks from Churches and Monasteries in Gondar and Gojjam beginning from this day officially dissociate ourselves from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Synod and Church administration led by Abuna Mathias (the Patriarch). At this time of tension there is no religious leader or elder who could stand on the side of the people. This shows us how much our Country has fallen in the hands of cruel tyrants. Those fathers of ours who advocated for the people’s cause and struggled for it have been brutally killed, jailed, or sent into exile. We grieve about this, we have wept to the almighty for our Country and our people. At a time when TPLF rule is prolonged and our youth have risen for the freedom of their people

and for the progress of their Country we are disappointed by the message broadcast by Abuna Mathias who is on TPLF side. We don't expect this from a religious leader and an elderly man. We demand that a global time for prayer and fasting be declared. From today onwards we strongly express our rejection the Synod and Church administration led by Abuna Mathias and with its seat at Addis Ababa, which does not represent the Christian people and has abandoned the flock to wild animals. War is openly declared on us; genocide is declared on the people in their own Country who have demanded for their rights to be respected. We will not watch this with our arms folded. We did not receive our Priesthood, Monastic life, and our service to the Church just to do nothing about it. We shall take the example of the great martyr and Church leader St. Peter by standing in front of the barrels of tanks and machine guns of the fascist TPLF invading force that has come to kill the people of Gondar and Gojjam. We want all Ethiopian and world Christians to know that we have decided to condemn the evil government and pay sacrifices. We appeal to all religious fathers and those in the service of the Church in Ethiopia to follow our track and condemn the oppressive government. We beg you in the name of the Almighty God, even if you get into trouble for this think of the words of God to protect His flock and pay the ultimate sacrifice without fear. From today onwards we the Churches and Monasteries in Gondar and Gojjam reject Abuna Mathias who is appointed by TPLF.

Anti-Tigray Archbishops of the EOTC conspired to give institutional form to their personal support for the invasion of Tigray. Two weeks after the Tigray War started and was at full swing influential Archbishops of Amhara origin organized a programme to formally express support for the War. TGHAT cited EBC report on the 17th of November 2020 that the programme was organized as a gesture of support for Abiy Ahmed's call for support themed "I stand with the Defense Forces". The Patriarch Abuna Mathias was tricked into blessing and opening the programme with a prayer. The

'lonesome' Patriach soon realized that the programme was not about the 'Cross' but about the 'Sword'.



“Those of who think TPLF will rise again and are hired for money to work for it; let me tell you the bad news: TPLF will never come back.” Abuna Petros

Statement by Archbishops Petros about the Tigray War

The talk about the massacre in Axum is fake news. I didn't hear anyone from Axum talking about it. More people from outside are fanning the news about it than those inside. What I heard is 20 civilians have died in a crossfire during fighting. What they say as 700 or 1000 civilians killed in Axum is not true. I heard about the reports of residents of Mekelle that they were disturbed by cannon fire from outside the City before ENDF captured it. This was in fact a talk from those who were under the influence of the politicians. There are about 500,000 displaced people who need food. They were displaced from the Amhara territory (Western Tigray) because most of them were TPLF cadres and supporters. When they (Tigray administration) left the people (Tigrayans) were too scared to stay behind. No one forced them to leave; they were displaced because they were scared. Half of them went to Sudan and the rest to the Tigray interior. It is said that there are 3 million in need of food aid; 1.8 million of which were already on safety net before the War. TPLF in power for 20 years; but it did not even have money to buy food.”

Fig. 15 Quotes by EOTC Archbishops in support of the Tigray War

	<p>“The story that Dekike-Estifanos were killed in Debre Birhan by King Zera Jacob is fake. Such stories are fabricated to tarnish the name of King Zera Jacob. No Tigrayan monk was killed”. Abuna Abraham</p>
	<p>“It is better for us to be ruled by the Satan instead of being ruled by the Junta (Tigray). Satan fears God. Satan respects God.” Abuna Michael</p>
	<p>“The statement issued by Patriarch Abuna Matias does not represent the position of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Patriarch is saying innocent citizens are being harmed in Tigray, but he is talking the opposite.” Abuna Hitsan</p>
	<p>“They (Tigray) said: We will even go to hell to destroy Ethiopia”</p>
	<p>“Better to eat the hyena (Tigray) and beg for mercy rather than be eaten by the hyena”</p>
	<p>“What is the use for you to drink tella and talk after you surrendered Waldiba (Monastery in Western Tigray)? We must have the guts! We must have the courage! We must have the bravery! Take a Kalashnikov Rifle and protect your country. I suspect, May be there is Junta inside you? Ethiopia has become Ethiopia because of Amhara.”</p>
	<p>“Putting pressure on the Government of Ethiopia to negotiate with a terrorist is not fair” Aba Fanuel</p>

3.3 Allied-FDRE- Individual-External (Allied-FDRE-IND-EX)

Most of the FDRE-support actors in this category are citizens of the United States. Their so deep involvement in regular politics,

let alone in promoting a genocidal war, is not allowed by Ethiopian Laws. It is bizarre as far as politics in Ethiopia is concerned that it is remotely controlled by Ethiopia-born citizens or foreign-born-Ethiopian-origin citizens of other countries. The history of politics in Ethiopia since WWII is a history of foreign educated elite. The influence on the political life of Ethiopia the Ethiopian diaspora exercised is immense; but in no other part of its recent political history has Ethiopia seen the extent of diaspora control of politics in Ethiopia as it did in this war.

Table 3.4. FDRE-support Actors (Dual Role)

Tamagn Beyene*	Zemedkun Bekele*
Mesay Mekonnen*	Achamyeleh Tamiru*
Habtamu Ayalew*	Prof. Tilahun Yilma*
Ermias Legesse*	Neamin Zeleke*
Gezaw Legesse*	Hermella Aregawi
Sisay Agena	Abebe Belew*

*Federal actors with mostly Amhara roles (agenda)

If the main parties to the war were the chemistry, diaspora has been a strong catalyst. A new development in the Ethiopian diaspora politics is the divider has changed from ideology to ethnicity. Although the ethnic battle lines have remained potent in the last three decades they became wider and deeper in the last four years. The most demographically, economically, and politically vigorous of the diaspora is that of the Amhara origin. The Amhara in the diaspora has used its human and economic resources to build a strong political muscle in US and European cities. Their presence in the economic, social, and academic life of the host societies is pervasive. The media and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are the two institutions that serve as the bastions of Amhara supremacist nationalism in the diaspora.

The actors listed in this category (Table 3.4) are in words on the side of the Federal government but in deeds deep to their necks in Amhara supremacist politics. They use their alliance with the Federal political forces against Tigray to legitimize their claims on territories in other regional states. They are more often than not on a collision course with what they allege to be “Oromo dominated government” at the Federal level. Their desire to be at the helm in Ethiopia under a unitary system is often frustrated by the incumbent. Despite its bloody conflict with Tigray, the incumbent is not in a position to abandon Federalism. This is something that does not fit into the Amhara supremacist agenda. Amhara and Oromo politicians have always been strange bed fellows.

The perceived Oromo rule of Ethiopia is challenged severely by the overwhelming power of the Amhara political and entertainment media. The power of Amhara mass communication emanates not from its power of persuasion, but from the fact that Amharic is the official language of the Federation most Ethiopians hear and speak. Amhara messages reach all corners of Ethiopia more rapidly than do in other languages. Another strategy of the Amhara media, to manipulate the psyche of Ethiopian viewers and listeners, is to portray political and economic interest of the Amhara elite as concern central to Ethiopia’s existence. They accuse anyone standing against Amhara interest as harboring hidden goal of ‘destroying’ Ethiopia. Ethiopians could not acquire the energy to withstand the dangerous tactic. That was a large part of the reason the Tigray War was wrongly perceived as a war to save Ethiopia. Millions of Ethiopians became victims of the intensive and multi-faceted propaganda campaign and flocked to their deaths.

This has been the damaging role of the Ethiopian media from abroad. The actors listed in this category are largely responsible for the political chaos that gripped Ethiopia in the last three years. Most are journalists operating from the United States of America. At the top of the list of the actors in this category is Tamagn Beyene. He has been acting like an Ethiopian ‘Ayatollah’ in exile. He managed to be a political and social leader among the Amhara diaspora with hefty economic benefits. As a young man he started his career as a master of ceremony for a cultural troupe in Gondar.

The experience on the stage may have helped him in his ascent to the political and social leadership. He found himself abroad in the US because his militant support for the defunct Military Regime had put him on a collision course with the TPLF-EPRDF government in Addis Ababa. His lack of flexibility as a man of art and his unwillingness to adjust to the new normal drove him into a life of exile. It is an irony of political life that his enemies are responsible for his success in the diaspora. Tamagn did not succeed as a professional or as a business man; his fame skyrocketed, and his earning as well, for his theatrical organizing skills of opposition rallies against TPLF-EPRDF.

For over a quarter of a century life must have been a boring routine for Tamagn; but the year 2018 was a time when his wildest dreams would come true. TPLF-EPRDF was removed from power and someone else from the EPRDF who was perceived as diaspora-friendly was sworn into the office as the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. It became a windfall for Tamagn when Abiy Ahmed traveled to USA and found himself in the midst of a wildly cheering crowd. He managed to divert attention on the stage by bowing low enough to kiss Abiy’s shoes. That

moment brought Tamagn deep into the hearts of the anti-TPLF millions; turning him into a lead anti-Tigray war propagandist. He traveled to Ethiopia, visited Ethiopian troops in the war fronts, and encouraged them to fight bravely for “Ethiopia”. Tamagn literally filled the political air in Ethiopia amid the insanity of millions. The limelight did not last long enough for Tamagn though. The War in Tigray did not go as planned and the Pretoria peace agreement was signed. This caused the huge inflated balloon of the Amhara project on Tigray to burst. Tamagn’s public appearance has become rare. He is too old to shift to another life away from bloody war politics. He may wash and use his “blood-bucks”.

Fig 16 Mesay Mekonnen genocide edict; Inspecting trainees in Eritrea; Exihilarated by the invasion of Tigray in ESAT TV Studio.



Half of the list in Table 3.4 is populated by five current and former journalists of ESAT TV (Mesay Mekonnen, Habtamu Ayalew, Ermias Legesse, Sisay Agena, and Gezaw Legesse). All are notoriously anti-Tigrayan. They are so indecent in their use of language that they are unaware of the existence of euphemism.

They can fabricate stories, distort the truth beyond recognition, and build narratives they skillfully instill into the minds of their enchanted viewers. One among them is a Nazi on ESAT. Mesay Mekonnen's thirst is not for exciting news items to report to his viewers and listeners; but his craving is for Tigrayan blood. Four years before the Tigray War started Mesay Mekonnen made this shocking declaration on ESAT-TV, USA (Fig.16).

Gizaw Legesse is ESAT Panelist from Maryland. He is an old man in his 70s. As men grow older they get much cooler in terms of their enthusiasm for hardline politics. They get used to the fact that the political hassle bustle on earth does not exist beyond the grave. To the contrary Gizaw grows hotter and harsher on issues that humanity holds dearly. Human rights violation is a violation of what makes us human. By promoting inhuman acts such men of the media lose their humanness; but Gizaw does not seem to mind. He is poisoned with hate of anything that is Tigrayan so much that the siege imposed on Tigray as a silent exterminator is a joy in the heart of Gizaw. He fears that his gratification will be cut short if the Government of Ethiopia lifts the siege on Tigray. That was why he advised the Government of Ethiopia never to lift the siege (Hostage): *"Ethiopian Government should be clear on its stance on the siege on Tigray: No basic services to the people of Tigray, full stop! If they want basic services such as banking, budget, electricity, clean water, telephone and internet, they should hand over some hundred or so criminals."* (Transcribed by Eyob Taddelle Gebrehiwot. June 22, 2022, Tghat).

Zemedkun Bekele's 'Zemede Show' is not about Christianity, though the presenter claims to be a deeply religious man. Politics in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is more a norm than a taboo. I am not aware of any research conducted on the subject but based

on observation one can guess wisely enough that Ethiopian Orthodox leaders spend most of their hours and days in politics. Even in Church prayers it is perplexing to see that politics is thick in the air. Religion has a huge role in politics. This is not deniable. However, the kind of politics the Church finds itself has to be the test of its relevance as a house of God. Zemedkun had openly insulted the Orthodox Church of Tigray as “*gone to hell, lame, and urinating*”. (Video clip on Dedebit Media). Church fighting for peace, and against war, corruption, maladministration, and poverty elevates itself to the level of near divinity. However, Zemedede is wildly busy with the politics of justifying Amhara ambitions over all other nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. He overinflates Amhara issues over and above all others that deserve much greater attention.

Zemedkun of ‘Zemedede Show’ and Habtamu Ayalew, and Ermias Legesse of Ethio360 have been burying the genocide and destruction in Tigray by systematic mirror propaganda inflating the relatively small damage in the Amhara Region. They blow beyond proportions the losses of life and property in the Amhara Region during TDF’s control of some districts in a counterattack. By way of their intensive panel discussions, taking several hours per day, they breathlessly jam the media and render the voices of agony from Tigray inaudible. The diction by these Amhara born and church educated media people is so persuasive that it is not difficult for them to misdirect their audience and lead it to wrong conclusions and actions against Tigray.

Violating the Federal geography of regional states the police force and irregulars from the Amhara region annexed the Western Zone of Tigray in November 2020. The Federal government turned a blind eye to the lawlessness and gross violation of the

Constitution in order to keep the Amhara forces on its side in its war against Tigray. First they took the land by force then they needed scholarly justification to prove that the territory they annexed is theirs. Western Tigray was given to Gondar province by the Tigrophobic Monarchy in the 1940s. Amhara Region did not exist then. Federal arrangement returned Western Tigray to its historical owner and Amhara Region was created. Now Amhara Region is claiming Western Tigray as its own former territory; but Amhara Region did not exist to have that territory as its own. The fallacy is unmistakable; but a scholar in the Amhara diaspora, Achamyeleh Tamiru, came up with all kinds of fairy tales, wrote a book, and released several YouTube interviews, all to justify the unjustifiable.

Professor Tilahun Yilma is distinguished professor of virology in the School of Medicine and the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California. The best of democrats and the worst of terrorists work and live in USA. This is the perplexing American enigma. If Tilahun is helping Ethiopia's health sector with his knowledge and accumulated experience that is commendable. Nevertheless, that was not how we came to know about Tilahun Yilma for the first time. To the utter dismay of the world of academia we found him in the wrong place trying to apply his knowledge of microbiology to the politics of hate. For him a human being in the person of a Tigrayan is a cancer cell. He knows he will be heard by all Amhara extremists because his reputation as a virologist easily transferable to a fame in politics. This was what he had to say:

"If even one cancer cell remains alive it can kill people. Weyane (Tigray) is cancer. As you eat fish by carefully removing its

cartilages, we have to design a programme to weed them out until not a single Woyane is left.”

France 24 English is a global media with a reputation for truthful reporting. It does not tolerate fraudulent politics. This was proved in countless occasions one of which was the debate between Neamin Zeleke and Meaza Gidey. The latter is a brave female activist of Tigray. Neamin is one of the vocal justifiers of the Tigray invasion and destruction. This debate exposed the evil objective Neamin stands for. Neamin Zeleke defended the genocide in Tigray and accused Tigray of collaborating with Egypt. He panicked while trying to justify his standpoint and messed up the respectable France 24 Studio.

Hermela Aregawi is a US Citizen with Tigrayan parentage. Her mother is a professor of chemistry and does not sit comfortably with her Tigrayan ethnic identity; so does her daughter. In this globalizing world both are entitled to their negative attitudes towards the homeland of their ancestors. However, if their attitude finds itself moving in the direction of harming the land of their origin they will be put in the appropriate box tagged as traitors and even as misanthropes. Hermela Aregawi is a journalist who is expected to have more eyes and a more sympathetic heart than the ordinary person does. When hundreds of world media were talking all hours of the day and all days of the week about the genocide and destruction in Tigray Hermella either doesn't hear, doesn't pay attention, or doesn't care. She led the “no-more” global movement in Ethiopia and abroad to put pressure on the West to “leave Ethiopia alone”. To leave Ethiopia alone to do what? The movement erroneously emulated the anti-colonial struggle and demanded the end of “interference” in the “internal

Afairs” of Ethiopia; and of Africa too. The “no-more” movement she led worked hard to conceal the genocidal war in Tigray and allow Ethiopia, Amhara, and Eritrea to continue with the impunity without outside interference. She wears a Pan Am smile.

Any sane mind in Ethiopia would consider the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi as the best political leader Ethiopia ever experienced. For Abebe Belew, an ESAT TV journalist, Meles Zenawi was just a Tigrayan to be hated or eliminated if possible regardless of his merit. Abebe trampled on his journalistic ethics and insulted Meles Zenawi in public. Meles died physically; but Abebe is now mentally dead.

FOREIGN FDRE-SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL ACTORS

Leaders of foreign states, regional and international organizations have had significant roles in the Tigray War. In fact the level of participation of some of them has been much greater than many of the internal actors. This makes the Tigray War more an international conflict rather than just a domestic one. Isaias Afeworki is the leader of Eritrea and the prime mover of the Tigray War. Before and during the War Isaias has been at the steering wheel of the planning and execution of the War. The de facto commanders of the ENDF and the chief operatives in the national security office were Eritrean generals.

Table 3.5. Foreign FDRE-support Ind. Actors (A-FDRE-EX-IND)

Isaias Afeworki	Tayb Erdogan
Mohammed Bin Zayed	Xi Jinping
Mousa Faki	Vladmir Putin
Antonio Guterez	Mohammed Formajo

The script of the war drama was nothing but the tripartite-block of the three Horn of African states: Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Mohammed Formajo was a junior partner, ranked third after Ethiopia; with Eritrea as the undisputed head of the block. Obviously, the two junior political leaders cannot think of competing with Isaias Afewerki who lived a life of political conspiracy for over half a century. Mohammed Formajo contributed a few thousand troops to the Tigray War. United Arab Emirates is a treasure island in the middle of a burning sandy desert. Petrodollar has blinded UAE from looking back at the years of impoverished Bedouin life of its ancestors in their sand-beaten tents. From the height at which UAE now located itself it can see Tigray only as a small insignificant spot down below.

When Mohammed Bin Zayed invited Abiy Ahmed and Isaias Afewerki, and decorated them with heavily ornamented necklaces, he must have been aware that the two were planning a disastrous war on Tigray. This was proved beyond doubt when Tigray was challenged more by UAE drones than the army of two states and several regions of Ethiopia. Tayb Erdogan of Turkey and Xi Jinping of China were supplying Ethiopia with drones that were playing the decisive role in the Tigray War. Moreover China and Russia under Putin were vetoing every Security Council decision against the genocidal War on Tigray. The more than 10 UN Security Council meetings were aborted because the two global powers sided with Ethiopia and Eritrea against the USA and EU.

The Tigray War had become a Global war and an arena for world power rivalry. Ethiopia and Eritrea used the superpower stalemate as an opportunity and continued with the destruction of Tigray with absolute freedom. Superpower rivalry may be a norm; but the silence and foot-dragging of the UN Secretary General

Antonio Guterez is not. The United Nations became necessary because world states normally clash when protecting their national interests. The role of the UN is not to sit helplessly when superpower rivalry makes it difficult for the human rights to be protected. Global organizations are expected to find an innovative way out of this and help people worldwide facing human rights violations. Antonio Guterez seems to have been interested in his friendly relations with the Ethiopian leader and consider Tigray as an obstacle to that.

At the end of his procrastination he rang an alarm bell referring to the Tigray War as spiraling out of control; but he failed to tell the world that he was partly responsible for the mess. African Union is a regional organization uniting African states; but the question what is the union of states needed for has never been adequately answered. It is hard to list those things that did not happen because of the existence of AU: Genocide? Election rigging? Coups? Poverty? Unemployment, Mass outmigration? Conflict? Massive displacement? What difference did the existence of the AU make in these? The AU Chief Mussa Faki sided with Ethiopia from the outset, failing to be part of the solution.

3.4 Allied-FDRE-Internal-Institutional (Allied-FDRE-INT)

Countless groups or institutions have directly or indirectly taken part in the Tigray War from the Ethiopian side: Federal government ministries, agencies, and corporations; universities; religious institutions; 50+ opposition political parties, which are PP-friendly duplications; a myriad of print and electronic PP-friendly media; major government owned as well as private banks; substantial number of big to small business enterprises; Ethiopian National Defense Force, Federal Police, and Regional Special Forces; and Federal utilities.

Table 3.6. FDRE-Institutional Actors

Prosperity Party	Ethiopian Airlines
ECSJ (EZEMA)	Federal Universities
ENDF	Gov. and Private Banks
Regional Special Forces	Big Businesses (other)
Media (Social, YouTube, FM)	Utilities (Power, Telecom)

PROSPERITY PARTY (PP)

To erase the legacy of the TPLF from Ethiopian political history the former ruling coalition known as Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) was replaced by the Prosperity Party bringing former member parties of the EPDRF and other regional parties together: Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO), Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), Benishangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Unity Front (BGPDUF), Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party (ESPDP), Gambela People's Democratic Movement GPDm), and Harari National League (HNL). The new party was founded in 2019; and the list of parties in the merger does not include TPLF: a founding and leading member of EPRDF. TPLF had rejected the newly established Prosperity Party replacing EPRDF.

By merging them the previous autonomous status of the parties as regional ruling parties ceased to exist. By creating the Prosperity Party and continuing the new party as a ruling party, without being registered and elected, a de facto unitary system was instituted while the Constitution remained federal. The contradiction messed the political atmosphere of Ethiopia in the last four years. The tension between the Federal Constitution and the Prosperity Party with growing unitary inclinations is simmering. The Prosperity Party itself is not monolithic. There

are clashing interests in support of unitary system versus Federal system. The inner party crisis and instability has opened the flood gates for rampant corruption. TGHAT (April 26, 2021) describes:

“Prosperity Party, does not have unity. Far from its claim of unity, it is divided among the Amhara and Oromia, Somali and Afar, Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz, Sidama and South factions. Prosperity Party has many who do not accept Abiy for various reasons – this is especially common in Amhara and Oromia Prosperity parties. The Amhara PP lacks coherence and is divided along federal and regional officials. Even at the regional level, there are various groups with different interests and aims. They blame Abiy for the killings and atrocities against the Amhara in different parts of the country and call for his resignation. The region is highly influenced by the Amhara nationalist activists, wealthy donors, and interest groups whose influence is sought by the regional officials. Oromo PP, like the APP, is fragmented with the lower local structure disregarding the instruction coming down from the upper echelon of the party. Oromo PP has a large number of Jawar supporters and OLF-sympathizers, and those who oppose Abiy and want to replace him with Lemma Megersa. There are many who are accusing Abiy of working to promote the Amhara supremacist (Neftegna) ideology and are conspiring against Abiy’s administration and working with armed groups in Oromia.”

ETHIOPIAN CITIZENS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY (ECSJP)

Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (Known informally as EZEMA) is an amalgam of eight parties and the second powerful party next to Prosperity Party: Patriotic Ginbot 7, Ethiopian Democratic Party, All-Ethiopian Democratic Party, Semayawi Party, New Generation Party, Gambella Regional Movement, and Unity for Democracy and Justice Party, and Ethiopia Raeiy Party. EZEMA is in theory an opposition party but in reality it is the closest and most trusted ally of Prosperity Party. The Party and its

leader Prof. Birhanu Nega have been instrumental in bringing Abiy Ahmed and Isaias Afewerki into the unholy alliance that destroyed Tigray. Continuing to prove that its collaboration with Eritrea against Tigray transcends sovereignty of Ethiopia EZEMA was at the forefront opposing the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray. “EZEMA says the Eritrean Army should not withdraw from Tigray, and accuses TPLF, OLF, Fano Amhara and many others of being a threat to national security.” (TGHAT 26 April 2021).

ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE (ENDF)

Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) was the de jure leader in the Tigray War; but realities have proved the fact that the de facto command center of the War was in the PFDJ headquarters located in Asmara, Eritrea. Ethiopian forces included Regional forces, the Federal Police, and the ‘Pretorian Guard’ divisions on the ENDF.

Table 3.7. ENDF* capability (GFP™ Strength Review 2023)

Military strength (Rank)	45/145	Trainers stock	26
PWR Index score (Perfect is 0.0000)	0.7979	Helicopters stock	3
Tanks stock	468	Attack Helicopters	6
Vehicles	6240		
Self-Propelled Artillery	100	Total Population	113656596
Towed Artillery	319	Fit for service	33869666
MLRS Rocket Artillery	183	Reaching military age annually	2614102
Aircraft total stock	89	Total or Active Military personnel	150000
Fighters	23	Air force Personnel	5000
Transport fixed wing stock	9	Navy Personnel	11500

*By the end of the third quarter last year (2020), Addis Fortune 14 November 2021 reported that: *“The recurrent defense budget consumed 23 Billion Birr. Six billion birr higher than apportioned by Parliament for the fiscal year.”*

European Institute of Peace has in 2021 conducted a survey of the Regional Special Police Force in Ethiopia. Ethiopia's regional states have established regional special police forces, in addition to the regular regional state police. They are rapidly growing in size and have successfully recruited senior (former) army officers into their ranks. Special police forces have become deeply involved in Ethiopia's interregional conflicts and border disputes, most notably in the current conflict in Tigray.

“Oromia special police is close to 100,000 and in the Amhara Region, the force it is estimated to be 60,000. The number may have increased with the war between the federal government and the Tigray Defense Force. The Special Forces carry far heavier arms than the regular police force in Ethiopia does. Special police forces have access to heavy weapons like machine guns, M40 rifles, sniper rifles, DShK heavy machine guns” (European Institute of Peace. 2021).

THE MEDIA

The Media that sided with Ethiopia against Tigray is like “the stars in the skies and like the sand in the deserts”. Statista.com reported that, in Ethiopia 2023 there are 6,895,700 Facebook, 6,467,100 Messenger, 826,500 LinkedIn, and 666,900 Instagram user accounts. On whose side were most of these accounts posting, liking, sharing, and following? Given the anti-Tigray insanity that reigned over Ethiopia for over four years, how much hate on Tigrayans spread by the millions of accounts and have negatively influenced millions of Ethiopians is clear. The social media on the Ethiopia side was most successful when internet

access was closed in Tigray. Social media users in Tigray couldn't respond in kind. Hence, 'truth' came only from the Ethiopian side; and the world believed it as a result. The efforts made by the Tigrayans in the diaspora were no match for the massive and concerted media campaigns on the Ethiopia side.

Before the invasion of Tigray, when social media networks were available, Tigrayans used Tigrigna in their posts. Afan Oromo was also used in the social media; but the anti-Tigray propaganda was coming out rarely in Afan Oromo. Amharic was the dominant language used in the social media. While Tigrayan social media users were busy chatting and slapping each other in Tigrigna most other non-Tigrayan social media users were busy digging the grave under the feet of Tigrayans. In terms of the success of the social media in demonizing Tigrayans there was little difference between pre-war and after war access to the social media. Before the war social media use among Tigrayans was full of trivialities, incompatible with the imminent threat of war that was hanging over Tigray.

Besides the social media hundreds of YouTube channels were bombarding viewers with news and views against Tigray. As Tigray TV and Dmtsi Woyane TV and their YouTube channels were barred and frequently taken off satellites, Ethiopia-friendly TV and YouTube channels overwhelmed the world with persistent anti-Tigrayan news and narratives. Ethiopians at home and in the diaspora, by ignorance or by intention believed whatever information is aired by these media outlets. It is strange to realize that even when the viewers know that the media are lying about Tigray, they prefer to allow them to keep on lying.

By February 2023 the following Anti-Tigray media outlets had so many subscribers: Note that the number of viewers without subscribing could be several fold: EBC (1.3 million), Fana (1.23 million), Ethio360 (576 thousand), Amhara Media (630 thousand), Walta (282 thousand), ESAT (642 thousand) and EriTV (477 thousand). The latter is an Eritrean TV station; but it does the same thing as others: spraying anti-Tigray poison.

The role FM frequencies play in spreading anti-Tigray news and views is even much higher than the social media and the YouTube channels. Government owned and private FM frequencies can reach remote areas and influence the rural majority in the local languages. People living in the Deep South and Southwest of Ethiopia, who never met a Tigrayan in their lifetimes, flocked north to kill what they were told were devils in human form. According to Scan-org there are 90 FM radio stations spread throughout Ethiopia: Amhara-15, Addis Ababa-11, Oromia-7, and Southern Region-9. It was not only by spreading anti-Tigray propaganda based on fabricated and twisted narratives that the media were misleading the public. Falsehoods were released as documentaries:

“EBC, Walta, and Fana aired an inflammatory documentary entitled “Yeftih Seqoka”, literally meaning the Agony of Justice, which narrated human rights violations in Addis Ababa’s prisons as committed only by ‘Tigrigna Speakers,’ from among prison administrators who had different ethnic backgrounds (Transcribed by Eyob Tadelle Gebrehiwot. June 22, 2022) Tghat.

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

Ethiopian airlines is Africa's largest airline in terms of passengers carried, destinations served, fleet size, and revenue; and the world's fourth largest by the number of countries served (The

Economist, Routes Online, and Anna Aero). It is fully government owned. During the War the chief executive was a Tigrayan, who was not allowed to travel outside Ethiopia (The New York Times, 12 December 2021). While the Tigrayan CEO sat there the global carrier he leads was allegedly busy transporting weapons for the war in Tigray. In an exclusive investigative reporting by CNN’s Nima Elbagir, Gianluca Mezzofiore, Katie Polglase, Barbara Arvanitidis, and Video by Mark Baron dated October 8, 2021:

“Ethiopia’s government has used the Country’s flagship commercial airline to shuttle weapons to and from neighboring Eritrea on at least six occasions from November 9 to November 28. Ethiopian Airlines billed Ethiopia’s Ministry of Defense tens of thousands of dollars for military items including guns and ammunition to be shipped to Eritrea. Tanks and heavy artillery loaded onto planes coming to Addis Ababa, while small arms – mortars, launchers were dispatched to Asmara.”

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

There are over 40 public universities in Ethiopia run by the Federal Government’s Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MOSHE). Taking the mission of Addis Ababa University as a typology for all public universities in Ethiopia this is how the mission of Addis Ababa University is stated on its Home Page:

“Addis Ababa University’s mission is to produce competent graduates, provide need-based community service and produce problem-solving research outputs to foster development of the country.”

The underlined part of the mission statement is crucial for the subject to be spotlighted here. Unfortunately, this was not what happened in several universities of Ethiopia during the Tigray

War. The management, the staff and the students of the universities documented here became key actors in the War in contravention to the lofty principles of the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

- 1 Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel, Emnet Negash, Gebrekirstos Gebreselassie, Amare Teklay, Nyssen, J., 2022. Database: the Ethiopian public universities during the Tigray War.
- 2 TGHAT Universities that Supported the War January 12, 2022

Fig. 17 University officials visiting war front in Western Tigray; AAU donating 60M; Graduation: university staff military training



Table 3.8. Non-monetary support of universities in the War

- Staff donated their salaries to the ENDF
- Students' budget diverted to ENDF
- University medical staff sent to fronts
- Donation of equipment, other articles for the army
- Donation of live animals for the ENDF
- Donation of blood by university staff to the ENDF
- Universities became safe heavens for hate-preachers

- Harassment of international collaborators for being anti-war
- University officials visiting war front in Western Tigray
- Tigrayan university academic staff in detention camps
- Tigrayan university academic staff killed in BDU and WU
- Tigrayan university staff fired and expelled from residence
- Tigrayan students stoned to death
- Lists of staff of Tigrayan origin circulated to public
- Militarization of academic spaces: University stadiums, buildings converted into military use
- Donated Agricultural Colleges' cattle to ENDF
- Preparation and donation of food to ENDF and Fano
- University staffs took military training
- Revocation of Honorary degrees of anti-war awardees
- Disposal of evidence of massacres in Western Tigray
- Bank accounts of Tigray Universities closed
- Budget of Tigray universities not released
- Staff salaries not paid and are dependent on food aid
- No food for university students in Tigray
- Tigrayan students from other universities expelled from campuses and nowhere to go; some detained, others hiding.
- Airstrikes in university campuses in Tigray
- Ministry of Higher Education silent; proudly announcing donation of 211 million from Federal Universities to ENDF
- EU is indirectly financing ENDF; EU funds health and education €81.5 million. Part of this is budget is fighting.

Table 3.9. Timeline of financial donations for the War

Year-Month	Name of University that Donated to ENDF
2020 November	Jigjiga University, Werabe University
2021 August	Samara University
2021 September	Arba Minch University, University of Gondar, Addis Ababa University
2021 November	Bonga University, Bahir Dar University Wolaita Sodo University. Dilla University
2021 December	Hawassa University, Arsi University, Mizan Tepi University, Adama Science and Technology University, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, Metu University, Jimma University

Table 3.10. Financial donations to the ENDF

Name of University	Donation (Million Birr)	%	Name of University	Donation (Million Birr)	%
Addis Ababa	60	15	Mizan Tepi	20	5
Gondar	50	12	Addis Ababa S.T	16	4
Hawassa	45	11	Bonga	15	4
Wolaita Sodo	39	10	Adama S. T	11	3
Jimma	35	9	Samara	3	1
Dilla	30	7	Dire Dawa	1.5	0
Arsi	30	7	Bahir Dar	1.2	0
Arba Minch	28	7	Jigjiga	1	0
Metu	21	5	Werabe	1	0

BANKS OF ETHIOPIA

The National Bank of Ethiopia is the State run Central Bank, which among many other duties and responsibilities “licenses and supervises banks...” in Ethiopia. This implies that the banks are supervised in light of the mission of the National Bank as an overarching code of conduct for all banks. The key point in the mission of the National Bank is: “*Maintain price and exchange rate stability, foster sound financial system and contribute for the rapid and sustainable economic development of Ethiopia*”.

Public universities of Ethiopia also have stated an identical mission. Unfortunately, during the Tigray War the action was diametrically opposite to the mission. Instead of contributing for the rapid and sustainable economic development of Ethiopia the banks under the supervision of the National Bank contributed to a war of destruction of Ethiopia. They not only helped wreck huge investments loaned by the banks themselves but also failed to honor the contracts they signed with millions of customers in Tigray. Only a month after the War in Tigray started The Ethiopian Herald reported on 12th of December, 2020 that “*The Ethiopian Banker’s Association donated 200 Million Birr for the ENDF and the ‘displaced’*”.

The mention of ‘the displaced’ was either a smoke-screen or a face saving gesture for the banks who were involved in something the peaceful world of business abhors. By December 2020 only Tigrayan civilians were displaced to Sudan and to within Tigray. They were displaced by the ENDF the banks funded. The invading forces (ENDF-EDF-Amhara) killed, robbed, and raped many of the displaced, and didn’t care about what happened to the rest of them. The depressing news of the donation was soon

forgotten because it was believed that the Tigray War was over and the ENDF had become victorious.

In the last week of June, 2021 the news of the “rise of TPLF from the ashes” was a devastating news to those who donated for its doom. The following month, Ethiopian Banks were again on a donation spree for the war against the resurrected Tigray. Bloomberg’s Fasika Tadesse and Simon Marks reported on August 19, 2021 that:

“A funding round this month raised more than 400 million birr (\$8.8 million), according to four Ethiopian banking executives who asked not to be identified because the information isn’t public.”

The names of the four Ethiopian Banks were undisclosed because they know the donation to fund a war against one’s own people contravenes the developmental mission of banks. When the TDF was at the gates of Addis Ababa only 100 kilometers close; the banks donated again. Addis Fortune, November 14, 2021, reported that *“Banks raised 1.23 billion birr to support government for Humanitarian aid of displaced people”*. This is again another hide and seek played with the world business community. The banks earmarked the donation for the war displaced people in “Tigray, Afar, and Amhara”.

The truth is the donation was for the ENDF not for the displaced. The donation was made in November 14 a month before TDF withdrew from Debre Birhan, back to Tigray. Who can do rehabilitation of the displaced in the middle of a raging war? This time, the names of the banks that contributed to the donation was disclosed, as Awash, Dashen, Hibret, Abyssinia, Cooperative Bank of Oromia, because the donation was for the ‘displaced’.

Half of the donation was contributed by the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. Other big businesses also donated to the ENDF: Midroc Ethiopia donated 100 Million Birr, Construction Contractors Association contributed 100 Million Birr, and Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation 50 Million Birr. (Addis Fortune, November 14, 2021).

BANKS' CRIMES AGAINST CUSTOMERS

At the top in the list of core values of the National Bank of Ethiopia is Accountability. Accountability pertains to the service for customers. Private and governmental banks in Ethiopia failed to honor the legal contractual agreements they made with their customers in Tigray. For two years banking services all over Tigray were closed and customers starved because they could not access their savings. The National Bank may have ordered to shut-off the banks; but none of the banks complained or took the case to court.

Table 3.11 List of banks and the number of branches in Tigray

Name of Bank	Branches	Name of Bank	Branches
Commercial	25	Nib	3
Lion	12	Abay	2
Abyssinia	11	Buna	2
	48/55%	Oromia Coop.	2
Dashen	8	Oromia	2
Wegagan	8	United	2
	64/74%	Debub	1
Awash	3	Enat	1
Berhan	3	Zemen	1
			22/26%
Total Number of Branches			86/100%

Whoever was responsible for the closures of the banks, the action resulted in the deaths of thousands making the banks accountable for the deaths. Table 3.10 is an abstracted, recompiled and re-tabulated data from ‘Streets of Ethiopia’. Not only the customers, bank infrastructure also suffered looting and destruction.

Fig. 18 Ethiopian Banks violated codes of business ethics in the War



Chapter 4

Actors on the Amhara and Eritrea Side

4.1. Allied-Amhara-Internal-Individual (Allied-AM-IN-IND)

The more powerful actors on the Amhara-side have dual roles as Federal actors as well. Those on the list in Table 3.11 are those whose roles are restricted to the Amhara-side. Four of them (Zemene, Mesafint, Masresha, and Mire) are leaders of the irregular armed group known as ‘Fano’. The rest are politicians in administration and in the Parliament except for one movement-leader (Eskinder) and one female activist (Meskerem).

Table 4.1 Amhara-side Internal-Individual Actors (AM-IN-IND)

Col. Demeke Zewdu*****	Dawit Woldegiorgis
Gen. Tefera Mamo****	Agegnehu Teshager***
Zemene Kassie**	Dr. Desalegne Chane*
Mesafint Tesfa**	Christian Tadele*
Masresha Setie**	Worku Aytenew*****
Mire Wodajo**	Dr. Yilkal Kefale***
Abere Adamu*****	Dr. Belete Molla*

*Leaders of the right wing Amhara nationalist party (NAMA) **Leaders of the Fano Amhara extremist militia ***Former and current Presidents of Amhara Region ****Commanders of the Regional Special Force *****A business tycoon with vested interest in Western Tigray *****Renegade former TPLF officer

Actors on the Amhara-side are not only parties to the Tigray War but also parties to the wider conflict throughout Ethiopia. Their roles in the Tigray War is related to their claim of Western and Southern Tigray. Elsewhere, they have a much bigger agenda of territorial expansion into other regions and/or restoring the Amhara-centered unitary system of government by force of arms.

COLONEL DEMEKE ZEWDU

Colonel Demeke Zewdu was a former Ethiopian Army officer and also a former TPLF combatant. When he fell out with TPLF around the turn of the Century, he got something up his sleeves to take revenge against his former political group. His parents are Tigrayans and they have revealed this in a televised interview. In spite of his real identity as a Tigrayan he decided to sell out in order to hit two birds with a single stone. For him, much more than the revenge on TPLF is his lucrative association with top Amhara business people who eyed Western Tigray for large scale agro-industrial investment.

Demeke got a few disgruntled elements from Western Tigray and most of the rest from among Gondar-Amhara politicians and set up a committee for counterfeit ‘Welkait-Amhara-identity’. After the annexation of Western Tigray by the Allied Forces (FDRE-Amhara-Eritrea) the Colonel was appointed by the Amhara Region as chief of security of Western Tigray. This was a gross violation of the constitution by a member state of the Federation on another member state of the Federation with Federal consent.

Mission No.1 for Colonel Demeke was to demographically re-engineer Western Tigray into Amhara-land. Inside him, he knows that Western Tigray is overwhelmingly Tigrayan. He has no way to justify his claim that ‘Welkait is Amhara’ unless he cleans Western Tigray of its almost a million Tigrayans inhabitants and replace them by Amhara settlers from elsewhere. The nearly three years of killing and displacing spree was led by the Colonel who was callously exterminating his own kind. Noé Hochet-Bodin of Le Monde (30 April 2022) described Demeke Zewdu as “*a warlord who is celebrated as a freedom fighter in his region, but*

being accused of ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray.” Noé Hochet-Bodin met Demeke Zewdu in a press briefing in Gondar. The latter was tightly guarded by fiercely gazing soldiers. Noé Hochet-Bodin-Le Monde (30April 2022) explained the reason why the Colonel was so tightly guarded

“The man they were protecting has been under scrutiny since the release of a joint investigation by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) on April 6 into crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing committed in Western Tigray, also known as Welkait. In their report, the two human rights organizations accuse three men of having organized a widespread and systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Tigrayan population. Their number one suspect in the investigation is none other than Demeke Zewdu.”

WORKU AYTENEW

Worku Aytenew is a wealthy businessman of Amhara origin. He is the most controversial personality in terms of how he acquired his business empire. Leaving that to the law keepers his role in the War is examined and the findings are mind boggling. For a businessman, supporting a war is one thing, but plunging oneself into it is another. Throughout the Tigray War Worku was no less a commander than Gen. Bacha Debele has been. Clad in battle uniforms he would visit training camps and address recruits. He spews hate speech to embolden the young trainees and even promises support for their families. Few seemed to realize that he was lying to raise enthusiasm among the recruits so that they march happily to their deaths. Worku Aytenew addressing thousands of enthusiastic trainees in a training camp said:

“They (Tigray) have taken their courage from us. They are Banda (traitors) Applause! They led Italian troops to Amhara-land. They recruited 12 to 60 year olds and they are invading us. They are coming in multitudes. They have vowed to eliminate Amhara from the face of the earth. So do we want to live or not? (Audience in Chorus: To Live!).”

Fig. 19 Tycoon in Uniforms: Worku Aytenew in a combative mood



No doubt, Worku Aytenew has a business interest in the War. It is alleged that his support for the war is motivated by his new oil factory which needs sesame seeds that Humera in Western Tigray can provide. Worku was not limited to the political support for the War. Along with his friend Belayneh Kinde, he jointly donated 150 oxen for the army in the War front (Ethiopian Reporter, 14 November 2020 and Fana, 11 November 2020).

AGEGNEHU TESHAGER

During the War Agegnehu Teshager was President of Amhara Regional State. He is now speaker of the House of Federation. Initially it was felt that the appointment was by design to facilitate for the retention of Western Tigray by the Amhara via the House of Federation. Nevertheless, after the Pretoria Agreement his role on the issue has diminished and is fighting for his political survival just like all the rest of the Amhara Prosperity Party leadership. His name is a household name after the WhatsApp scandal in which Agegnehu was caught conspiring, with a leading Amhara activist Tamagn Beyene (USA), to portray the Welkait issue as a national

agenda of Ethiopia. He was one of the top Amhara-side lead actors who were trying to turn the Tigray War into an inter-ethnic one. While trying to persuade people to fight against Tigray Forces by whatever means he promised the people that he would put a bullet in his head like Tewdros II if the Tigray Forces win. Nevertheless, Agegnehu spilled the beans in the WhatsApp call (17 July, 2021):



“My brother Tamagn, How are you? ...I was busy; that is why I did not answer your call. We are under enormous pressure because each and every agenda of Ethiopia is in our hands ...As you know people only sing war cries. ...When it comes to the reality people give too many excuses for their retreat from battle fronts. Some say they run out of ammunition, others say they run out of ration, and still others say they are confused. This problem is most common among militia from Wello, East Gojjam, Awi, and West Gojjam. They are creating serious problems for us (Gonder). They are requesting to be returned home... Militia from South Gondar, Gaint (Tamagn’s home place!), Debretabor, and North Gondar are fighting. These militia units are amazing (Fellow Gonderie). They never retreat. They have no sufficient arms and ration, but they use whatever is available to them and are fighting. They make you proud! It is not fair to compare people in this regard; but you can’t help but be surprised about it. We are working to portray the agenda of Welkait as the agenda of Ethiopia. Abebe Belew called me and told me that we have to raise money for the army in the guise of helping displaced people. You (Tamagn) are expected to give direction and guidance on the matter.”

Hundreds of thousands of Amhara special force and militia perished under his command. In a televised address in 2021 Agegnehu Teshager had said these words urging his followers to commit genocide on Tigrayans: *“We cannot rest until the enemy (Tigray) is eliminated. These people are enemies of the entire people of Ethiopia, they are the enemies of the Oromos, enemies of the Afar, enemies of Gambela, and enemies of Somali.”*

MAJOR DAWIT WOLDEGIORGIS

Dawit Woldegiorgis was a major and one of the young officers who overthrew the Monarchy in Ethiopia in 1974. He later became the head of the Military Administration in Eritrea before independence. He presided over the heinous crimes committed on Eritrean civilians during the armed struggle for Eritrean independence from Ethiopia. Now he has become a staunch ally of the Eritrean Government in the Tigray War. The former army officer does not flinch in this regard.

Major Dawit strongly believes that Eritreans have to stay as long as they wish although the Federal Government wants them to leave. He was speaking on behalf of the Amhara expansionist elite who have annexed Western Tigray in collaboration with Eritrean troops. He is very well aware that Eritreans have been massacring, gang-raping, destroying, and looting property and infrastructure in the last two years in Tigray. Dawit Woldegiorgis does not seem to care about Tigray as long as the interest of the Amhara elite is served. This is how he justifies Eritrean presence in Western Tigray:

“One becomes an enemy, and at other times becomes a friend. That is the beauty of diplomacy. The alliance of Eritrea and Amhara is still valid. The presence of Eritreans in Welqait is critically important. If they (Eritreans) don’t want to leave, we (Amhara) don’t want them to leave either.”

MESAFINT TESFA

He is nicknamed 'Arbegna' (Patriot). Mesafint Tesfa is the eldest and the oldest of the Fano leaders. He is alleged to have been an illiterate highway man. Probably for the lack of experienced gunmen Fano drew this man into the unfamiliar territory of politics. As an old man he was revered as a spiritual leader of the Fano and is heavily guarded. It was inappropriate for him to hold a gun at that age, spread hate politics and brutalize civilians in other societies. The only politics he knows, but does not understand properly, is the blind hate of Tigray. He derives his pride from the number of armed Fano densely standing around him, and from the hate speech he delivers to a cheering crowd.

This was the logical outcome of his ignorance about skill, caution, and responsibility in politics. It is clear that hate breeds in ignorance. Fano got the right person for it. This is one of his hate speeches which show what kinds of enemies Tigray is dealing with:

“Not only me, you also know it, that she (Tigray) has no capacity. We are her capacity, we are her trainers, we teach her methods; we feed her too. Otherwise she has no capacity. She is bad in her deeds, a Satan’s daughter, and the devils offspring.” (Tigray Update August 26, 2021).

CHRISTIAN TADELLE

Christian Tadelle is a leader of the right-wing Amhara nationalist party: NAMA. During the Tigray War Christian Tadelle was trying to inspire a crowd to go to war. This is how he motivated them:

“The enemy (Tigray Forces) that is standing in front of us is just a flu, a common flu. It is even less than a flu; an emaciated dough

spilling. Like a dog it roams the neighborhood and spills the dough. It is your duty to chase these hooligans and these dogs. It is true! A dog that spills dough can be chased even by three or four years old child”

ESKENDIR NEGA

Eskendir Nega specializes in Addis Ababa; and hence, he is never directly involved in the Tigray War. However, more deleterious than what the bullet fired from him against Tigray can do is his poisonous media campaign against Tigrayans. Posing as an Ethiopian nationalist, trying to ‘protect’ Addis Ababa for all Ethiopians living in the City, Eskinder has been working hard to prevent Oromo influence over the City to the convenience of complete Amhara control. To this end, he founded a party named ‘Balderas’. His mannerism is so deceptive that no one takes him for a narrow nationalist. His skills as a journalist has helped him instill bad attitudes in the residents of Addis Ababa against Tigrayans and Oromos. Amhara business is deep into this covert partisan politics claiming Addis Ababa as it is in Western Tigray.

Eskinder Nega’s hate campaign against Tigrayans is not limited to the recent state of war in Tigray and the politics of the Amhara associated with it. As far back as the downfall of Military Regime of Ethiopia, Eskinder abhors the idea that it was the Tigrayans who defeated the Military Regime. What matters was that the dictatorship came to an end by whoever it was done. For Eskinder dictatorship should have continued to rule if it is only the Tigrayans who could overthrow it. May 2004, in an Amharic weekly ‘Askual’, Eskinder Nega published an article. Here is a quote from that article:

“Did the bandits (Tigray) really take power by defeating us militarily? Had our armed forces been loyal to their oath; wasn’t it possible to

exterminate the wolves, who are currently ruling us, from the face of the earth? It was certainly doable. What can we learn from history? What did we learn? The German people who took a decisive stand against the exploitative Jewish, under the resolute leadership of the Nazi, had continued showing their bravery in action. What does this tell us real Ethiopians? What is the lesson for us?" (Eyob T. G. June 22, 2022, Tghat).

YIKAL KEFALE AND MESKEREM ABERRA

Dr. Yilkal Kefale is a lame-duck President of the Amhara Region. He is one of the five presidents of the Region in only four years. Trapped between the extremism, the unregulated proliferation of armed groups, the pressure from Arat Kilo, and the involvement of the Region in the Tigray War, Yilkal is no match for the Gordian knot of politics in the Amhara Region. The opposite pole of Yilkal Kefale is the hyper-active Meskerem Aberra. She claims to be a staunch advocate of the Amhara people and her reckless political activism has got her to prison in more than three occasions. She is admired by her fans mainly for being a woman in the midst of the androcentric Amhara society. She fights for the rights of women; but not for all of them. For Meskerem some women are more equal than others. For her, *"gang rape in Tigray is just an unfortunate accident caused by war."* This is how she justified sexual violence in Tigray. May be gang-rape becomes a crime when it happens only in the Amhara Region and on Amhara women. Political activism, the kind of Meskerem Aberra, is more often naïve and self-serving.

ABERE ADAMU

The late Aberere Adamu was the happiest person on the 4th of November 2020 because the Tigray War started. He was so excited that his statements were too informal for the serious story of war he was talking about. Unfortunately, he did not live long

after his announcement of the start of the War to a cheering audience. He died or was killed soon after. He exposed that there was preparation for the War in the Amhara Region probably to the dissatisfaction of the Allies who did everything under the sun to conceal the secret of prior planning. Abere’s overconfidence exceeded the red-line and gave orders to the Chief of Staff to instruct his troops to fight along the Amhara army:

“It is history and let me tell you what happened. Amhara Region Police and Temesgen Tiruneh, President of the Amhara Region already knew that this was going to happen. Therefore we have already done our homework and deployment of forces had taken place in our borders from east to west. We started that night after we have already completed our preparations. At that time, assistant commissioner Biset (Getahun), the commander of the special forces called me that the war has begun.”

4.2. Allied-Amhara-Internal-Institutional (A-AM-INS-IN)

There have been six key institutional actors in the Amhara Region playing various roles in the Tigray War: Two political parties and four armed groups. Although the six groups were geared towards the same goal their actions were rarely coordinated. In many cases they were even antagonistic. That was why chaos reigned wherever they went: The two political parties (APP and NAMA) have been at each other’s throat from the outset although they shared the common goal of destroying Tigray.

Table 4.2 Amhara-side Internal-Institutional Actors (A-AM-INS-IN)

Amhara Prosperity Party	National Movement of Amhara (NAMA)
Amhara Special Force	Fano Militia
Rural Militia	Armed or unarmed volunteers

RURAL MILITIA AND VOLUNTEERS

Rural Militia and ‘Volunteers’ played a significant part in the war as cannon fodder. Tigray Forces (TDF) complained about this particular force. Firstly, the militia and volunteers flooded into TDF trenches in a human-wave making it a burden on morality for the TDF fighters. The volunteers were allegedly sent in thousands deliberately to exhaust TDF of its ammunition. Agegnehu Teshager, the then President of the Amhara region, openly called on all able-bodied men and women in the Amhara Regional State to join the Amhara Region forces to counter TDF's ‘invasion of the Amhara Region’. This is the worst part of Agegnehu Teshager’s call: He promised to allow those who participate in the war to “*own and carry the weapons they capture from TDF*”.

In view of the fact that the Amhara traditionally are obsessed by the idea of owning a gun Agegnehu’s offer became irresistible. Gun loving thousands flocked to the war front to possess a gun strangely in exchange for their lives. For the relatively smaller numbers of TDF fighters, fighting a regimented conventional battle, the chaotic human torrent of the militia and volunteer force became a nightmare. Most were moving in unarmed.

FANO

Fano is a non-governmental militia, which traces its origin to the alliance of the Amhara youth with the Oromo Querro youth movement. The activities of the Fano were initially focused on organizing and leading mass rallies in the Amhara Region against TPLF-EPRDF government. The peaceful movement was justified on the basis of the need for a more robust democratic governance which was in short supply. The Amhara National Democratic

Movement (ANDM), a member party of the EPRDF coalition, already has a military wing in its home region: The Amhara Regional Special Force. It did not need another armed group to run its politics in the Amhara Region. The more radical groups in the Amhara Region had a different idea. They needed an armed group that can cater for an extremist Amhara nationalism.

This was particularly the case for the National Movement of Amhara (NAMA): an ultra-radical Amhara right-wing nationalist party. This party formed the political base for the militarization of the Fano movement. Radical Amhara Nationalism is anti-constitution and anti-federalism. It believes in a united Ethiopia with Amhara as the historical, political, religious, and cultural center. Alternatively, Amhara nationalism envisages a Greater Amhara Nation incorporating territories from outside the Region claimed to be “ancestral lands of the Amhara’: Metekel (Benishangul), Western and Southern Tigray; Welega and Dera (Oromia), and Addis Ababa (Capital of both Oromia and the Federal).

Fano Militia is composed of zealots, who are engaged in armed confrontation with any of those who resist the expansionist political and military campaigns: Oromo, Tigray, and Sidaama. The Fano-friendly media spews hate propaganda against Tigrayans and Oromos. The Fano leaders also do not hesitate to use extremely offensive terminology against Tigrayans and Oromos. They are so reckless and lawless that you don’t see a trace of responsibility, from their words and actions, for the Ethiopia they claim to be dying for. Fano militia has allied with ENDF and the EDF against Tigray. The militia has displaced a million people, massacred civilians, and looted property in Western Tigray. It got much closer than the ENDF to the Eritrean

Government and became increasingly unmanageable to Prosperity Party leadership in the Federal government and in the Amhara Region.

It rallied radical Amhara politicians and ordinary Amhara alike and became deeply entrenched in the Amhara Region posing increasing challenge to the Abiy Regime. The support base of the ultra-radical nationalist militia is not restricted to NAMA. Eskinder Nega’s Balderas Party and Ethio360 media are also its strong backers. Center for Arab Progress on Sep 20, 2022 wrote: *“The Fano movement of the Amhara in Ethiopia: between the stigma of banditry and the reminiscence of the past.”*

4.3. Allied-Eritrea-Internal-Individual (A-ER-IND-IN)

Hagos Gebreamlak posted a brief bio of the top four leaders of Eritrea in The Africa Report on August 24, 2022. The officials have also been key actors in the Tigray War. Hagos’ description as well as others’ from other sources are used in this section to describe the Eritrea-side actors.

Table 4.3 Allied-Eritrea-Internal-Individual Key Actors

Isaias Afeworki	Gen. Filipos Wolde Yohannes
Yemane Gebreab	Sophia Tesfamariam
Abraha Kasa	Awol Seid
Zemihret Yohannes	Jenay Ghebregherghish Ghebremariam

Fig. 20 Eritrean Despots against Tigray: Isaias, Filipos, Abrha, Yemane.



ISAIAS AFEWORKI

Isaias Afeworki has been the President of Eritrea for the last three decades. Isaias ruled Eritrea with an iron grip since 1993. His authoritarian rule keeps the Country isolated internationally, as he removes threats to his rule, using a permanent state of emergency and military mobilization to tighten his grip on the people and the army. His PFDJ party does not hold elections but drafts the young for compulsory military training and service. Many people have fled conscription, with nearly 10% of the population having left the country as refugees. The army, since its establishment in 1970, has been somewhat independent of political leadership; but gradually, Isaias controlled the army. When journalists asked Isaias Afeworki in Nairobi about the atrocities committed by Eritrean troops in Tigray he said; “This is a fantasy; a factory of fabrication of misinformation”. The Eritrean dictionary of denial of everything bad the leaders do is legendary.

Faisal Ali and Mohamed Kheir Omer (Portrait of the man and the dictator, Democracy in Africa) on 11 April 2022 add some details to the character of Isaias Afeworki: ‘As a child Isaias never accepted second fiddle; he wanted to captain all his neighborhood football teams; he always insisted on sitting in the best seat available at home. Isaias slapped teachers who gave him bad grades. Isaias hates election because he cannot stand to take a mandate from the people as that will limit his powers. At the age of 62, Isaias told a guest that he is healthy and expects to live another 40 or 50 years, and continue to lead his Country. With the media, Isaias is reclusively aloof and engages combatively. He had a thorny baptism in regional geopolitics, directly warring with all his neighbors. Eritrea was never big enough for Isaias, and he

was always too aloof to engage with bodies that might limit his influence.

He has always been notoriously brutal, hot-tempered, secretive and unwilling to indulge any opposition. He created and lived through history, betrayed and was betrayed, and made and broke lives with the same demeanor today as he had when he was an adolescent revolutionary. He has a cold, authoritative style of speech and affects a military disposition; a rock-hard stubbornness and indifference about how he realizes his goals. ‘During the struggle he had inferiority complex towards his comrades who were successful in university; he eventually eliminated them. Isaias could not accept being a member of the ELF leadership. He needed an organization where he commanded absolute authority. He has temperamental unwillingness to accept anything but his view. Insistence on denial when caught and silence when speech is required is a trademark of Isaias’s character. He is a cunning manipulator and determined survivor. Isaias is by now Africa’s most reclusive and authoritarian leaders. His unwillingness to change is now detrimental to his country and its neighbors.

As soon as Isaias started his friendship with Abiy Ahmed he saw an opportunity for himself to eliminate TPLF. His well-known war cry was “Game over Woyane”. In his interview on 12 February 2023, Isaias Afeworki blamed USA for the Pretoria Deal that sabotaged his final assault on Tigray in which he felt absolutely certain to win. He said the Agreement was forced on both by USA.

YEMANNE GEBREAB

Yemane Gebreab is the second-most influential Eritrean leader after President Isaias. He is the de facto foreign affairs minister and as such has played an important role in Eritrea's participation in the Tigray conflict. Yemane is Isaias' chief diplomat and implements the regime's foreign policy. His official position is special adviser to the President and head of political affairs of the PFDJ. He has been in the ministry of foreign affairs for more than three decades. Foreign ministers come and go, but Yemane remains there. He goes wherever the foreign affairs minister goes. Yemane is deeply involved in cooperation with Ethiopia, mainly because of the Tigray War. Yemane had lobbied various countries and talked to diplomats, particularly Africans and Israelis, in a bid to reduce the international pressure on the Ethiopian government due to the Tigray War. He had been organizing support for Ethiopia in various international institutions and had organized anti-Western intervention campaigns like #No More Campaign Hermela led.

ABRAHA KASA and ZEMHRET YOHANNES

Gen. Abraha Kasa is the head of the Eritrean National Security Agency. In the army, his main task is to spy on the army generals and officers. Zemehret Yohannes is the regime's ideological wizard. He manages government's propaganda as head of research and documentation. His messaging focuses on Marxism, anti-imperialism and Zionism. Zemehret is expert in conspiracy theory.

FILIPOS WOLDE YOHANNES

Gen. Filipos Wolde Yohannes is the chief of staff of the EDF. He took direct responsibility of commanding Eritrean troops in the

Tigray War. Eritrea Hub reports on 23 August 2021 that US Treasury sanctions the Eritrean military leader in connection with serious human rights abuse in Tigray. The EDF under his command were responsible for massacres, looting, and sexual assaults in since November 2020.

SOPHIA TESFAMARIAM

Sophia Tesfamariam is Eritrean ambassador to the UN. How intractable the mindset of Eritrean leaders who destroyed Tigray can be discerned from what the Ambassador did and said in the UN on 20 September 2022. On this day, and the days before and after, the action of Eritrean troops was at full-swing to complete the destruction of Tigray once and for all. The Chief of Staff of the Eritrean Defense Force was already under US sanction for the atrocities committed in Tigray by the Force under his command. In a drama staged by the Federation of World Peace and Love (FOWPAL) Sophia Tesfamariam was the superstar in the ceremony of ringing the Bell of World Peace and Love. She rang the bell, prayed for the world, and said:

"For 20 years, we worked for peace, you know, mobilizing youth for peace, youth for the Horn of Africa, and trying to bring peace to our region, after fighting almost 30 years of war for independence. I wish for peace in the Horn of Africa and the world. I wish for peace and development for all marginalized people of our world; peace for development and security. Peace is very important, because it's fundamental for everything that we do, for education, for learning, for development, for security. If there is no peace, you don't have anything else. I want to ring it hard so that it reaches the blue building, and every other building here so everybody feels working for peace is the most important thing that we do here. I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to come here and be a part of this fantastic ceremony and feel very privileged and honored to be with you this morning. This is the highlight of my day. I would share

my experience and feelings about ringing the bell with the Eritrean Foreign Minister and President and recommend them to ring the bell to let the sound of the bell spread across her country and the Earth!” (Federation World Peace and Love).

That was not the end; Sophia was presented with gifts by her Chinese host. She thanked him; but that was not what Dr. Hong, Tao-Tze, president of FOWPAL, wished to get in return for the gift. He was giving her a piece of advice to be practical about peace. This was clear from the message the gift represented. The gifts included: a compass clock of conscience, an anthology of conscience, and the history of international day of conscience. ‘The clock represents time, direction, and goal, guiding people toward the right path of life and reminding them to seize every moment to apply conscience and do good deeds’. May be the Chinese leader of peace knew what Sophia said was opposite to reality.

JENAY GHEBREGHERGHISH GHEBREMARIAM



A prominent Eritrean regime supporter and media person based in Stockholm, Sweden. He works with the Eritrean regime closely and appears in regime-affiliated media outlets. He continuously engages in hate writings against Tigrayans on Facebook.

Jenay shared the following post on October 3, 2020, just a month before the start of the Tigray War. A version of the original translated by Hayet Alem was posted on Tghat December 29, 2021. The author significantly abridged and rearranged it. What Eritrean troops did to Tigray was the practical expression of Jenay’s ‘final solution for the Tigray problem’.

“For Eritreans there is nothing more important than how to make Eritrea powerful. For this lasting peace between Tigray and Eritrea is needed. To realize this there shouldn’t be a region called Tigray. Morality and humanity in front of national interest is cheap and nothing. In the last 500 years it has always been the people of Tigray that have been betraying, attacking, and hindering Eritrea from being the most powerful country. Even after reconciliation of Ethiopia and Eritrea Tigray will always be anti-Eritrea identity. As time goes Eritreans who identify themselves with Tigray will develop the Abyssinian mentality or the Tigray mentality which is anti-Eritrean identity.

We may say TPLF, not the people, is our enemy; but even if TPLF is gone there will be another anti-Eritrea organization in Tigray. So after TPLF any kind of political structure should not be created even as small as a religious association like Saint Abune Aregawi. Eritrea should follow up every six months and abort it like unwanted pregnancy. Tigray having same population as Eritrea the wealth and ports of Eritrea will be envied by Tigrayans even if peace is made between them. Tigray is uninhabitable, dry land not suitable for farming, and isolated. If they give up dependence on others they won’t be able to prosper and develop; this will push them to Eritrea. Due to its limited resources Tigray cannot host more than 1 million people. By all measurements the Tigray region is not for the people of Tigray. Their culture is poisoned. They wish to have what isn’t theirs. If Tigray continues as is, they will continue to rob our ancient history, poison our culture and language and they will keep sending intruders to deprive us of sleep. History is our witness for all of it. Even in the last 20 years Tigrayans have done everything to the new generation like what they did to our ancestors. With this kind of hateful neighbor we fought for 500 years, you cannot live in peace without always watching your back.

The solution is also useful for the people of Tigray. The people of Tigray can get a better life other than depend on aid, other than live envying Eritrea, other than live with vitamin deficiency making their faces look like dirty fabric. With few people to protect historical places like Axum the rest 5 million need to be pushed out to Ethiopia

and to Yemen. The project will take 150 years for them to be completely assimilated in Ethiopia and Yemen. Until then Eritrea can expand its political influence. If then Tigrayans can start a new civilization from Yemen they can collaborate with us. Once the threat that can arise from Tigray is eliminated, by strengthening Eritrean identity and nationalism, it will be the new generation's homework to take us back to the glory and influence we had in the Red Sea 100 years ago. If we are actually paying attention, our fathers are giving us back our throne in the horn of Africa. The state seat is also being moved from Asmara to its former throne seat Dubarwa (Adi-halo). The only thing remaining is taking back the command and influence of the Gulf Arab.

To hit and beat Tigray properly, which is a threat to Eritrean identity, we must first make Ethiopian identity stronger by dismantling the regions in Ethiopia into smaller zones. Dismember Tigray to different parts and dissolve it. To shield Eritrea from Tigray influence we have to employ a social engineering solution to create a buffer zone in the borders between Tigray and Eritrea. Mere geographic border is not enough. Socio-cultural boundary is a must. We can settle other non-Tigrigna speakers in the bordering areas of Tigray and Eritrea.

Question: How can a lasting solution come?

Answer: There shouldn't be a region called Tigray.

AWOL SEID

Awol Seid is an Eritrean artist. Sajid Nadim of My Views on News is quoted here from his news report and comment on December 2, 2022; and transcribed by Author. This is the best description of Awol Seid and actions.

“Eritrean government is trying to add salt to the wounds of Tigrayans. He (Awol) is very close to Isaias Afeworki and his work is mostly related to wars. He is all praise for EPLF and critical of Tigray. A few months ago he departed on a visit to

Europe where Eritrean festivals are held. Before departing he has seen Isaias Afeworki; but his visit to Europe led to a backlash. Eritrean opposition groups tried to stop the festival and we saw clashes. Awol Seid published a video. He recorded the video at Axum Obelisk. Axum Obelisk represents Christianity; it is the holy City for Tigrayans and Christians in Ethiopia. Awol Seid is a Muslim. Axum is the headquarters for Christianity. In the video he talks about Badme and mentions the sacrifices of Eritreans. He is in Axum to commemorate the sacrifices of Eritreans who laid down their lives. This is to humiliate Tigrayans. Peace will never come, believe me, if this hate narrative continues. Those wounded Tigrayans, wounded inside! Do you think they will remain silent? They will keep on expressing their hate whenever they can.”

4.4. Allied-Eritrea-Internal-Institutional (A-ER-INS-IN)

The People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF) are the two Eritrean institutional actors in the Tigray War. Both PFDJ and EDF have functions diametrically opposite to their names. Neither is the party of the people, democratic, and just nor is the army a defense force. PFDJ is not even a front; if it is, it can only be a front for aggression. It never held party elections let alone national polls. The best in its ranks are rotting in high security jails for decades. The finger counted top leadership of the party is what is known about its existence.

Defense of Eritrea’s sovereignty and territorial integrity has not been the core value of the EDF; meddling in the affairs of neighboring countries is. Since its independence three decades ago, Eritrea has done nothing other than build its military capability. There have been more Eritreans in the army than in growth propelling sectors of the economy. Its failure to build a

viable economy has reduced it to the status of a pariah state and an idle renter of ports and military bass.

EDF was at war with Yemen over the Hanish Islands; militarily intervened in the second Sudanese Civil War; was involved in the Congo War; fought with Ethiopia in the border war, and with Djibouti over the border. Next, may be not the last, EDF was destructively involved in the Tigray War.

Table 4.4 Eritrea defense capability (GFP™ Strength Review 2023)

Military strength (world rank)	113/145
PWR Index score (perfect 0.0000)	2.2956
Tanks stock	1756
Vehicles	3512
Self-Propelled Artillery	54
Towed Artillery	156
MLRS Rocket Artillery	219
Aircraft total stock	33
Fighters	8
Transport fixed wing stock	5
Trainers stock	7
Helicopters stock	13
Attack Helicopters	6
Patrol Vessels	18
Total Population	6209262
Fit for service	1564734
Reaching military age annually	74511
Total or Active Military Personnel	375000
Air force Personnel	3500
Navy Personnel	1000

Each and every individual in Tigray is victimized by the invasion; but not everyone contributed to the resistance. Of course, in this deeply religious society of millions prayers have been the day long routine of the rest of the Tigray populace. This was the only thing most could possibly do. Hundreds of thousands have taken up arms, dozens are engaged in diplomatic effort, hundreds are preoccupied with analyses shaping and reshaping narratives based on truth and destroying those founded on enemy falsehoods. Tigray-friendly media have been vigilant exposing conspiracies to the world public. Actors on the Tigray side are different from the opposite side in the War. The Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea block was preparing for the War for over two years. In fact, the Amhara member of the Alliance were preparing for three decades and intensively rehearsed for two years. Eritrea was already in a mood for war against Tigray for 20 years.

The war of such a magnitude was a huge surprise for Tigray and for all Tigrayans all over the world. Isaias Afeworki of Eritrea also had his own style of concealing his side of the preparation for the invasion of Tigray. He repeats in almost all his interviews that he asked the then President of Tigray “why he was preparing for war”. Isaias was cleverly putting all the blame on the Tigray President. The allies actually contradict one another because they were hiding the truth. While Isaias repeatedly said Debretsion Gebremichael wanted the war, the Chief of Staff of ENDF said recently that Debretsion did not want the war.

How Tigray and Tigrayans collected the scattered pieces of themselves and forged a formidable resistance to the mammoth operation is for the world to record and remember. At the time when Tigray was invaded without adequate preparation for its own defense and was trying to regroup Abiy Ahmed intervened

and tried to stop the convergence of Tigrayans to save Tigray. In a televised address in Tigrigna Abiy appealed to Tigrayans to rally behind him against TPLF. He knew victory would come only if people of Tigray could be on his side:

“Esteemed people of Tigray. It is known that we are finalizing the burial of the evil force (TPLF). The force is encircled in all directions and is limited to a small locality. There is neither entry nor exit and it is a force in agony. At this time it has reached a level in which it cannot move to the battle fronts and give leadership. Your children are everywhere without food and water and exposed to death and injury. Therefore, save you children as soon as possible from being sacrificed for the force that is being buried. You are given a chance for two to three days to save yourselves.”(Excerpt from five minutes address. Translation by Author).

Time proved it beyond an iota of doubt that the war was against the people of Tigray not against TPLF alone. Was Abiy expecting Tigrayans to help him against TPLF while he allowed Amhara forces to occupy Western Tigray and Southern Tigray, Eritrean forces to occupy Northern, Northwestern, and Northeastern Tigray? Would Tigrayans abandon TPLF while thousands of innocent Tigrayans all over Ethiopia are fired from their jobs, being hunted, jailed, starved, thirsted, tortured, and killed? Would Tigrayans turn their backs on TPLF while social and economic infrastructure is devastated, historical treasures are looted and destroyed, thousands of Tegar women and girls are being gang raped? Would Tigrayans fight against TPLF to save only Mekelle and the surrounding which is already in the hands of ENDF and has become a huge open air prison for them?

The reason why Abiy appealed to Tigrayans is to mentally prepare Ethiopians and the world to justify the harm he planned to inflict on them. When Tigrayans rejected the sinister appeal and

continued the stiff resistance against the invasion it became the turn of ESAT TV to threaten the people of Tigray for refusing to abandon TPLF:

“The people of Ethiopia have called upon, and also appealed, on different occasions, to the people of Tigray to at least show neutrality (desist itself from supporting the group), but to no avail. They (Tigrayans) never tried. Even worse, they wage psychological war on us, insisting, stubbornly, that they are the spiritual children of them (TPLF). They laugh at us. They mock us. What we have got in return is only humiliation and carnage” Article by Eyob Tadelle Gebrehiwot TGHAT June 22, 2022.

Fig. 22 Boulder and Armchair: The tale of invaders and defenders



Internal individual actors in Tigray refers to those Tigrayans who were directly involved in the armed resistance. They were drawn from those leaders and other individuals who were already residing in Tigray, those who joined the struggle from other parts of Ethiopia, and those who lived abroad but travelled to Tigray to join the resistance. In this section, the list of actors is compiled only for those who have had more frequent media coverage. The list in Table 5.1 is not ranked. Neither is there a reason nor criterion for ranking. The list does not include those leaders or politicians of Tigray who were killed or jailed early in the first phase of the War: Seyoum Mesfin, Abay Tsehaye, Asmelash

Woldeslassie, Zerai Asgedom, Sekutire Getachew, Daniel Assefa, Abebe Asgedom, Alganesh Meles, and others.

There is a huge difference between individual actors on the Tigray side and the Ethiopian side of the war. The former are neither employed nor paid to play their respective roles. Besides being penniless they have difficult to impossible access to basic necessities such as food and water. For the shelter there is no demand for it; the sky is the roof above their heads. The motive power that drives them into happily sacrificing their lives is saving their people. The latter are either paid heftily or already rich enough to play their role within their comfort zones. The risk of dying is allotted on equal basis on the Tigray side; while some are more equal than others in this regard on the Allied-side. There are actors assigned to live and others assigned to die. (Fig.22)

Table 5.1 Tigray-Internal-Individual Actors (TIG-IN-IND) Not Ranked

Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael	Gen. Tadesse Werede
Getachew Reda	Gen. Migbey Haile
Fetlework Gebreegziabher	Gen. Fisseha Kidanu
Dr. Mulugeta Gebrehiwot	Gen. Abrha Tesfay
Amb. Wendimu Asamnew	Gen. Teklay Ashebir
Professor Kindeya Gebrehiwot	Gen. Zewdi Kiros
Gen. Tsadkan Gebretensay	Gen Yohannes Woldejiogis

General Tsadkan Gebretensay is both an intellectual and a soldier. He is one of the top TDF commanders in terms of political and military skills. His military career did not originate from formal recruitment into the army. He joined the armed struggle led by TPLF in 1975 after dropping out from university education and abandoning his dreams. In the next 16 years he reached the level

of a supreme commander of the TPLF's military wing. He served as the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Force for about a decade. He later became a successful businessman and also served in international bodies.

Tsadkan joined the TDF, abandoning his business and successful career, after failing to convince Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to resolve the Tigray issue peacefully. In the first few months of the Tigray War he was the commander in chief of the TDF and later member of the Central Command of Tigray. He was one of the key negotiators in the Pretoria Agreement between Tigray and Ethiopia. More than a year ago, General Tsadkan was interviewed while sitting on a rough boulder and leaning against an unpainted stone wall of a village house. An honorable cycle of struggle for the freedom of the Tigray People from youth to old age: University Student---Freedom Fighter--Army Chief--Businessman---Freedom Fighter---Vice President of Tigray.

Fig. 23 Tigray-side Top War Leaders. First Row: Debretsion, Getachew, Fetlework, Mulugeta, Wendimu, Kindeya, Tsadkan, Second Row: Tadesse, Migbey, Fisseha, Abrha, Teklay, Zewdi, Yohannes



Before leaving the Ethiopian National Defense Force, General Tadesse Werede (Wedi Werede) was head of the training department of the ENDF and head of the mission and force

commander of the UN mission in Abyei, Sudan. He replaced General Tsadkan and became the commander in chief of the TDF throughout the War. Tadesse Werede is a charismatic figure, soft spoken, but a rock-solid personality. He was a former commander in the TPLF during the 17 years of armed struggle. Like General Tsadkan, that was how Tadesse got himself in the ENDF. The two senior commanders of TDF had built the ENDF from the bad situation it found itself in the final days of the Military Regime. Several attempts to kill them was the reward they got for what they did to build Ethiopia's defense capability. General Abrha Tesfay (Dinkul) commands the southern and other related fronts. He is feared by the enemy; and like the three other generals he was reported killed several times by the Ethiopian media. He is known more for his military skills than oratory. General Migbey is a cheerful officer who is loved by anyone who happens to see him talk and dance. He makes that very hard life seem easier. Migbey, well known for his military leadership in the most difficult western front, also has kind and easygoing personality.

Maggie Fick of Reuters described Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael on November 30, 2020 as follows: He joined TPLF as a teenager and grew up in the armed struggle. He became a guerrilla radio operator and founded "Dimtsi Woyane" (Radio Revolution). He was sent to Italy to learn communications technology. He got his bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering from Addis Ababa University. His PhD is in Information Technology from Capella University in Minnesota.

He served as deputy director of the national intelligence agency; chaired Ethio-telecom; appointed as communications and information technology minister; and later promoted to the position of a deputy prime minister. He chaired the state-run

Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation and ‘modernized the creaking power sector that now serves 115 million people’. He oversaw the construction of hydropower dams, the biggest of which is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. In September 2020 he was elected President of Tigray. Abiy invaded Tigray soon after, and Debretsion had to leave the Capital of Tigray to start armed resistance. Since November 2020 Debretsion’s huge contribution to Ethiopia’s progress was thrown into the dustbin and Abiy’s Government wanted him to surrender or be captured. On 28th of June 2021 he was back to Mekelle as President of Tigray after TDF successfully drove the invadeing forces out. After the Pretoria Agreement he was replaced by Getachew Reda as President of a Transitional Government of Tigray. Debretsion is now chairman of the TPLF. He is known in his party as a ‘shy workaholic’.

Getachew Reda has first and second degrees in law from Addis Ababa University-Ethiopia and Alabama University-USA respectively. He served as a minister of communication in the thankless Federal Government of Ethiopia. Getachew Reda is member of the executive committee of TPLF, adviser to the President of Tigray and spokesman for the Tigray Regional Council and the Central Command as well. For the international media community his name has almost become synonymous with the name of Tigray. He has been a source of hope and a window to peep through into Tigray during the dark two years of the War. Getachew has been the chief negotiator in the Pretoria Agreement representing Tigray. He is now President of Tigray.

Unlike those on the Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea side the main actors on the Tigray side are not only directly involved in the War but also have no access to finance and arms purchase. Tigray, where

in the actors live and fight, was completely sealed from the rest of Ethiopia and the world. Borders were closed 360 degrees; and telephone, internet, and banking services closed throughout the duration of the War. It was a miracle how Tigray Defense Force (TDF) was defeating the fully armed and heavily financed allied forces in several battles. The main actors were targeted by countless drone attacks and assassins who infiltrated into the interior of Tigray. Many of the main actors were falsely reported dead by the allied news media. The Tigray Defense Force (TDF) was hastily organized, but it very quickly crystalized. It was no ordinary army of recruits or conscripts or mercenaries. In his telephone call to Alex de Waal from rural Tigray Dr. Mulugeta Gebrehiwot gave a hint about how the TDF grew into such a formidable army within few months:

“Wherever you go, you get dozens of youngsters asking you to be mobilized, to be trained and armed. The TPLF does not have any shortage of manpower when it wants to mobilize. It is anger, and they’re left without option.” African Arguments. January 29, 2021.

In contrast to the peaceful and regular social and economic life that goes on inside the home-regions and countries of the allied invading forces, the millions in Tigray breathe war, drink war, eat war, dress war, think war, sleep war, talk war, and fight war. The war is the new normal for Tigray. That is why inside the TDF, there are fighters drawn from active duty in all walks of life: doctors, engineers, teachers, students, managers, businessmen and women, bankers, technicians, farmers, herders, professors, clerks, janitors, housewives. The list goes on! This is clear evidence that Tigray stopped functioning as a social and economic unit due to the War.

This is a doomsday scenario; but people of Tigray were not broken? What kept the people hoping against hope that Tigray will survive? The long history of Tigray has given the people a polity that keeps them unified and solidified in time of danger. Within the robust social organization Tigrayans built over the centuries one thing stands out keeping Tigray alive and kicking when the going gets tougher. Like plasma keeps the blood running, music keeps Tigrayans in elevated spirit in time of adversity. The people sing in time of joy, and more, in time of war.

The crucial importance of music for the freedom struggle in Tigray was recognized as early as the founding of TPLF as a guerilla army in the mid-1970s. A music troupe was created to inspire the fighters and more importantly to create awareness among the people about the struggle. The history in the last half a century of Tigray is unique in the sense that music has played a decisive role in the political life of Tigrayans. ‘*Tehadso*’ (Literally meaning Renewal) is the name given to ‘music-in-uniforms’. There have been famous names of singers who were behind the military successes first of the TPLF and the TDF next. The motivating role played by the second generation of musicians has been immense; and most popular song, which since the 1980s symbolized victory in battles is: ‘Wufer Tebeges’. Fig. 24 (Bottom-center).

Eddie Becker (Media Burn) visited Tigray to document the Famine in 1984-85. He saw famine victims; but also met zealous teenagers who were dancing war songs to the tune of a “*krar*”. He took a video of a village song group led by a boy. While taking the video and admiring the enthusiasm in the boy, who was singing a song with AK47 rifle in his hands, Eddie Becker had the

following kind words to say about Tigrayans: “*Tigrayans are really a fierce kind of fighters. They are really gentle people. They have a whole history of being powerful fighters.*”

Fig 24 Motivating Actors: **Top** SolomonY, Z-Aman, Mamit, Abebe, Teklay, Tertaraw, Gebru **Mid1** Temnit, Neguse, Elsa, Girmay, Kidane, Milaw, **Mid2** Kiflom, Abraham, Eden, Berhane, Merkeb, Mahlet, Shewit. **Bottom** SolomonT, Shumye, Samrawit.



It was not only impossible but also illegal to take part in the Tigray War from outside Tigray. That is why there is no access to information about how Tigrayans living in Ethiopia outside

Tigray were taking part in the Tigray War. It is not possible to support the War of defense through authorized transfer of arms, finance, and other kinds of logistical support. Illicit transfer involves very high risk. Technically, one cannot fight from outside Tigray; participation is restricted to media support by informing the world about what has been happening in Tigray. Two Tigrayans stood out in Addis Ababa and refused to back Abiy's Government in the Tigray War: The Speaker of the HOF and the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Tigray is the cradle of Christianity and Islam for this part of the world. Tigrayan nationalism has no religious boundaries.

Fig 25 Keria Ibrahim member of TPLF leadership



“I had consented under oath the duty and responsibility to honor the Constitution, which is the venerable union of the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia, and became the speaker of the House of Federation. I see that the Constitution is being violated and a dictatorial government being established. I don't want to be any part of it. The loyalty I have for the Federation and according to Article 13 and Article 9 of the Constitution it is my Constitutional responsibility as well as my duty as a citizen to honor and practice the Constitution. I cannot participate in anti-constitutional activities. Under the guise of Constitutional interpretation the Constitutional and the multinational constitutional order is in grave danger. Constitutional interpretation that could lead to dictatorial rule is presented to the House of Federation for approval. As speaker of the House of Federation I don't want to cooperate. My conscience does not allow me to be complicit to this historical blunder and political

conspiracy. I will not betray the political mission I fought for, and the trust of the fallen Martyrs and the nations and nationalities. When the people of Tigray decided to use the Constitutional right to self-determination and elect their own leaders they are told to accept what the Federal Government decides for them. They are being threatened by military invasion if the people of Tigray don't comply. Effort is being made to provide a Constitutional cover for the threat of military invasion. I will not participate in this violation of the Constitution. Having said this, I honor the oath and promise to the Constitution, to my people, and to my own conscience, I declare my resignation, on my own free will, from my position as speaker of the House of Federation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia."

Even media participation in support of the Tigray war of defense was possible for those Tigrayan actors living abroad where there is freedom of expression. Had it not been for the external Tigrayan individuals in the diaspora the world would have remained ignorant for good about the genocide and destruction of Tigray. Information, videos, images, statements from the main actors in Tigray were leaking out in various ways. There were some non-Tigrayan heroes working in the international media outlets who risked their lives to smuggle information out of Tigray. A reign of terror had been proclaimed on Tigrayans who live in Ethiopia, outside Tigray.

While businessmen, bankers, and others were financially supporting the ENDF and this was being reported on the media, Tigrayan businessmen and bankers working in the same location with the former cannot think of transferring donations to the TDF. Two predominantly Tigrayan banks (Wugagen and Lion) were being falsely accused of financially supporting the TDF and faced a lot of harassment.

The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Abuna Mathias-is a Tigrayan. He lived up to God’s expectations as a religious leader and exposed the genocide and destruction in Tigray to the whole world in a leaked video. He was barred from giving his statement to the media about what was happening in Tigray:

Fig 26 Patriarch: Most dangerous Job in Ethiopia for a Tigrayan



“I have tried several times but failed to stop the barbarism that has been going on in Tigray. I sent my statements to the media many times; but they sent all of it back to me. Until this day I did not get any permission to say a word. The problem in Tigray is extremely bad. The fact that there is a great deal of cruelty going on there is known to the whole world let alone to me. Extermination of people is happening. They (soldiers) move into cities and towns, into villages, into neighborhoods, and into residences, kill the youth and throw them down the cliffs. They don’t allow proper burial after killing them. God may have his own ways of reversing the brutality; but countless people are dying. Women are being raped; and they are suffering more in the aftermath. The dead are better; the raped women will have a permanent scar in their minds to last as long as they live. For six months I have been gaged and intimidated. I could not say anything as a result. In Tigray property is also completely looted. People have lost lives, their property and their rights. They have lost everything. They have decided to exterminate and they are doing it until now. While doing all this, they have no sympathies at all. Worse still is, they are preventing farmers from tilling their land to grow their food. They are burning farm implements. They tell the farmers that they are all dead; that they are not allowed to live on

earth. They ask them why they want to cultivate the land when it is already decided that they cannot live. They fire at Churches and monasteries. Several rounds of artillery fire at Debre Damo destroyed the dwellings of the Monks and killed one of them. When the faithful tried to protect the properties of Axum St. Mary of Zion they were summarily executed. In Mariam Dengelat the faithful just completed their prayers and were in the Church corridors when they were all gunned down. The Church in Asimba (Irob) founded by a Monk known by the name Zewengel was hit. The Monks of the Waldeba Monastery lived all their lives there; but were forcefully and brutally evicted. The old and the infirm died on their way to nowhere. They were scattered in all directions. Only those who were younger and stronger managed to escape safely. There is no place in Tigray that is free from the horror. They are saying: 'unless all Tigrayans disappear from the face of the earth, we cannot sleep well'."

After the Patriarch made the above statement he was bombarded by criticism, condemnations, including personal insults. The revelation alarmed the pro-war members of the clergy and many of them rejected it as *"not an official word from the Synod"*. The genocide preacher Deacon Daniel Kibret lashed out at the Patriarch as *"a father who is a national security threat to Ethiopia"*. The outlandish political analyst Seyoum Teshome on 'Yeneta' spoke his nastiness about the Patriarch as: *"This man is deeply involved in TPLF politics."* The Patriarch fought bravely against all the odds around him. Those who served the Church under his leadership were so toxic to him without consequence. The Orthodox faithful watched quietly as the supreme leader of the Church of Ethiopia was being harassed and insulted by his subordinates and those associated with them.

The Orthodox Church in Tigray which is Christianity's founding Church for Ethiopia has been in a difficult situation with regard to

its relations with the Synod in Addis Ababa. What the Church in Addis Ababa did to the Tigrayan Patriarch was only adding more fuel to the already raging fire in the relations between the two Churches. The seemingly endless patience of the Church of Tigray came to an end and it declared on the 7th of May 2021: ‘*the connecting rod is cut for good.*’

Fig 27 “Menbere Selama”: Restoration of the Axumite Church.



5.2. Tigray Side External Individual Actors (TIG-IN-IND)

In Tigray’s war of self-defense the role of individual actors is more visible and practical than that of institutions. Tigray is just a regional state in Ethiopia. Except what individuals can do in their capacity as individuals, or as leaders of institutions, diplomatic protocol does not allow institutions from abroad to directly assist the defense of Tigray.

Table 5.2 includes those actors on the Tigray side who are Tigrayan by ethnicity, from other nations and nationalities of Ethiopia, and foreign nationals as well. The table is populated by media people, analysts, and scholars. There are hundreds of such actors who stood by the side of Tigray in the worst of days; but those who have had more frequent media appearances based on author’s knowledge and perceptions, are included in the list and in the photo collages.

Table 5.2 Tigray External Individual Actors

Stalin Gebreselassie	Dr. Tewodros Adhanom
Dr. Haile Arefaine +Legesse	Abebe Gidey
Edmond Birhane	Amb. Fisseha Asgedom
Haile Michael	Kasa Hailemariam
Nima Elbagir	Meaza Gidey
Jan Nyssen	Dr. Tsegaye Ararsa
Martin Plaut	Prof. Ezkiel Gabissa
Kjetil Tronvoll	Qoms Aba Serke Birhan
Alex de Waal	Mariamawit Haile
Amanuel Eyasu	Prof. Mehari Tadelle
Michael Wallace	Prof/Dr. Geladius Araya

Stalin Gebreselassie is a household name not only for Tigrayan families, but also other viewers from other societies who love to watch his news and opinions. He presents both in Tigrigna and Amharic. He speaks so naturally that he looks like chatting with friends. He is so organized and never messes up with the sequencing. The seamless move from one subject to the other is analogous to a fade-in and fadeout transition. May be, Stalin was born when Marxism in Ethiopia was at its height. Stalin is known for leading the victorious Soviet army into Berlin; he is known for something else too. This need not bother the Stalin of Tigray because the name also means “man of steel”.

A man of steel indeed! Stalin Gebreselassie has been a bright light at the end of the pitch dark tunnel for Tigrayans all over the world in the last two years. There is no question about his dedication to the Tigray cause; and he knows the best way to help his fellows is to keep them informed. He was working intensively in the Tigray Media House for the first half of the Tigray War; but for reasons that have partly remained obscure to viewers he was able to move his viewers to a new YouTube Channel known as Zara Media

Network. The Channel has 127,000 subscribers by mid-February 2023. Stalin got a reputation for acquiring photos and videos of the otherwise hidden massacres, rapes, and looting.

Still working in the Tigray Media House is another beacon for Tigray. He appears every other day and like a mirror he shows Tigrayans how they look like around the world. Haile Michael is visibly tireless when he presents his review of what he got in the print and electronic media written on a subject about Tigray. He doesn't seem to miss any of them. Does he? Him and his other colleagues who are reporting, analyzing, and interviewing have earned Tigray Media house subscribers as many as 350,000. Its recent crisis will hopefully be resolved.

Bold and uncompromising; but still accommodative. This is Dr. Haile Arefaine of Dedebit Media conglomerate. The Media is diverse and captivating. Haile strongly adheres to principles. His non-stoppable smile, fluency in language, and logical points of arguments will leave one wondering if the field of hydrology helps people to be all rounded. No doubt, water is everything. Legesse Kidane is an analyst extraordinaire. It is difficult to stop listening if Legesse keeps on talking. He has a commanding voice fit for what he is doing. He has a power of leadership over his interviewees. Haile and Legesse host highly knowledgeable people like Abebe Gidey, Tegadalay Hagos, Ambassador Fisseha, and Holy Father Aba Sereke Birhan. Dedebit has 91,300 subscribers. Ambassador Fisseha Asgedom had served as Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Nations Organization.

Edmond Birhane and Mariamawit Haile of Horizon Free Media cover brilliantly what is lacking in most YouTube channels: Balance and scrutiny of the intricate mix-up of religion and

politics particularly as it pertains to Tigray. Viewers should be encouraged to listen to them and raise the number of subscribers from the 49,000 and 12,200 respectively to higher level. Edmond and Mariamawit are staunch advocates for Tigrayans. He never failed his father who was the leader of the Woyane I movement. Kasa Hailemariam, through his tweets, telegram account, and Facebook is busy informing and warning Tigrayans and the rest of the world. He reached 39,400 followers for his twitter account. With the good intentions and readiness to serve in him Kasa’s twitting reach is an asset for making Tigray better known.

Fig 28 Communicating Actors: **Top** Aba Serekebirhan, Haile, Legesse, Tronvoll, Plaut, Haile Michael, Edmond, Haavisto, Mariamawit, Kasa **Bottom** Amammuel, Stalin, Nyssen, Elbagir, Meaza, de Waal, Tsegaye, Wallace, Mehari



Pekka Haavisto is Finland’s foreign minister and European Union special envoy to Ethiopia. Ethiopia’s leaders in closed-door talks with him February 2021 told Haavisto that *“they are going to wipe out the Tigrayans for 100 years.”* This week the envoy warned that this *“looks for us like ethnic cleansing; if you wipe out your national minority, well, what it is? You cannot destroy all the people, you cannot destroy all the population in Tigray”*. In his comments shortly after those February meetings, Haavisto had warned that the crisis in Tigray appeared to be spiraling out of

control. This is Cara Anna's report from Nairobi, Kenya on June 18, 2021 for the AP News.

Two Oromo scholars stood out from the background of undecided and unguided politicians in the ruling and opposition parties of the Oromo nation. Dr. Tsegaye Ararsa and Prof. Ezkiel Gebissa remained loyal to the lofty principles of freedom and human rights. For them national or ethnic borders have little meaning. As much as they stood for the rights of the Oromo people they heroically fought in the cyber space against the genocidal War in Tigray. Both have been using Tigrayan YouTube channels like Tigray Media House, Dedebit Media and many others. Their most frequent appearances have been on Kush Media Network Amharic channel which has 33,600 subscribers. Tsegaye Ararsa has 32,000 followers on twitter.

The two Oromo intellectuals have been given all kinds of bad names, and were branded as "Junta". This is quite expected from the opposite side in the War; it is the noisiest empty barrel that should not scare people carrying a noble mission. Ezkiel is a professor of history and African studies and Tsegaye Ararsa is in Melbourne University's Law School. In one of the years in the past Dr. Tsegaye Regassa Ararsa was accused, in a mirror politics, of inciting ethnic violence in Ethiopia from Australia, where he has made his permanent residence.

Ayalew Asfaw Shebeshi (very clear where he belongs) organized a petition and submitted to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection of Australia for formal investigation on Dr Tsegaye Regassa Ararsa for hate crimes on Ethiopia. His accusers are taking Tsegaye's own words right from his lips and using them against him. For anyone who listens to Tsegaye's wisdom

for just a few minutes would realize how vicious the propaganda campaign of the Amhara elite has become:

“Dr. Tsegaye Ararsa is an Ethiopian who moved to Australia as a postgraduate student. Instead of returning to Ethiopia, he chose to apply for permanent residency in this country. Now he is living in metropolitan Melbourne. Dr. Tsegaye identifies himself as an ethnic Oromo and has made extensive use of social media and YouTube to promote hatred and enmity between the various tribes of Ethiopia. Dr. Tsegaye has a lot of followers on Facebook and other social media platforms. We, the undersigned, demand a serious investigation into Dr. Tsegaye, holding him accountable for ethnic violence that engulfs Ethiopia.”

Dr. Geladewos Araya is a senior Tigrayan living in the United States. He is professor of international studies, president of the development and education for Africa, and associate professor in City University of New York. He makes frequent appearances especially on Tigray Media House to share his rich experiences on important subjects such as the history, politics, and society of Tigray.

One of the key members of the Tigrayan intelligentsia is Dr. Tewodros Adhanom. Tewodros is currently Director General of the World Health Organization. He has served as Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Federal Government of Ethiopia. His high profile as an international figure did not deter him from fighting for the people of Tigray. Braving false accusations flooding from the Government of Ethiopia and enjoying the support of the international community Dr. Tewodros appeared several times in the global media, and tweeted quite often, about the plight of the people of Tigray in the hands of the Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea Block. Here is one of his typical tweets March 22, 2022. Dr. Tewodros said:

“Tigray is on the edge of a major humanitarian disaster unless the siege is ended. The Region has been sealed off by the Eritrean and Ethiopian forces for more than a year. No food, no medicine, no fuel, no cash, no media, no telecom. Starvation must never be used as a weapon of war”

While Dr. Tewodros Adhanom is the Director General of the World Health Organization in Geneva, Dr. Tewodros Tefera is a refugee doctor in the Hamdayet refugee camp in Eastern Sudan. This is the tale of two doctors and two Tewodroses, in entirely different settings, but both telling the world about the brutalities of the invasion of Tigray. Cara Anna and Nariman El-Mofty posted an article on Associated Press, May 4, 2021, entitled *“Refugee Doctor Chronicles Tigray’s Pain as He Treats It”*.

“He is a surgeon and a father. Every morning, he wakes up under a plastic tarp and is reminded he’s now a refugee, too. Tewodros Tefera is one of more than 60,000 people who fled violence in Tigray, crossing to Sudan. Horrified by what he saw when the fighting between Ethiopian and Tigray forces began six months ago, and by the tales of new arrivals, the 44-year-old chronicles the pain even as he treats it. For Tewodros, it has not been a comfortable transformation from cool and detached doctor at one of Tigray’s largest hospitals to driven spokesman for his people. His wife and small children remain there, and he doesn’t know when he’ll see them again. He arrived in Sudan with only the clothes he wore—jogging pants and a polo shirt and his wedding ring. He slept in the market in his first few days in Sudan before introducing himself as a doctor and being welcomed. He worries about his mother still inside Tigray. At times he closes his eyes and knocks a fist against his forehead, trying to drive back anxiety. He works from dawn to well beyond dusk at a clinic run by the Sudanese Red Crescent Society in the border community of Hamdayet. With no running water or

electricity, he and a handful of colleagues see well over 100 patients a day. Tewodros has delivered babies and treated gunshot wounds, despite a shortage of anesthesia.”

Fig. 29 Hippocratic Oath in Action: Dr. Tewodros Tefera in Hamdayet



In the same month and the same year the “refugee doctor” article was published, a young lady had come face to face, with a genocide ideologist, on France 24 English Programme. Neamin Zeleke may have wrongly thought that he could crush the young female in front of him with just a few words of arrogance. He misbehaved and messed up the France 24 studio when Meaza Gidey trashed him with her eloquence and turned him into a naughty child in front of the whole world. These are the children of Tigray and these are its uncivilized enemies. Like black and white the contrast is visible.

Meaza Gidey lives in the United States; but she did not get there licking ice-cream. She has gone through enormous difficulties in her personal life while she was in her homeland. Did she forget her people when she managed to walk on the streets of New York chasing the American Dream? If you happen to view her

YouTube videos she doesn't look anything like it. She looks as miserable as any women in the refugee camps of Hamdayet. How couldn't God act quickly enough when the likes of Rachel are spraying their tears in his direction? The faith of Tigrayans is being tested beyond limits.

"Meaza's passion isn't political. It's personal", it is said. She is one of the leading faces in the #StopWarOnTigray movement; and has 100,000 followers on twitter. Meaza helped establish Omna Tigray and in 2019, she co-founded 'Yikono', a grassroots movement aimed at creating a society that treats men and women equally. On 27th of October 2021 Omna Tigray featured Meaza Gidey as "A Women Led Movement", in which her epic struggle in life is briefly presented.

During what came to be known as the "Badme War" a 'public secret' was forced out as if keeping it safe this far was to the benefit of the people of Tigray. Early enough exposure of the secret could have helped the people to identify real friends and real enemies and avoid the destruction they experienced. The ability to distinguish who is what between Sudan and Eritrea was in the pockets of the TPLF leaders inaccessible to the people who needed it most. Who could have thought Eritrean leaders had started the genocide of Tigrayans, though by other means, as early as 40 years ago? Who recognized the Sudan that saved Tigrayans 1984-85 from the massacre by famine perpetrated by EPLF leaders? What Sudan did in 2020-2021 is the same, though in a different setting: saving Tigrayans from a genocide Made-in Eritrea. The paradox is painful; a Muslim nation in a far-away desert being more caring than fellow Christians that share the same ethnic origin.

Tigrayans are overwhelmed by emotions when they think of how they got into Um Rakuba and Hamdayet where the kindness of the Sudanese was a reason for hope. Sudanese not only hosted fleeing Tigrayans but also told the world about what was really happening to those who stayed back in Tigray. Nima Elbagir is a Sudanese-born journalist and an award winning international television correspondent with the CNN. She has 95,000 followers on twitter. She travelled to the banks of the Setit River (Tekeze) on the Tigray-Sudan border and witnessed evidences of torture, detention, and execution of residents in the town of Humera. This is what Nima Elbagir reported walking on the banks of the Setit River, CNN 9 September 2021:

“This is the Setit River, a source of life for the people living along its banks. For weeks the river has been bringing with it dark secrets from Tigray. Mangled corpses mysteriously appear here downstream in Sudan. On both sides of the River Tigrayans keep a grim tally of those who are believed to have been executed by Ethiopian Forces.”

A few months before Nima’s trip to the Setit River banks, she had got access to the interior of Tigray and reported on the 13th of May 2021 on CNN. From Mekelle, the Capital of Tigray, Nima Elbagir risked her life and travelled by car across Tigray. War was raging in almost all parts of Tigray as she moved from one location to the other in the rural areas to see evidences of massacres like burials grounds. She had several dangerous encounters with Eritrean troops at checkpoints on her way to Axum where she met victims. Nima also led a group of CNN correspondents exposing the involvement of Ethiopian Airlines in the shipment of arms during the War.

Although found in different historical, cultural, and economic contexts Ireland and Tigray are comparable at least in one sense. Both know how to cross turbulent times, survive, and thrive. In history drought devastated the two societies. The Irish braved the

Atlantic Ocean and contributed significantly to the building of US economy, culture, and politics; they built their own nation into one of highly developed countries in Europe too. Against all odds Ireland is trying to help Tigray diplomatically mindful of its own terrible experiences in the past. Michael Wallace is a brave son of Ireland. He is a politician and a member of the European Parliament. He told the Parliaments to do something about Tigray:

“The terrible Humanitarian Crisis in Tigray continues. The effective embargo on aid reaching the millions of Tigrayans desperately in need, by the Ethiopian government, is absolutely criminal at the moment. And The EU is apparently afraid to say a bad word to PM Abiy Ahmed Ali. Why hasn’t the EU done more to pressure Abiy Ahmed Ali into ending the persecution of the people of Tigray? Are they afraid it might impact on future Trade arrangements with Ethiopia? Do lives in Africa matter less?”

Ethiopian officials, on several occasions, accused Mike’s home Country for supporting the “terrorists” in Tigray. The Irish don’t want anyone to tell them that their friends in Tigray are not terrorists but freedom fighters. Not all Europeans are defenders of the parasitic interest, of their home states, in the developing world. Starting from the Irish humanitarian Michael Wallace, few more like him are added here for their advocacy for the people of Tigray. Kjetil Tronvoll is professor of peace and conflict studies at Bjorknes University College in Norway and heads Oslo Analytica. Kjetil Tronvoll has 180,000 followers on twitter. During the Tigray War Tronvoll was the subject of a hate speech campaign, including death threats based on misinformation spread by Ethiopian government agencies. Tronvoll contacted Norwegian police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting for an intervention. Kjetil Tronvoll had an interview on Professor Getachew Assefa’s show and he had the following to say:

“The war is fought in the battle fields in Tigray; it is also fought in the media: particularly to get the attention, international sympathy and get international legitimacy; to spin the narratives supporting ones side. The majority of the information emanating from the Addis Ababa, be it from the Prime Minister’s Office or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or from the Military leadership is falsehoods, pure propaganda, manipulated information and disinformation The kind of peddling of the narrative to comfort Ethiopian people but also to influence the international community to not engage, to not disturb in their business: ‘We do as we want in Tigray’. The declaration of the cease fire on June 28, 2021 which obviously should be a declaration of military defeat. ‘We are pulling out’ means we lost the battle.”

Martin Plaut is a journalist and academic specializing in the Horn of Africa and South Africa. He worked as a BBC journalist for three decades and was also researcher in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. He has 294,200 followers on twitter by mid-February 2023 and twits on Tigray more often. As recently as January 31, 2023 Martin Plaut shared seven photographs taken by Mishtir Sabat and a satellite image of a school in Addilal Gheralta completely destroyed by airstrike on 22 June 2021. There were no human casualties because there were no students since 2020. On October 21, 2022 Martin Plaut wrote an article on Jan Nyssen’s contributions to the assessment of the human and physical impacts of the war in Tigray using physical geographic assessment tools. Martin Plaut and S. Vaughan in the first half of 2023 published a trail blazing book on the Tigray War.

Amanuel Eyasu is an Eritrean by birth; but unlike most Eritreans he is a prominent advocate against the Tigray War and bitterly opposed to his county’s involvement in the genocide and destruction of the Tigray he feels embodies the original identity of Eritreans. He is the founder and chief analyst in the YouTube and

TV channels he created. He uses the media with 249,000 subscribers to fight the Totalitarian Regime in Eritrea and its invasion of Tigray. Asena is the name of the YouTube and TV channels. Throughout the two years of the Tigray War Asena made immense contribution in the awareness creation and analysis of the Tigray War. Amanuel Eyasu on several occasions came to assistance by hosting Tigrayan TV Channels taken off satellites by Government.

Jan Nyssen can very easily be mistaken for a Tigrayan in white. He is so absorbed into the social fabric of Tigray that even native Tigrayans cannot mix as easily as Jan could into the deep rural society of Tigray. Emeritus Professor Jan Nyssen is a physical Geographer at Ghent University Belgium. Since his dissertation research on soil erosion he frequently visits Tigray. Some sole and joint authored publications about the war in Tigray by Jan Nyssen:

PROFESSOR JAN NYSSSEN

*Tigray: atlas of the humanitarian situation; *Geospatial solutions for evaluating the impact of the Tigray conflict on farming; *Challenges and resilience of an indigenous farming system during wartime; *How Ethiopia's conflict has affected farming in Tigray; *Catastrophe stalks Tigray; Mapping the humanitarian emergencies in Tigray; *Western Tigray: illustration of a mapping blunder; *Crop status in Tigray in August 2022; *Market prices in Tigray (March 2020-March 2022) *Remote sensing to the rescue-Assessing the impact of armed conflict on cultivated land in Tigray; *Ploughing in the Tigray War; *Cluster bombing on Tigray.

WARNED TIGRAYANS



Sage Gebrekidan Desta

“You don’t find them in development, you don’t find them in battles; only in treachery! How do I destroy somebody! Witchcraft, poisoning, falsehood, cheating, pitting one against another, confusing! They don’t fight directly; they don’t involve directly; here and there they push two people to fight one another. When the two die, they come into the center. This is their history! You cannot trust them! They are poisonous snakes! It is because we don’t know them that they treat us-Tigrayans-like a ‘Dining-Table-Center-Piece-Bowl’. We don’t know them!”

WARNED ABIY AHMED

Gen. Tsadkan Gebretensay Former Chief of Staff of ENDF



“In Addis Ababa, I met Abiy Ahmed, along with others, three times and discussed the issue but it became obvious he had no intention to resolve it peacefully. Especially at the end, I raised my point that he’s fighting with the Tigrayan people and that it will lead the Country to a dangerous position if he doesn’t settle this peacefully. He talked about the interviews I had. In the interviews, I stated that

the people of Tigray have enormous advantages: homogeneity, no ideological polarity, and cohesiveness. Moreover, I had said that Tigrayans are a political community who use their political knowledge and judgment to come to a conclusion by themselves. Tigrayans have a rich military tradition and historically, they have sacrificed a lot in the several wars for freedom. Abiy Ahmed asked me if I mean what I say or I am saying it just for political consumption. I replied that I do not speak just for political consumption; I believe in what I say. Abiy’s reaction to my reply was; ‘Don’t be mistaken. There is no society that will not be subjugated by force and money. The same goes for the people of Tigray too.’ I warned him if this is what he believes in, if this is his policy, he was wrong. He responded by saying: ‘Do not worry too much about the people of Tigray; do not lose sleep over the people of Tigray; we will solve it some way.’ At this point things became clear. In the midst of this Hachalu Hundessa was killed and the chances of resolving things in Ethiopian politics, with dialogue and achieving peace started to visibly narrow and the inevitability of the use of force increased. After this, I came to Mekelle.”

WARNED ETHIOPIANS

Seyoum Mesfin (Former Foreign Minister of Ethiopia)



“Isaias Afeworki of Eritrea and Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia are creating havoc, complicating the whole situation, and initiating a civil war in Ethiopia. They must be removed from power early enough.”

Seve Abraha (Former Defense Minister of Ethiopia)



“If the war is started the consequence will be extremely severe. A war started in Tigray will not be just a local skirmish; it will be a full-fledged war. I am not saying this to frighten people; I want the people of Ethiopia to know the reality. If the war starts it will have no boundaries. In view of the regional power intervention and the war on the social media, if a bullet is added into this, the Country will turn into a beer parlor where everyone gets drunk and behave as they wish”

Chapter 6

Actor Relationships: Nature and Direction

6.1. Actor Mapping

Individual actor relationships is too complex to be graphically represented. Hence, Actor Mapping in this chapter is a macro and meso level depiction of relationships of actors at global, regional, national, state, and institutional levels (Table 5.3, Fig. 26). On this map of actor relationships the direction and the nature of the relationship is depicted by simple geometric figures and signs. Text description of relationships is restricted to the FDRE-Amhara-Eritrea triangle.

Table 6.1 Global, regional, national, state, and institutional actors

No.	Category	List of Actors
1	Super powers	USA, China, Russia
2	Global and Regional Organizations	UN, EU, AU
3	States involved	Ireland UAE, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Somalia
4	Global Media	CNN, BBC, Reuters, Aljazeera, NYT, WP AP, GN, Oxford Ac/ ESAT, Ethio360/ TMH, Dedebit
5	National Institutions	Banks, Public Universities, Churches
6	Civilian groups	Tigray diaspora, Amhara diaspora, Eritrea diaspora
7	Armed groups	Fano, Afar militia, Regional forces
8	Main Actors	FDRE, Amhara, Eritrea, Tigray

Fig. 30a Actor Map of the Tigray War (Legend: Fig. 30b)

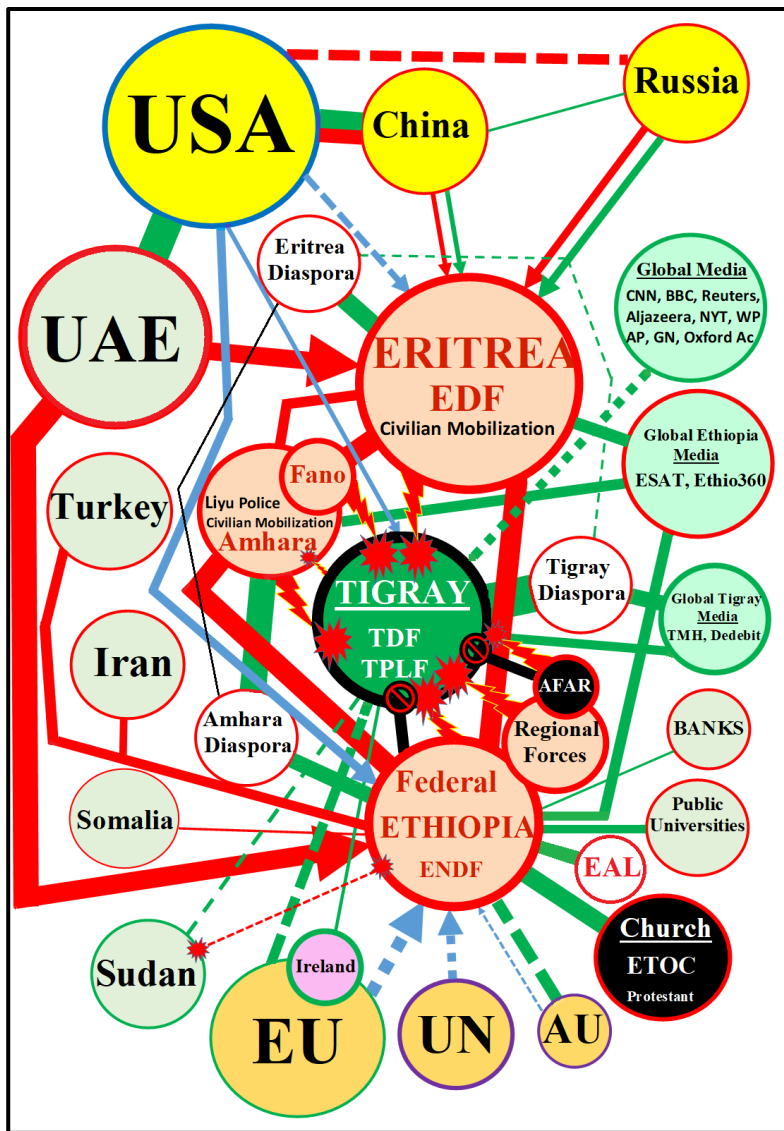
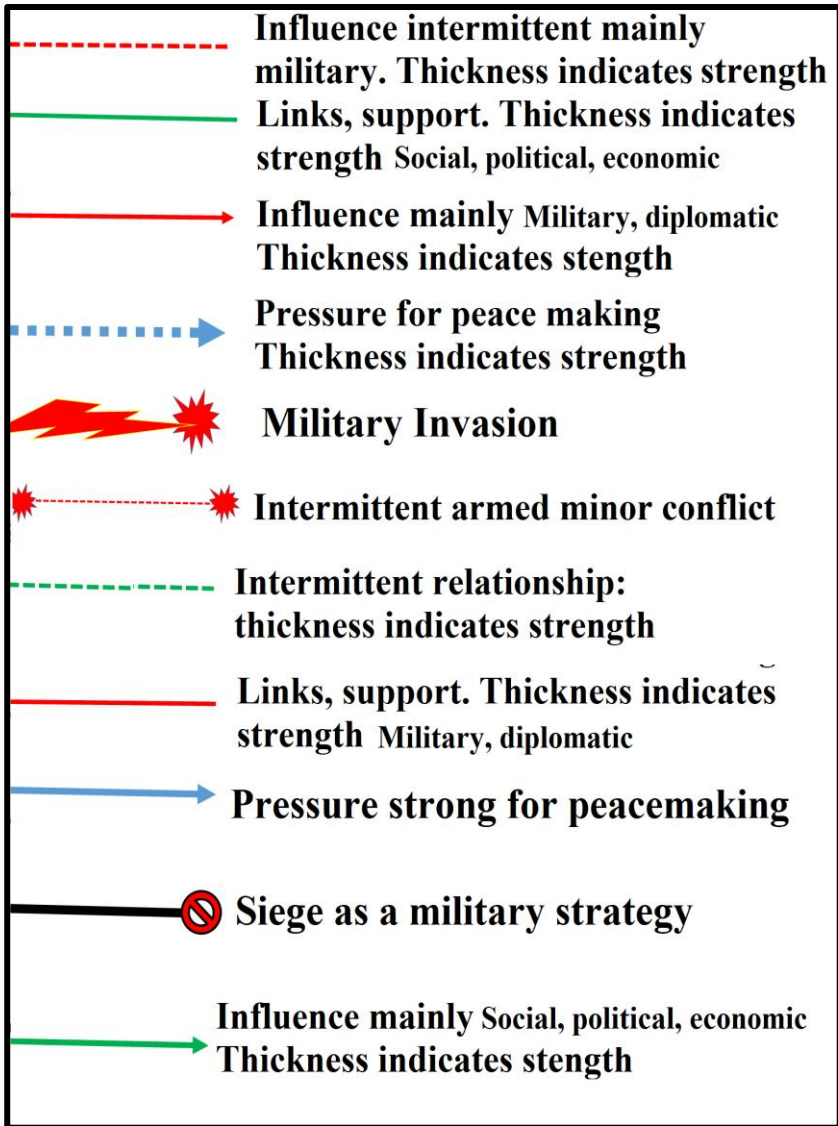


Fig. 30b Actor Map legend



6.2. FDRE-Eritrea-Amhara: Alliance Building

6.2.1. FDRE-ERITREA

The main facet of the trilateral alliance was initiated by the friendship created between Isaias Afeworki of Eritrea and Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia. On April 2, 2018 Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called for peace with Eritrea. A few days later President Isaias Afeworki of Eritrea responded positively to the call, but couldn't hide what peace with Ethiopia can bring to his advantage: "Game Over Woyane!".

From day one, the peace was destined to be a start of war against TPLF-Tigray. The tacit agreement about the common interest between the two leaders was signed and sealed as a peace agreement applauded by the whole world. Washington Post 9 July 2018 reported that Abiy had the following to say during the signing of the agreement in Asmara: "*We have agreed to bring down the wall between us. Now there is no border between Ethiopia and Eritrea.*" No one can fail to see what is implied in Abiy's phrase: "...*there is no border...*" When Eritrean troops invaded Tigray, "they did not cross any border"; hence no sovereignty of Ethiopia was violated". This was the political and diplomatic convenience created for Eritrea to intervene inside Ethiopia.

Isaias Afeworki put it even more strongly. In the same Washington Post report 9 July 2018 Eritrean President said: "*We can assure you we will face the future together. We will work as one.*" Reading between the lines, this statement is more than a promise for good diplomatic relations between two sovereign states. There was another hint that the agreement between Abiy Ahmed and Isaias Afeworki had more sister motives than just the

restoration of diplomatic ties between the two states. The longest border Ethiopia shares with Eritrea is what lies between Tigray and Eritrea. Since the border problem was the official reason for the belligerence between the two states any solution to the Ethio-Eritrean border problem cannot be attained without involving Tigray in any of the negotiations. Abiy and Isaias hid their heads in the sand like ostrich.

Fig. 31 Alliance between Ethiopia and Eritrea against Tigray



Abiy was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, the Speaker of the House of Federation, and President of the Afar Region. The Somali National News Agency 8 July 2018 commented that “*Afar was invited not Tigray! Hinting a problem (Confrontation) TPLF was legal leader of Tigray at that time.*” Mr. Herman J. Cohen seems to have got the message underlying the peace agreement quite clearly. It was not expressed early enough though. After two years on October 12, 2020, less than a month to the invasion of Tigray by Ethiopia and Eritrea, Cohen tweeted: “*Eritrean President's current state visit to Ethiopia sends a strong signal to*

the Tigrean regional authority to not even think about using military force to resist the Ethiopian central government under Prime Minister Abiy.”

The tweet was responded to by Kjetil Tronvoll on the same day as: *“Isn’t this to turn the issue on its head? The visit of PIA to Ethiopia may be perceived by Tigray people and TPLF as a possible escalation towards armed conflict against them.”* Martin Plaut advised: *“Good relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea will only succeed if both nations respect the rights of Tigrayans”*. The three gentlemen were talking about later visits. Of course, all the visits were based on the initial agreement and the objective of visits remain the same.

On 15 October 2020 it was reported from Asmara that *“President Isaias Afwerki returned home in mid-morning hours today after three-day working visit to Ethiopia which was marked by tours to development projects”*. One of his destinations was the Head Quarters of the Ethiopian Air Force in Bishoftu. There is no reason why a leader of a foreign state should visit secret military installations of another state; states that have been on war footing until only a couple of years ago. Who needs a prophet to tell that this is the eve of a big war which would be launched by the alliance of the two leaders of the two states?

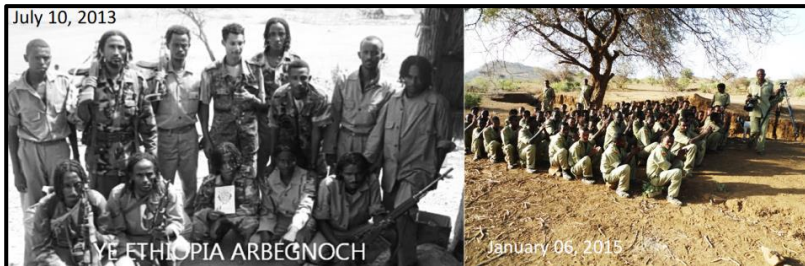
The alliance between Abiy Ahmed and Isaias Afeworki against Tigray was blessed and fortified by UAE’s Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Zayed who awarded the two leaders the highest awards of the United Arab Emirate (UAE). This was reported by ENA on July 24, 2018. Throughout the war in Tigray UAE was fiercely behind Ethiopia and Eritrea. Tesfa News added on July 24, 2018 that the “Order of Zayed” is the highest civil honor in

UAE and was conferred by the Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Army. The contradiction between a civilian honor and a conferring supreme commander is clear; but what was concealed could only be guessed.

6.2.2. AMHARA-ERITREA

Another facet of the Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea alliance is too awkward for diplomatic protocol to handle. Amhara-Eritrea alliance against Tigray is hard to understand and difficult to explain. Amhara is a regional state within Ethiopia, while Eritrea is a foreign state. Foreign relations are done by a central government not by and of the regional government. That is why there is only one Foreign Affairs Ministry in Ethiopia not Foreign Affairs also as regional bureaus.

Fig. 32 Amhara Forces operating from Eritrea against TPLF



The alliance between Amhara and Eritrea can be traced back to the anti-TPLF ‘Arbegnock Ginbar’ hosted by Eritrea. Dilwenberu Nega posted on Aiga Forum on 31 March, 2009 about an incident in London (UK) in which the connection between ‘Arbegnock Ginbar’, essentially Amhara-based rebel group, and Eritrean was exposed:

“The PR machinery of the so-called Arbegnotch Ginbar, Abbay Media, is funded by Shabia and run by DJ Girum Yilma’s wife who is the daughter of one of Shabia’s General. Girum- a through and through Amhara– became the darling of Shabia and a household name in London not only via his Shabian wife, but with his services to Shabia”

‘Arbenoch Ginbar’ called for armed struggle against TPLF-Tigray in its declaration on 10 July, 2011. Since then it intensified its attack on a few places in Gondar: its home base. Arbenoch Ginbar’s operations were concentrated in Western Tigray, not as such by the proximity to its base in Eritrea, but motivated by Gondar’s claim to Western Tigray. Welqait was attacked on 25 January 2013, and Tsegede on 15 Decemebr 2012 and on 6 January 2013.

Fig. 33 Amhara Region delegation pays homage to Isaias Afeworki



Since the Ethio-Eritrea peace agreement on 9 July 2018 there might have been behind the curtain dealings between Amhara and

Eritrea; but the alliance came out into the open when a delegation from the Amhara Region violated all rules of diplomatic engagement and visited Isaias Afewerki in Asmara on 15 August 2018. Amhara Region, like Oromia and Somali Regions, does not share border with Eritrea. The visit would be acceptable if Eritrea and Amhara shared boundary like in the case of Afar and Tigray regions. It is strange that the visitors to Eritrea turned out to be from the Amhara Region not from the Afar and Tigray regions as normally expected. The Amhara Region sent delegates to Eritrea with the expectation of creating a shared border by annexing Western Tigray. In view of conventional logic, the following justification given for the visit by the delegation from Amhara Region is unacceptable. Shabait reported on 15 August 2018:

“The representatives stated that the objective of the visit is to express appreciation for the peace agreement reached between the leaders of both countries and make due contribution in the implementation of the agreement. They further explained that the peace agreement would make significant contribution to highlighting the image of the two countries. Noting that friendly and peaceful neighborhood has been restored between the two peoples, the representatives expressed readiness to promote a new era of friendship and cooperation to posterity. They further voiced appreciation for the support the people and Government of Eritrea extended to the Ethiopian people at a time of need.”

Like what the rest of the eight other regions did, appreciation for the peace process does not need travelling to a foreign country with a visa stamped on the passports of the delegates. Neither is it procedural for delegates of a regional state to contribute to the implementation of the agreement in Asmara without assignment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of their respective countries.

The delegation from the Amhara Region made its message clear to Isaias, to the rest of Ethiopia, and to the whole world that the friendship has some dreadful objectives. The female member of the delegation presented a souvenir to President Isaias Afeworki which bears a picture of the Stele of Axum and the Geez Alphabet. It is amusing that a leader of Eritrea, a state which was an integral part of the Axumite Kingdom, receives a souvenir bearing the Oblisk of Axum and the Geez Alphabet from the Amhara Region which had no part in the creation of the historic treasures. Another item in the souvenir is the rock-hewn church of Lalibela; that belongs to Agew not to Amhara. The only thing relevant to Amhara in the souvenir was the Portugese Castle of Gondar.

Fig. 34 Shabia and Amhara: Former enemies turned strong allies



The fake souveniring can be waved as ridicululous; but the underlying message in the souvenir is more dreadful. Agew Civilization that built the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela is already swallowed into the Amhara mainstream. The next claim of the Amhara is Axum. They were begging Isaias to help them fufill the dream of Amhara ‘reclaiming’ the sole proprietorship of the Axumite Civilization. Amhara activist not identified by name said (Time Media 9 February 2023):

“Whether you like it or not, whether you believe it or not, Ethiopia will be saved only by the Amhara people. When we say we are Amhara people what do we have to prove our claim? Our alphabet! Let him come forward; who has alphabet. Who is next to the British for creating an alphabet? Amhara! (Audience). How about the philosophy? Amhara! (Audience). How about the literature? Amhara! (Audience)...How about the religion? Amhara! (Audience). How about the civilization? Amhara! (Audience). Who owns Axum? Let us tell the truth! Amhara! (Audience). Axum is the finger print of our ancestors. We were the first in Axum.”

The Eritrea-Amhara alliance against Tigray was being consolidated by a return visit of Isaias Afewerki to the Amhara Region. Upon arrival at the Gondar Airport, President Isaias was accorded warm welcome by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonen, and President of the Amhara region Gedu Andargachew. Shabait on 9 November 2018 reported that: *“President Isaias Afewerki passed through the streets of Gondar city amidst exuberant reception by city residents. Isaias also visited the University of Gondar and other development sites.”* This reminded the author of what happened in Gondar in the years before the 1935 Italo-Ethiopian war. In the history book of Ethiopia, written in Amharic by Tekletsadik Mekuria, there is a photo of an Italian Consul in Gondar known by the name Raphael De Lauro. In the photo the Consul is seen sitting on mule-back accompanied and cheered by hundreds of people of the City of Gondar!

At a lunch reception hosted in honor of the leaders, the President of Amhara region, Gedu Andargachew presented gifts to the leaders of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia in the name of the people of the Region. More than the alliance with Eritrea, Amhara Region had stretched its agenda as a Horn affair. The leaders of the three states named their group as ‘tripartite; but by the time they held their meeting in the Amhara it turned into a

‘quadripartite’ against Tigray. Radio France International on 9 June 2021 quoted a UN report that Somali Army had participated in the Tigray War. Lucy Kassa, on The Globe and Mail 20 January 2022 quoted survivors that *"Somali troops committed atrocities in Tigray as new alliance emerged"*.

On Mereja.com there was a post on 10 November 2018 stating that President Isaias Afewerki’s grandfather was buried in Gondar. This is a clear testimony to the dishonorable distance, Amhara in general and Gondar in particular, travelled to beg Isaias Afewerki for support in their ambitions on Tigray. Gondar was prepared to compromise its integrity by trying to please Isaias for the sake of annexing Western Tigray using Eritrean Defense Force.

6.2.3. FDRE-AMHARA

The third facet of the Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea alliance was the Ethiopia-Amhara bilateral. This particular alliance was not formalized until the start of the War. For an obvious reason it was not necessary to reach formal agreement between a federal state and a regional State within its jurisdiction. In view of the fact that the target is Tigray the Federal Government is expected by law to use federal forces (police or army) to handle security issues in regional states. Amhara Region, except for its population size is the same as any other regional state in terms of its role in Federal Affairs. This is more in theory than in practice though. The Amhara are the spoiled child of Ethiopia.

The precursor of the Amahara-Federal Government alliance was the creation of the Oromara block. Oromos and Amhara make up over 60 percent of the population in Ethiopia, and before the start of the War and the military alliance between Amhara and the

Federal government was formalized the two major demographics formed the Oromara block in order to monopolize a shared power by sheer percentages and to fend off the threat of TPLF from Tigray.

The Amhara Region was for a couple or so years preparing itself to invade Western and Southern Tigray. It expected Eritrea to be involved on its side. The Region did not need to talk to the Federal defense force (ENDF) because the key Federal administrative positions were held by leaders of the Amhara wing of the Prosperity Party, ruling the Amhara Region as well. The motive power for the invasion of Tigray was located in the Amhara Region. Eritrea was invited by the Amhara Region to help in the annexation of Western and Southern Tigray and use the opportunity for its own revenge on TPLF. The Federal Government was the de jure leader of the alliance against Tigray, but not the most enthusiastic of the three for a war on its own Regional State. That was why the Amhara Region kept its final war-plans secret from the Chief of Staff of the ENDF.

Fig. 35 Oromara Block: The Marriage of the Titans



The Federal Government of Ethiopia has deployed Regional Special Police Forces from Oromia, Afar, Amhara, and Somali regions alongside ENDF against the TDF. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed told the Parliament that he “...*can deploy the Amhara Region Special Force to Tigray, the Somali Region, or any other place for that matter*”. This was not the truth though. It was not the Prime Minister who decided to deploy the Amhara Regional Special Forces to the Tigray War. To the contrary, it was the Amhara Regional Special Forces that first deployed the ENDF starting the alliance in the battle fields of Western Tigray. The first time the ENDF and the Amhara Regional Special Forces fought side by side happened without the prior knowledge of top ENDF commanders. It revealed how much influence the Amhara Region leaders had on the Federal Government. Given the power they wielded in the Federal Government apparatus it was not difficult to twist the arms of the Federal Government into a destructive war. The secret was revealed in the fateful public speech delivered by the late Abere Adamu, a former police commissioner of the Amhara Regional State, soon after the war started on the 4th of November, 2020. Commanders of the Amhara Regional Special Forces had secret contacts with those within the ENDF Northern Command; especially with those members of the Mechanized Forces stationed near Humera.

Amhara commanders had already finalized a plan to withdraw the ENDF force in Humera, under the protection of the Amhara Regional Special Forces and come to the Amhara side of the front, in case the war starts. When the withdrawal of the ENDF forces was completed the ENDF mechanized force was ordered to fight against TDF by the Amhara Regional Special Forces commander called by the name Biset. The ENDF unit was

ordered to provide mechanized support to the Amhara Regional Force. Until this point none of ENDF supreme command had any idea what was going on.

It was tragicomedy in uniforms that ENDF started fighting without the knowledge of the ENDF central command. The ENDF mechanized unit was commanded by the Amhara Regional Special Force commander. Abere Adamu, Amhara Region Police Commissioner, called Field Marshal (then General) Birhanu Jula and broke the news to him about the “rescue” of the ENDF Mechanized Unit, and that the ENDF unit has started fighting under Amhara Regional Force command. When the Chief of Staff got confused about the news of a police commissioner commanding ENDF troops without his knowledge, Abere Adamu told him *“What happened has happened; just order the ENDF to fight”*. It was clear to the General who the boss was; so he agreed to do as instructed by Abere Adamu. This was bewildering to any observer initially; but it became the fate of the ENDF to be commanded not only by the Amhara but also by Eritrea.

The Federal Government of Ethiopia led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had a much better control over regional forces in regions other than the Amhara Region. Despite this Abiy Ahmed claimed that he has the mandate to depoloy any of the regional forces to any front he thinks fit. In his address on 11 October 2021, he said the following in Parlaiment: *“I can deploy the Amhara region special police to Tigray, to the Somali region, or to any other place for that matter”*.

6.3. FDRE and Eritrea External Support

In this section the most decisive form of support from external actors in the Tigray War is addressed; and that is, the supply of

armaments to the key players in the War: Ethiopia and Eritrea. The vast array of political, diplomatic, and economic roles in the forms of support, denunciations, suggestions, mediations, and aggravations coming from different local, national, regional, and global actors is beyond the scope of the book, This War needs several volumes of documentation to be adequately captured in its vast entirety.

Eritrean Defense Force

It is reported in AOA on 21 November 2018 that United Kingdom approved arms exports to Eritrea. This is a few months after the Abiy-Isaias peace agreement. When peace is in the air, UK's approval of arms sales to Eritrea evades reason. Between 2008 and 2017 the UK has approved 2 military arms export licenses to Eritrea. *"Despite selling arms to Eritrea, the UK government has spoken out forcefully about the Eritrean regime's human rights abuses"*. If UK were genuinely interested in the protection of human rights in Eritrea it could use its capability to weaken the power of coercion in Eritrea.

Ethiopian National Defense Force

As the War raged and dragged for two years the defending side in the War (TDF), which was at the start poorly armed, had managed to capture thousands of light and heavy armaments from the Eritrean and Ethiopian forces giving it an unexpected upper hand in the War. In the course of the War ENDF and EDF were not only being severely depleted of their numbers but also of their arsenal. Stijn Mitzer and Joost Oliemans, on ORYX 11 January 2022 reports that *"ENDF lost some 100 tanks and 70 artillery pieces to Tigray Forces; and also lost most if not all of its large-calibre multiple rocket launchers (MRLs), guided rocket and ballistic missile*

systems when Tigray forces overran their bases in the Tigray Region.”

- ❖ Iran, delivered at least two Mohajer-6s in August 2021
- ❖ China three Wing Loong I in September 2021
- ❖ UAE, deployed at least six of its own Wing Loong Is Nov. 2021
- ❖ Emirati-delivered VTOL UCAVs

Table 6.2 Transfer of armaments from different countries to Ethiopia
Stijn Mitzer and Joost Oliemans, ORYX January 11, 2022

Unmanned Combat Aerial	UAE	2+ Mohajer-6s	Aug. 2021
	UAE	3 Wing Loong Is	Sept. 2021
	UAE	Bayraktar TB2s	Fall 2021
	UAE	6 Wing Loong Is UAE Operated	Nov. 2021
	UAE	Unknown VTOL UCAVs	Sum. 2021
Guided Munitions UCAVs	Iran	Ghaem-5 PGMs	Aug. 2021
	China	50+ TL-2 AGMs	Nov. 2021
	Turkey	MAM-L PGMs	Fall 2021
	UAE	Blue Arrow 7 AGMs Used by the UAE	Nov. 2021
	UAE	120mm Mortar Grenades	Sum. 2021
Vehicles	UAE	50+ Toyota Land Cruiser Ambulance	2021
Small Arms	Iran	KL-103 Assault Rifles	2021
	Iran	Hoshdar-M Marksman Rifles	2021
Ammunition	Azerb.	HE 40M10 Mortar Bombs	2021 and 2022

Coming to the rescue of the two otherwise strongest armies in East Africa, were the combat or weaponized drones purchased or donated from Middle Eastern and far eastern states, notably UAE, Turkey, Iran, and China. (Africa Report-26 January 2022;

Associated Press-30 January 2022; Bellingcat-17 August 2021; BBC- 31 January 2022; New York Times- 20 December 2021). The report by Stijn Mitzer and Joost Oliemans, on ORYX 11 January 2022, confirmed that arms transfers from United Arab Emirates to the Ethiopian National Defense Force have been made, in 140 flights by January 2022, in an effort to turn the tide in the ongoing Tigray War. Ethiopia has devoted most of its scarce resources to the acquisition of unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) from a number of countries around the world:

Chapter 7

Causes of the Tigray War

“We should talk about the ultimate cause of war. It's a question we should never stop asking, because if we do, there's a chance, that we might miss an opportunity to reduce the occurrence of war.” Jaron Lanier

7.1. Introduction

In conflict analysis causes of conflicts could be structural and proximate (Herbert, 2017). Structural causes are root or underlying, long-term or systemic causes that are built into the norms and policies of a society; while proximate or immediate causes are more recent causes that can accentuate structural causes and lead to an escalation of conflicts. The original causes of a war may not be the ones that sustain it. Conflict caused by politics or social motivations may be prolonged or intensified by economic motivations. Hence, it is important to adopt a dynamic, chronological, and contextual approach in order to be able to understand how conflicts develop over time: what trigger or contribute to the outbreak, what further escalates, and what factors prolong conflicts.

The analysis of cause of conflicts is better depicted in the form of a ‘Conflict Tree’ (Herbert, 2017). A conflict tree visualizes: Causes represented by roots of the tree, core problems derived from causes by the trunk, and the effects represented by the branches. The analysis of cause of conflicts also uses position and interest mapping in the form of ‘Conflict Onion’ (Herbert, 2017 and Hyde, 2020)). Embodied in the causes of conflicts are the

actor: Positions (what they say they want), Interests or Goal (what they want), and Needs (what they really want).

7.2. Analysis of causes of the Tigray war

Much of the writings on the causes of the Tigray War are more tilted towards the proximate than they are to the structural causes of the War. What could be labeled as proximate causes of the Tigray War are: attack on the Northern Command, election held in Tigray, and the refusal of TPLF to join Prosperity Party. BBC (29 June 2021) stated the cause of the war as lightly as a ‘power struggle’; but Jan Abbink (30 January 2022) on ICER-Mediation, was more partisan in attributing the cause of the War to political system failure of a difficult transition from a ‘repressive autocracy to a democratic political system’. VOX (24 April 2021) maintained that the cause of the War was a ‘final breakout of tension that was brewing between Abiy’s government and TPLF’. Current Affairs (01 December 2021) described the cause as a ‘series of events and processes that caused the escalation of tensions between Abiy Ahmed and TPLF’.

The Tigray Regional Government insisted on holding elections in the Region, contrary to the Federal government’s decision to postpone National elections. Moreover, the Region withdrew its recognition of the Addis Ababa government on the grounds that its constitutional mandate had expired. In a tit-for-tat move the reaction of the Federal government was to consider the Regional election as null and void. CBC News (09 November 2021), UAB (15 January, 2022), and Walsh and Dahir of The New York Times (16 March 2022) also shared the causes of the War to be the feud reaching a boiling point in September 2020 when the Tigrayans held regional parliamentary elections in defiance of

Abiy, followed by TPLF forces' attack on a Federal military base in Tigray.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had expressed conflicting views of the cause of the War in his two public speeches before and after the War. On 7 May 2020, three months before the Regional election in Tigray, Abiy Ahmed warned Tigray of a serious consequence if it holds elections: *“Preparing to hold a fake election will endanger the Country and its people. The Government will be forced to take a decisive measure. For politicians to hold power young people need not die, mothers need not cry, houses need not be destroyed.”* A year after the War started Abiy Ahmed was in a mood to tell the truth about the War he never mentioned before: *“If the group (TPLF) had joined and quietly stayed in the Prosperity Party it could have saved whatever it had at its disposal.”*

Eyder Peralta (13 November 2020) on National Public Radio (NPR) acknowledges that the War has deep roots; but considered the power struggle as more essential. Meses et al (2022) are not decided about the relative importance of the historical contexts and the immediate causes of the War. They blame the international media for ignoring the historical context and at the same time for failing to mention TPLF's attack on the Ethiopian Northern Command and for accusing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for ordering a 'wanton attack on Tigray'. This seems to arise from the desire of those on the Ethiopia side to see the international community adopting their version of the story of what caused the start of the War.

There are scholarly works that attribute the Tigray War to a cause that lies intermediate between long historical roots and the most

recent political tensions. Tronvoll (2022), Alix Culbertson (16 March 2021) on Sky News, the CONVERSATION (21 November 2021), and Rajen Harshe (03 January 2022) on Observer Research Foundation (ORF) stressed on the tension between the center and the regional state. The crucial question is whether the Ethiopian state should be a singular national identity or a multiethnic federal system preserving autonomy for regional states. Tigray openly resisted Abiy's call to unify the Country by increasing the power of the central government over regions. TPLF has long argued that self-determination within Ethiopia was in the best interest of Tigrayans; and thus is zealously guarded.

Searcy (2021) agrees to the importance Tigray's Regional election and the attack on the Northern Command as causes; but contends that the War had much deeper roots which are inextricable from the modern history of Ethiopia. By 1935 Tigray was the one region still largely outside the control of the central government. In 1941 Haile Selassie attempted to centralize power by weakening the power of regional elites. This partly incited Woyane Rebellion in May 1943. Eliza Mackintosh (5 November 2021) on CNN takes the roots of the War back to generations in Ethiopia. The historical tussles over land between Amhara and Tigray peoples is also mentioned, by Aggrey Mutambo (04 September 2022) on The East African, as the more structural cause of the Tigray War. Siyum (2021) sums up the structural nature of the cause of the Tigray War as: historical narrations, power struggles, land ownership, tribal difference, political interest, and weak institutions.

Although it is not stated directly as the cause of the Tigray War, the long history of struggle to rob Tigray of its ancient history and cultural treasures and erase it from the face of the earth, is stated

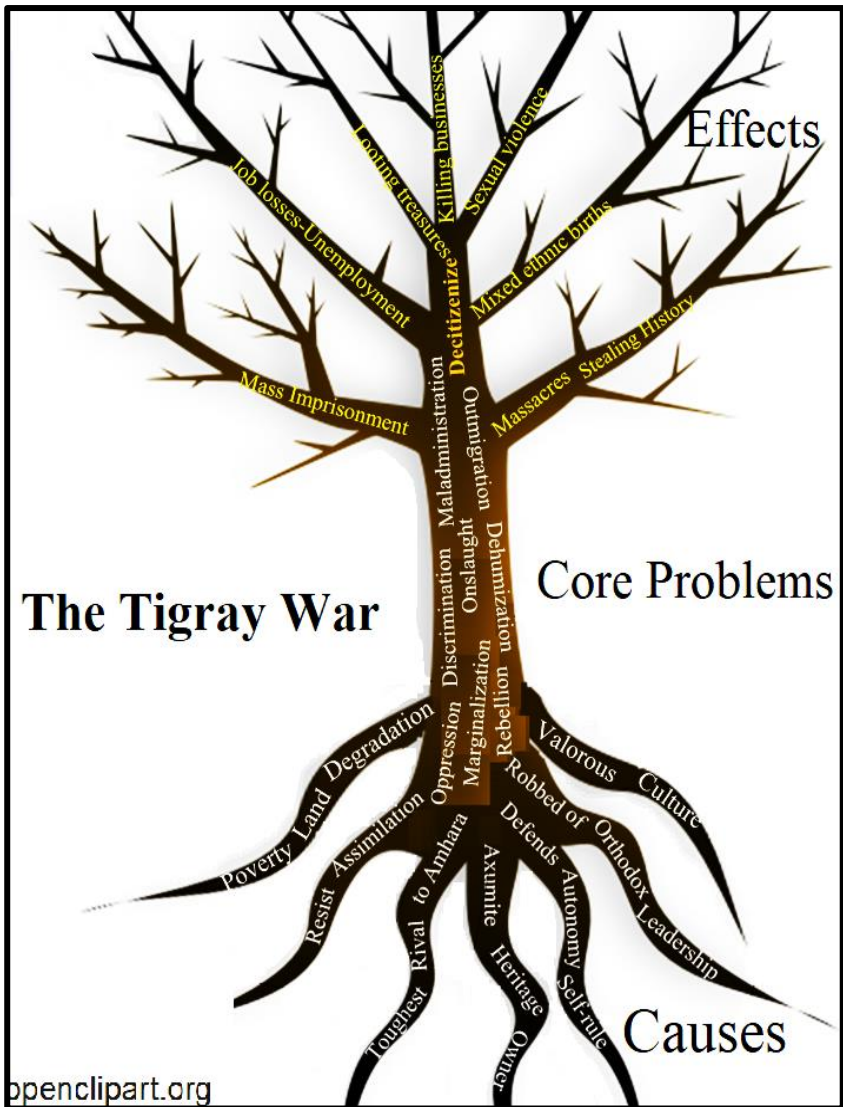
in public by Ethiopian and Eritrean political activists. The analysis of causes of the Tigray War, supported by visualizations and tabulations, is based on the causes identified in this section as well as preceding chapters of this book. Readers are advised to read the first two chapters and the chapter on profiles of the conflict as well.

The last Tigray War is the worst to date, but not the only one. Big and small military campaigns, famine used as weapon of mass murder, subtle but persistent and systematic environmental, economic, political, social, psychological, and cultural degradation, including geopolitical redesigning on the territorial integrity of Tigray have been going on for centuries. That's why the political tension between Tigray and the Federal Government or the power rivalry between TPLF and Abiy Ahmed are far from adequate to explain such a catastrophic war.

The proximate causes of the War in Tigray are just the 'tip of the massive iceberg' of the structural-historical causes which have been accumulating and complicating through the centuries. Proximate causes have appeared, been resolved, but reappeared throughout the history of Tigray in its relationship with central rule in the Abyssinian central highlands. The Pretoria agreement is one of such resolutions to the proximate causes of Ethio-Tigray wars. The only difference is, this time, the Tigray side was allowed to sign; but the upper hand remained in the hands of the Center as it has become customary for many centuries.

Although initially it started with a troubled contact with the Amhara, after the decline of Axum, the odds against Tigray were multiplying and fortifying making it difficult for Tigray to know from which direction threats come.

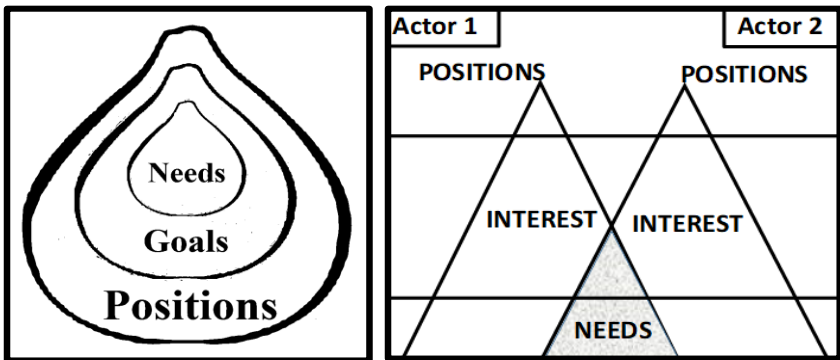
Fig. 36 Conflict Tree of the Tigray War



7.3. Positions, Interests, and Needs (PIN) of Actors

The analysis of the role of positions, interests, and needs in fueling conflict situations not only helps to understand the causes of war more thoroughly but also facilitates their resolution. PIN as a powerful analytical tool is expounded with various examples by FFI (2013), Maiese (2012), and Burgess (2017). Positions are simple statements, overt stances, tangible ideas of the best ways to satisfy interests and needs. Positions are often incompatible to one and the other actor in a conflict. If conflicts are based only on positions they become bogged down and drag for long. Interests, concealed by positions, are the underlying motivations for a position but are more tangible.

Fig. 37 Onion Diagram and PIN Diagram



Needs are very powerful interests or more fundamental than interests. Interests can be traded or compromised, but fundamental human needs such as food, shelter, water, identity, security, and recognition are not for compromise. Conflict deeply embedded in the participants' moral values are likely to be intractable.

NEEDS

Inventory of the Positions, Interests, and Needs (PIN) of the four major parties to the Tigray War (Ethiopia, Amhara, Eritrea, and Tigray) is made and the results compiled. The inventory has depended on the knowledge and perception of the author on what constitutes the Positions, Interests, and Needs of the parties to the War. It is hoped that the inventory is exhaustive. The author has had close personal association with the four parties and claims to possess deep enough knowledge about all the participants. In addition, the author has been following the war in all its dimensions during the period, before, and after. Information has not been in short supply. The author was also involved in the online debates by posting over 100 articles capturing events as they unfolded in the last four years.

In this War the aggressive three (Ethiopia, Amhara, Eritrea) are on one side and the defending party-Tigray- on the opposite side. It may be tempting to assume that the two sides have all identical intra-alliance Positions and Interests. In fact, this is far from the truth. As much as there are shared Positions and Interests within the Tripartite, there are also differences, even antagonistic Positions and Interests. After all, the parties in the Tripartite have been strange bed fellows past and present. What forged the unholy alliance between these otherwise bitter enemies is the core interest of the three to destroy Tigray. The Tigray side is not spared either. Although made up of only one party to the War, there are internal but nonessential differences in some of the Positions and Interests.

Starting from the bottom, all the parties have the prevalence of peace and development in their respective places as needs all of them share. The commonality for all the warring parties- Needs for

safety, security, food, water, shelter, basic social services, and job opportunities- may seem to be an opportunity for peace making compromising rigidly adhered to Positions and Interests. However, the warring parties have so much irreconcilable Positions and Interests that are oblivious to the Needs that could have served as motivations for reconciliation. Needs have either been utterly neglected or used as lethal weapons of mass murder during the War.

Historically, Needs have been the main drivers of political debates, civil unrest, and regime changes in Ethiopia. The Monarchy was overthrown mainly because it failed to address landlessness and poverty under a feudal system of tenancy. A devastating famine caused by drought added fuel to the existing fire ending the many centuries old monarchical system. The Military Regime that followed was unable to handle the Needs issue and resorted to socialism as the right ideological path towards poverty alleviation. Engaged in bloody ideological debates and engrossed in costly rebel wars the Military Regime never succeeded to address the Needs adequately.

In the seventeen years the Military Regime lasted people were both hungry and insecure, followed by the catastrophic 1984-85 famine. Determination to make poverty history came from the North and Tigrayans ended Military rule in Ethiopia after seventeen years of armed struggle. In Federal state power for 27 years Tigrayan politicians, partnering with other ethnic-based parties from all over Ethiopia, succeeded to resolve the Eritrean problem, embarked on a massive campaign to transform the moribund political and socioeconomic system, alleviate poverty, ensure rapid economic growth, peace, and security throughout Ethiopia.

Although good governance was in short supply the rest of the most critical Needs were addressed as they have never been in the recorded history of Ethiopia. This is the key to the understanding of the Tigray War. Tigrayans and their political party could never be overwhelmed by WWI-style invasion if Needs were the decisive drivers towards peace and reconciliation. Tigrayans deserved reward not penalty of a colossal magnitude. Ruled by a Tigrayan party and its partners Ethiopia attracted admirations from the world community of states as economic and military power in Africa. Its role in world social and economic diplomacy was praised.

There was a lot of warning coming from inside and outside Ethiopia that if war is started in Tigray it will engulf the whole Country and beyond. The shared Position of erasing Tigray and its Party has blindfolded and ear-plugged the Tripartite and all three jumped into the abyss of war without minding the least about its horrific consequences. As the War raged not only in Tigray but also throughout Ethiopia, leaders of the Tripartite were not bothered by the economy of Ethiopia nose-diving and the cost of living skyrocketing. Dollar value of Birr plunged down three to four fold.

While the rest of Ethiopia were suffering from the rising cost of the basic necessities of life arms purchases and the mass mobilization of a large portion of the workforce to the battle fronts was intensified even as Western sanctions were taking huge toll on the economies of the Tripartite states. Eritrea is the beneficiary from the War because its troops in Tigray looted everything from spoons to industrial machinery. Its secret service in Ethiopia black-marketed and drained Ethiopia's foreign currency reserve. Eritrea is reportedly paid huge sums in hard currency for massacring

Tigrayan civilians, destroying Tigray hired by the Federal Government of Ethiopia.

The War in Tigray has shown how insensitive politicians can be to the miserable life of the poor, which in fact they are responsible for. It is not people's own destiny to become poor. Poverty is the question of entitlement for which political leadership are responsible. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed and his huge team of civilian and military associates are reportedly believers of the Prosperity Gospel. The sect does not acknowledge that poverty is entitlement and a responsibility of governments. That was why Abiy Ahmed used this 'Godsend' opportunity of having millions of poor Ethiopians for the war effort. He often boasts of 100 million potential recruits to his army. This was what he said in Parliament on one occasion (ALARABIA 05 News July 2021):

"In one, two or three weeks, 100,000 trained, armed and organized special forces can be mobilized. If special force isn't enough, if a militia is needed, in one or two months half a million militiamen can be organized. One million youths can be mobilized and trained."

In the Tigray War the Tripartite has used Needs as weapons of war. In fact the "War of Basic Needs" in Tigray started a couple of years before the official start of the War on the 4th of November 2020. The main highway linking major demand and supply in the two largest cities of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa and Mekelle) was blocked by Amhara armed groups with the intention of the starving the people of Tigray. The Federal Government, who has the jurisdiction over the major trunk-roads linking regions, turned a blind eye to the banditry of the Amhara Region leadership.

When the two years long road-block failed to have the desired effect of killing thousands in Tigray a natural hazard was used, as it was repeatedly done in history, for the same goal: starving Tigray. On the eve of the massive offensive on Tigray in November 2020 desert locust invasion came before the start of harvest of the main season crop. It looked like the eve of a terrible famine for Tigray. When the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Amhara Region saw that the locust is serving as an effective proxy to starve Tigray to death aerial spraying of insecticide was banned from covering Tigray Region.

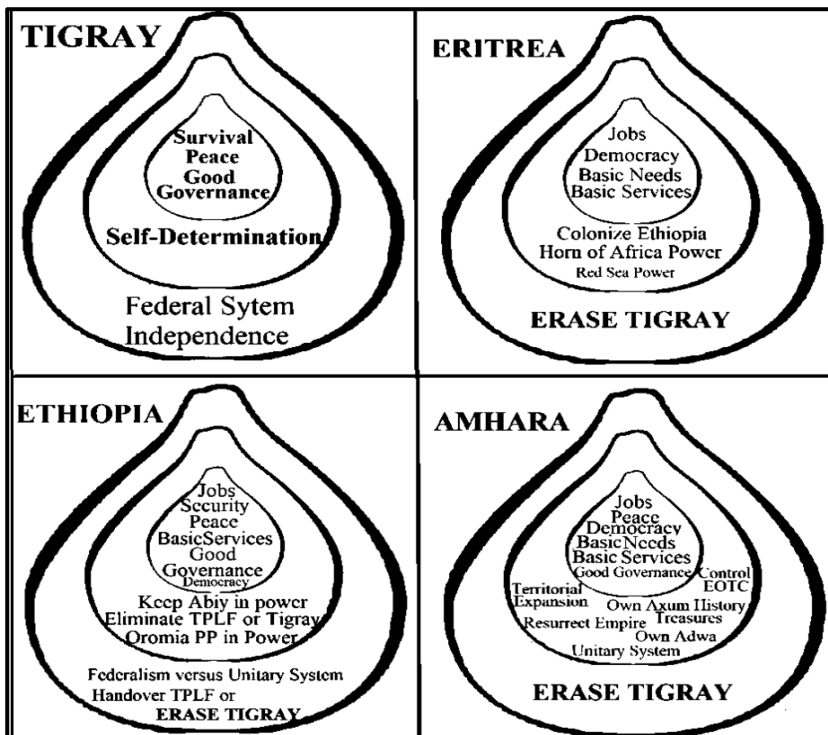
When the going got tough for the Tripartite in Tigray, a ‘tough’ ENDF did not get going. The Federal Government replaced the Fire with the more lethal weapon: Hunger. Hundreds of thousands of people perished in Tigray for the lack of food, and the money to buy their food and healthcare. The two year siege was imposed on Tigray 360 degrees without the tiniest sign of sympathy from politicians and the ordinary people of Ethiopia, Amhara and Eritrea alike. The preceding detailed analysis reveals the utter disregard for the role Needs could play as fertile ground for breeding peace and reconciliation. PIN analysis spotlights Positions and Interests of the Tripartite as opposed to Positions and Interests of Tigray.

POSITION AND INTEREST

The preceding analysis revealed the utter disregard for the role Needs could play as fertile ground for breeding peace and reconciliation. PIN analysis in this section spotlights Positions and Interests of the Tripartite and identifies internal differences. Positions and Interests of the Tigray side are obviously antagonistic to those of the Tripartite. One particular position of a particular group is taken at a time and checked how consistent it is with the

interest of the other groups. Positions on Tigray are strongly shared among members of the Tripartite; but their interests underlying the Positions are not the same. Eritrea wants the demise of Tigray as a geography and as a demography because it is perceived as standing on the way of Eritrea's colonial interest in Ethiopia. Eritrea knows its ambitions on Ethiopian economy and resources to support its long awaited 'Singapore Dream' is disapproved by Ethiopians and Amhara. The latter want to dominate Ethiopia's political, social, and economic life; not to surrender it to Eritrea. The Federal Government, which is dominated by ethnic Oromos, has its own ambitions for an upper hand in Ethiopia.

Fig. 38 Onion Diagram for Tigray, Eretria Ethiopia and Amhara



Oromos in the Prosperity Party do not want any competitor to their firm grip of power in Ethiopia. After all, it is this very reason why Ethiopia under an Oromo ruling party shared Eritrea's position on Tigray. Neither Amhara nor Oromos want to see anything from Tigray at the Arat-Kilo Palace ever again. Both fear that a Tigray left alive may most likely march into Addis Ababa as it did before, and as it tried in 2021. The morbid fear of Tigrayans at the helm is propelling them on the path of extreme cruelty. Oromos and Amhara are arch rivals and they are already at each other's throat after the end of their joint Tigray mission.

Regarding the Constitution and Federalism, Amhara almost invariably call for the Constitution to be changed, ethnic federalism to be banned and replaced by unitary system. In Ethiopia politicians are split between those who demand ban on the Constitution and those against the ban. There are also politicians leading people who have benefited from the self-rule provided by the federal Constitution and are defending the Federal system. This is where Tigray comes in concord with the latter. Nevertheless, power interest puts even fellow federalists against Tigray. Even those who share interest on protecting federalism with Tigray are not its allies in practice.

Although it is well known to the world that the Victory of Adwa is a Tigrayan victory, like the previous victories over Italy, Egypt and Mahdist Sudan were, the Amhara are adamant about their own distorted versions of history. The Amhara claim to the possession of the Victory of Adwa is just one of the several expressions of their notoriety in recording anything good as their own. The Amhara know they cannot realize their claims over the historical

and cultural possessions of Tigray while Tigrayans are alive. That is why they joined the genocidal bandwagon with those who have little else in common except for the inflammable differences in Interest. Amhara Interests mainly the restoration of a unitary system and/or the Imperial past, territorial expansion into other regions, the claim for cultural and historical supremacy in Ethiopia are going to have a boomerang effect on their own people living in Oromia and other regions. Medieval claims in the 21st century will cost the entire Amhara nation severely. Positions and interests shared with the rest of Ethiopians as equals and mutual support in addressing Needs is the best sustainable policy for the Amhara.

Fig. 39 PIN Diagram for Amhara and Tigray

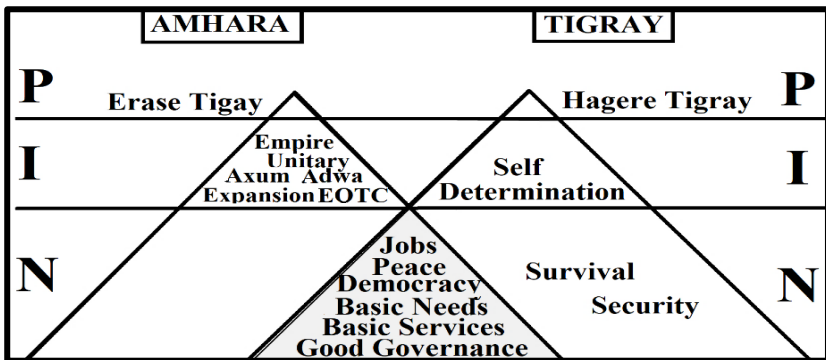


Fig. 40 War worsened poverty in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Amhara, Tigray



Chapter 8

Dynamics of the Tigray War

8.1 Introduction

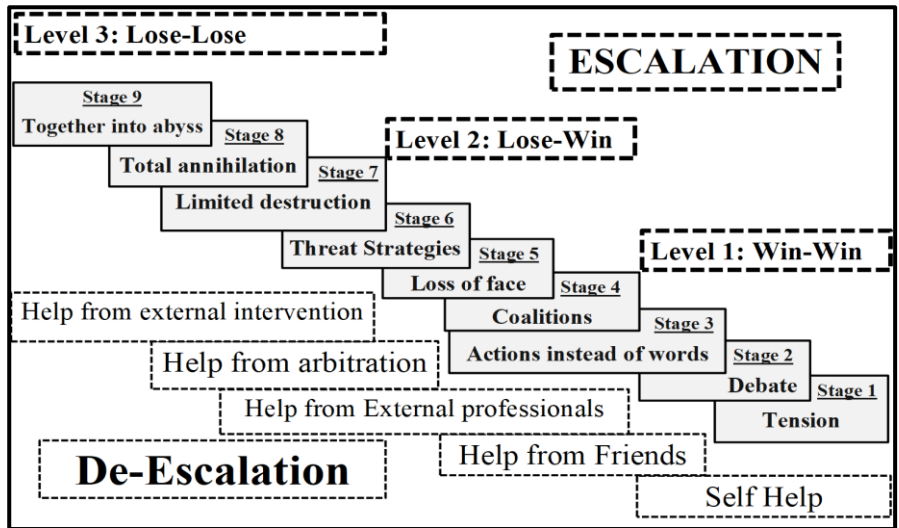
The Tigray War is unique in many respects. It was not fought between equals and one side fought ex-situ from distant homebases and the other side fought in-situ within its own support-base. In view of what is already described about the nature and capacities of the actors in the War in the preceding chapters its dynamics may not fit neatly into the attributes of each stage in the ‘Conflict Escalation Model’. However, there is a lot of similarity between events and processes in the War with what constitutes each stage in the Model. There are a few back and forth movements along the stages though.

8.2 The Conflict Escalation Model

The Tigray War has passed through stages that can be analyzed in the conflict dynamics framework: the Conflict Escalation Model created by Glasl (1982). The Tigray War has its deep roots which are structural. The escalation model is applied only to the period in which escalation and de-escalation happened. These are the years in which the proximate causes of the War had become relevant motivators. What each stage looked like are described in the framework of the Glasl’s Model. (Fig. 36). The Tigray War has structural causes that resurface with every opportunity to propel proximate causes. Regional election and refusal of TPLF to join the Prosperity Party could not be sufficient reasons to trigger a regional-scale war. The centuries old tensions are so fundamental and uncompromising that any opportunity to fight the tensions out turns into irrational mutual destruction.

The most recent aggravation of tension between the old enemies escalated into the most devastating war ever. Along a centuries old continuum it is hard to mark the time when tension became more intense than it has been historically. Although there had been several occasions, during the 27 years of TPLF rule in Ethiopia in which tensions were intensifying between Tigray and the huge number of anti-Tigray groups, the regional election in Tigray got prominence in the media as the key trigger to the exacerbation of tension before the War. The analysis of escalation in this section takes the course of events related to the election in Tigray as a starting point.

Fig. 41 Glasl’s Escalation Model (Recompiled by Author)



Stage 1 and 2: Tension and Debate (+Stage 5)

Tension- ‘Occasional clash of opinions, hardening of positions, and first confrontation’. De-escalation possible by discussion.

Debate- ‘Polarization or black and white thinking’. De-escalation

still possible through self-help. In the Tigray War the two stages coincided in time because it did not need any significant lapse of time for the tension to scale up into debate. As long as the root causes are deep and structural tensions were perpetual any rise in tension would very quickly escalate into debate and beyond within a very short period of time. It was like a tinderbox that required a small spark of disagreement.

On 5 May 2020 Oxford Analytica posted a viewpoint warning that the polls planned in Tigray may deepen constitutional crisis in Ethiopia. This could mark the time in which the tension that had been brewing from inside got global attention. Initially, it was just a difference of opinion among politicians and the public whether or not elections should be held during a COVID Pandemic. Some felt the election should be postponed and others argued that the date of election under the constitution should not be compromised.

When the Federal Government used a constitutional loophole to postpone the elections suspicions about the real intentions of the Prime Minister began to surface into the political space. It was alleged that Abiy Ahmed wants to ban elections altogether and crown himself as the ‘seventh king of Ethiopia’. In fact, there were more things than not to prove the allegation right given the Prime Minister’s quest for cheap popularity by devoting more of his time on glittering megaprojects than on the wrecked national economy and the skyrocketing cost of living.

Most seemed to have tolerated the utter neglect of the eagerly anticipated processes of democratization and economic reform in Ethiopia, out of sheer hate for TPLF’s rule. It was dreaded by most that any democratic process may re-install TPLF at Arat Kilo. A king in Abiy was considered to be far better than a democrat in

TPLF. What many at home and in the international community failed to realize at the outset was that it is not TPLF they hate it is the entire Tigray that they want to get rid of. It is for political correctness that curses are raining from every corner on the undeserving political party: TPLF. Political parties do their best; and this is what TPLF in power did. By any standards what TPLF achieved in Ethiopia is no less than a miracle for Ethiopia which was known to the world as a symbol of poverty and famine.

Any rationally thinking human being would take whatever faults TPLF had lightly so as not to overshadow its huge contributions. If it were only the Party that was hated, nothing of what happened would happen. With as much contribution TPLF made any other party from Amhara or Oromia would have been crowned as the ‘Emperor of Ethiopia’. Make no mistake, the hate is directed at Tigray and TPLF as its leading political party. TPLF is targeted as a strategic move because Tigray would defend itself more effectively led by TPLF than otherwise.

The tension and debate about the election gradually shifted into the second and third stages to a war of words between TPLF in Tigray and Prosperity Party and its allies in Addis Ababa. The gap in the positions of the Federal Government and Tigray were widening so much that in a month’s time, on June 17, 2020, Peralta, Eyder of NPR posted Tigray President Debretsion Gebremichael’s accusation that the Federal government was ‘threatening war’ against the Tigray Region. Oxford Analytica interpreted this as the Tigray party shifting pressure onto the Ethiopian government.

Abiy tried to play down the fear of invasion on the part of Tigray with a sinister intention of weakening its battle readiness. On August 3, 2020 Oxford Analytica reported that “*Abiy Ahmed has*

dismissed the possibility of a resort to force". Although Tigray had the right to elect its leaders and should not be swayed by unacceptable constitutional loopholes to postpone elections by the Federal Government, it was considered as the defiant party. Dominant viewpoints were allotting 'wrong' to Tigray and 'right' to the Federal Government.

On the eve of the election, September 8, 2020 Cristina Krippahl of DW wrote that the region's defiance was straining Ethiopia's unity. Global media's undue references to the debate as 'threatening national unity' was stimulating escalation rather than de-escalation. In the meantime, there was a widespread skip to Stage-5 in the Model accompanying the debate in Stage-3. In Stage-5 high level of confrontation happens where 'the opponent is denigrated in a sense of the loss of moral credibility'. Hate speeches against Tigray became widespread, vicious, and dehumanizing. Names like 'Junta', 'Alien', and 'Daylight Hyena' became virtual national anthems sung against Tigray in public without fear of legal consequences.

The Prime Minister himself was the inventor of the abusive name as 'Junta'. The word has an entirely different meaning from how and on whom it was used. Junta means: "*group of military officers who have taken control of a country following a coup d'état*" or "*small group of people, secretly assembled for a common goal*". If there was any group in Ethiopia that had taken power by a coup it was only the Prosperity Party. Accordingly, the name was more appropriate to Prosperity Party and the violent Oromo youth movement that catapulted Abiy Ahmed to the Premiership. TPLF was forced to withdraw from all axes of power in Ethiopia and helplessly congregated in Tigray. TPLF was far from being a small secret group or a bunch of army officers in the palace; it was a huge

and highly experienced party which effectively run the second largest state in Africa for 27 years. The hate was so much that people who knew what ‘junta’ really means did not care for a correction.

Any possibility of de-escalation at the tension-debate stage was lost because of the too early introduction of Stage-5. When such a strong social-political catalyst is added to the brewing tension and debate it would trigger a chain reaction that spirals out of control. Tigrayans in all walks of life felt deeply offended by the unbridled national craze of trampling on their dignity and honor as Tigrayans. More than the debate on the election what pushed Tigray further away was the widespread hate speech and the continued road blocks on its highways to national markets. Tigray could no more trust the opponent and the entire people of Ethiopia as a matter of fact.

Stage-3: Actions instead of words (+Stage 5)

When Stage-3 came to a full swing the debates were broken off and were replaced by action. By this stage confrontation between Tigray and the Federal Government had become irreversible. On 9 September 2020 Tigray voted in the Regional poll and alarm was raised in the global media: 09 September 2020 Simon Marks of VOA reported the Tigray Region Votes as ‘*defiance of government*’ and for Oxford Analytica the election would “*escalate Tigray-federal standoff and entrench Ethiopia impasse*”. The ‘defiance’ rhetoric was widespread across the global media: Giulia Paravicini of Reuters and on 10 September 2020 Simon Marks and Abdi Latif Dahir of New York Times referred to the election as defiance against the Federal government. On 11 September 2020 Medihane Ekubamichael of Addis Standard

raised the level of the ‘defiance’ and called it “beyond defiance“. Others like Samuel Getachew of QUARTZ on 12 September 2020 elevated the “*controversial regional election win would raise the stakes for Ethiopia’s Federal system.*”

Now the ‘genie is out of the bottle’ and inflated by one sided domestic and international media, hate speeches, and wild incriminations against TPLF officials formerly in Federal positions. To TPLF-Tigray’s dismay politicians, activists, and ordinary people in the 80+ ‘nations and nationalities’ of Ethiopia jumped on to the hate rhetoric bandwagon as a historic act of thanklessness for the 17 years of Tigrayan sacrifices to award them self-determination they could never win on their own for over a century. To add more fuel to the grievances of Tigray, Tigrayan professionals, soldiers, police, the clergy, business people, even poor street vendors were harassed and fired from their jobs branded as ‘junta’.

For a month after the Tigray elections it was hoped that sanity would prevail and de-escalation would start at this point. The Federal Government naively felt outmaneuvered by its arch rivals in Tigray and did not have the guts to think straight and avoid a catastrophe. On 9 October 2020 only three weeks to the start of the Tigray War a brilliant article authored by Zemelak Ayitenew Ayele was published on Ethiopia Insight. The article will go down to history as a lost golden opportunity Abiy Ahmed will regret about all his life. Zemelak advised: “*Far-sighted federal solidarity, not power politics and legalism, is needed to solve Tigray dispute*”. The Prime Minister was thickly surrounded by prophets of hate and warmongers who vowed to swallow Tigray whole. Little wonder then, that he became so oblivious to an impending disaster of his own making.

On 7 October 2020 Robbie Correy-Boulet had reported on Barron's (AFP News) the *'House of Federation of FDRE ruled the Tigray election as null and void and also denied Tigray the Federal budget subsidies totaling \$281 million'*. Tigray responded to the unprecedented decision by the HOF calling the action as *"...an illegal decision by an illegitimate body... and is tantamount to a declaration of war"*. Until this point it was hoped that the Angel would whisper on Abiy's ears and guide him towards tolerance by accepting the Tigray election as a benign digression from Federal election rules. On the same day, Oxford Analytica warned that *"House order will entrench Ethiopia's Tigray standoff."* The statement from Oxford Analytica was crystal clear: Rolling downhill would begin otherwise. Dr. Mulugeta Gebrehiwot is a renowned peace researcher associated with the World Peace Council. He was forced into the Tigray Mountains by the Allied invasion of Tigray. A week after the House of Federation ruled against the Tigray elections he wrote in African Arguments on 15 October 2020 that: *'Election became Tigray's test of Ethiopia's federal democracy'*. Indeed it was! With the provocative ruling of the House of Federation Level-1 transitioned to Level-2 on the Escalation Model.

Stage-4: Coalitions (+Stage 5)

Once debates breakdown and words are replaced by action the next stage is searching for additional strength to effectively confront the opponent and win. This takes the form of search for sympathizers and possible allies against the opponent. The Federal Government dictated by Abiy Ahmed was able to rally support from Regional states, notably Amhara, Somali, Afar, SNNP, and the Capital. The over fifty tiny, small, and big opposition parties, which almost

forgot that they were competitors against the incumbent, acted as if they all were members of the Prosperity Party. The endemic ‘Tigrophobia’ oddly paired with ‘Ethiomania’ had pervaded the daily social and political lives of societies across Ethiopia and in the deaf-blind diaspora. Abiy Ahmed had no shortage of supporters that would flock to war fronts against Tigray even barehanded.

Tigray side had no ally to form coalition with. Potential allies for Tigray against the Federal Government with unitary tendencies were those known as ‘Federalist Forces’ in the various nations and nationalities. Ambivalent as they had become about which side to take and fearful of consequences from the Federal Government if they openly side with Tigray, they could not be of any value for Tigray beyond issuing communiques of cooperation and occasional condemnations on the Federal Government. As the going got tougher, many of them either became dormant or slipped to Government side and lashed out at Tigray.

In Tigray TPLF was holding mass rallies and conferences to create awareness about the imminent invasion of Tigray by Amhara and Ethiopia and forge coalitions among the ordinary people of Tigray and its politicians at home and abroad. Unlike the undivided backing Abiy Ahmed enjoyed substantial numbers of Tigrayans in Tigray and elsewhere found it hard to believe that the Federal Government, which was the brainchild of TPLF would think of invading Tigray. Notable opposition leaders stationed in the Ethiopian capital, the likes of Aregawi Berhe, and Abrha Desta, were crying foul at TPLF for *‘fabricating an invasion to intimidate the people of Tigray and perpetuate its rule in the Region.’* This increased the odds against TPLF in its ability to adequately mobilize the people for war.

The Federal Government side of the War had already forged alliances with the Titans of the Horn and the Giants of the Middle East: Amhara Region, Eritrean Government, and United Arab Emirates. Federal Government's most crucial coalition was with Eritrea. Within a week of the HOF ruling against the Tigray elections Eritrean President travelled to Ethiopia for an official visit. Oxford Analytica on 13 October 2020 warned that the visit "*will deepen Ethiopia-Tigray tensions.*" Stage-5 was still ongoing and intensifying accusing Tigray of being '*Bandas*' (*traitors*) *vowing to destroy Ethiopia as a proxy of external enemies*".

Stage-6: Threat Strategies (+Stage 5)

Once coalitions and alliances are forged and banks and tanks are checked for adequacy to support an invasion, opponents start resorting to threats at each other demonstrating their respective strengths. Generals retired or on active service, including notable civilians, were counting Ethiopia's past victories over enemies and threatening Tigray that it would face the same fate. Tigray losing hope of any reasonable decision coming from the Federal Government was parading a few hundred of its very thin defense force, not as such to threaten the Federal Government but to encourage its people for a war of resistance.

The visit of the Eritrean President in October was interpreted by Herman J. Cohen as sending strong signal to Tigray not to resist the Federal Government militarily. Strong coalitions and threats notwithstanding, Tigray was determined to stand against persistent efforts to force it kneel down and took a sweeping measure. 29 October 2020 Addis Standards and Aljazeera reported Tigray blocked Northern Command appointments; officers were rejected and returned on the ground that Tigray no longer recognized any

decisions made by the Federal Government. This was more than enough escalation for European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell Fontelles, and on the eve of the start of the War (November 2, 2020) he called for a halt to the "provocative military deployments." EU Chief's belated call marked the end of Level-2 and the beginning of Level-3 of the Escalation Model. Joseph Borrell's call for de-escalations was too late and it fell on a hopelessly 'infected wound' that cannot be cured by conventional treatment. Unfortunately, world bodies take such tragedies as routine.

Stage-7: Limited destruction (+Stage-5 Getting worse)

At the beginning of this stage threats transition into violent confrontation: 'All tricks are used to harm the opponent, humanity is over, and one's own damage is accepted if the other's damage is greater'. It started with the launching of a surprise attack on the Northern Command by the Tigray Forces on the Night of 3 November 2020. France 24 called the attack "*the midnight confrontation that helped unleash Ethiopia's conflict*". The following day, 4 November 2020 Ahram, BBC News, and Paravicini and Endeshaw from Reuters reported that Abiy declared a military offensive to restore the "*rule of law and central government authority*" in the Region; declared a state of emergency for six months; and shut down telecom and electricity.

The attack on the Northern Command was a significant action which effectively disabled the most heavily armed command in Ethiopia. Most of its heavy armaments were captured by the Tigray forces including long-range missiles. Comparing the success of the Tigray forces with the joint Amhara-Eritrea-Ethiopia invasion of Tigray Abiy Ahmed considered it as a tolerable sacrifice. That was

why so early in the War Abiy was very cheerful praising his commanders.

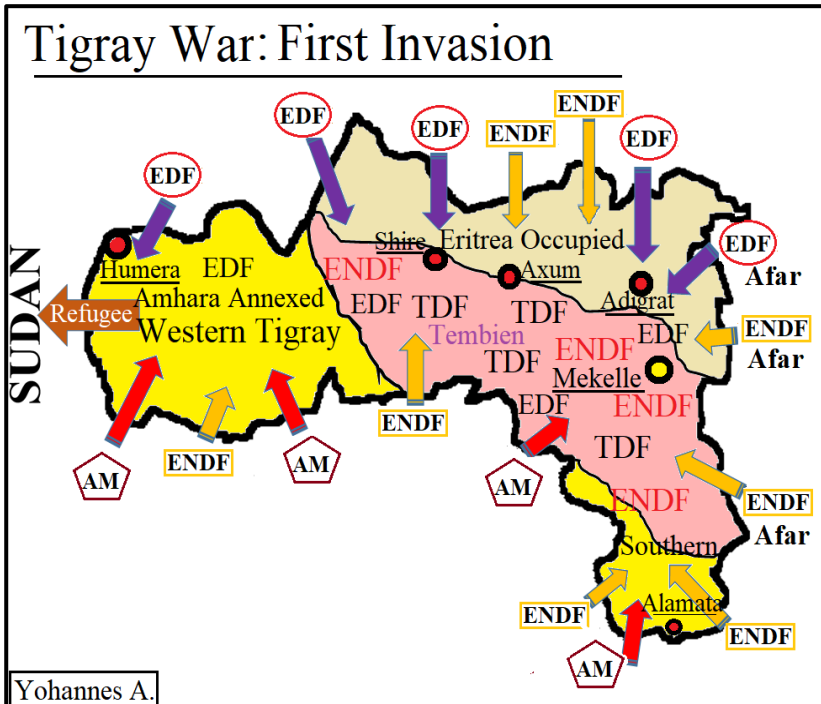
What Abiy Ahmed claimed to be a smaller sacrifice to attain greater win was trivialized by the President of Tigray when the latter claimed that “*Tigrayan forces had seized most of the weapons at the Ethiopian Northern Command and the Ethiopian forces had defected to the Tigrayan side*”. As a face saving move and to appease the international community Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) underreported the civilian casualties as follows: “*the first half of November caused the death of around 25 civilians who were caught in the crossfire between warring parties.*” EHRC served as smokescreen.

Suspicious about Abiy Ahmed’s plans to win the War by whatever means, and that this could have grave human rights implications, Amnesty International was quick enough to urge the Ethiopian authorities on 4 November 2020 to: “*quickly restore communications so as to respect people’s rights to freedom of expression*”. The fear was proved real by the massive human rights violations that ensued in the two years. On the 6th of November 2020 the United Nations called for immediate de-escalation of tensions and a peaceful resolution to the conflict (Feleke, Bethlehem; McSweeney, Eoin, CNN).

The UN appeal was to no avail as PM Abiy had announced a campaign of airstrikes in several locations of Tigray (Anna, Cara; Meseret, Elias, 6 November 2020, Associated Press. AP News). De-escalation was not possible at this stage because Abiy Ahmed felt he was victorious and the enemy was vanquished. He referred to the Tigray forces and the TPLF leadership as “*flour in the wind which will never be retrieved forever*”. Walsh, Declan a year later

reflected in a New York Times article on the paradox of the Century: "Nobel Peace Prize that paved the way for war" ₂

Fig. 42 Tigray: Invasion, Occupation, and Fighting (2020-2021)



Stages- 8 and 9: Total annihilation-Together into the abyss

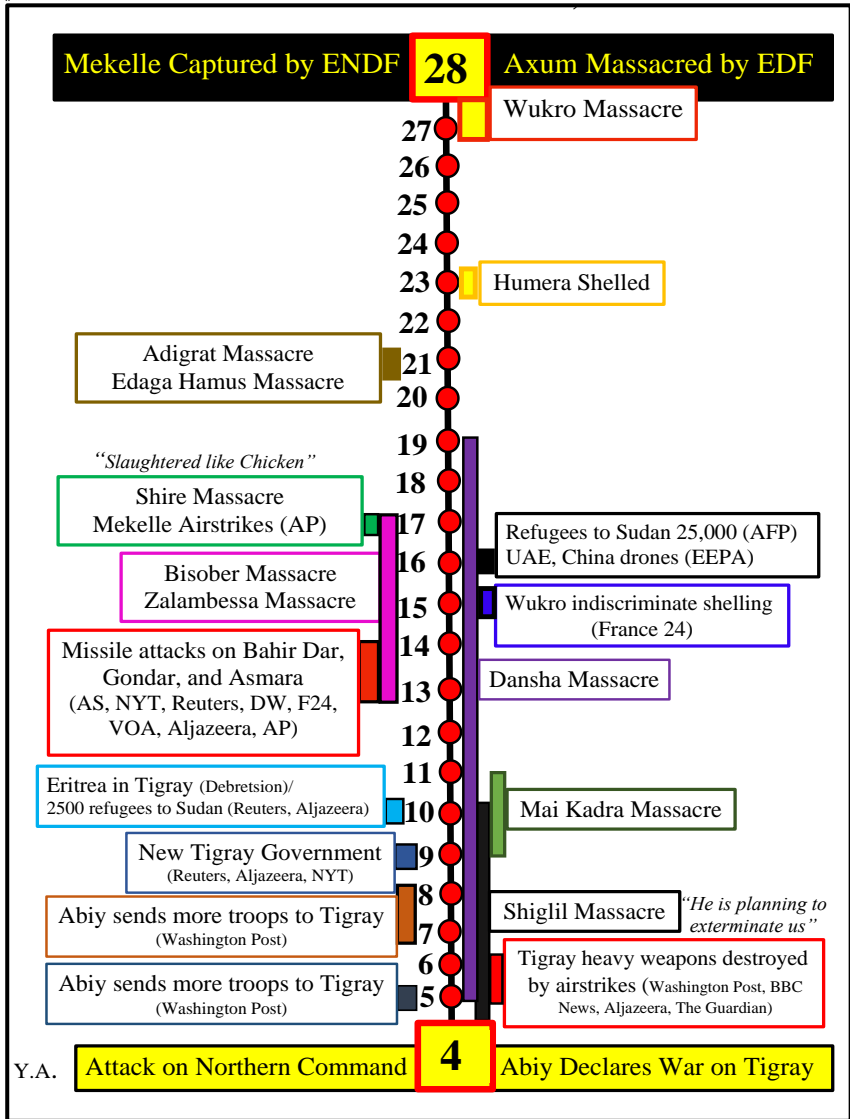
The two stages are characterized jointly by ‘destruction of the opponents system by all means; accepting the destruction of oneself as the price of the destruction of the opponent, and mutual destruction undeterred by environmental or generational damage. The Tripartite invaders (Amhara, Eritrea, and Ethiopia) heavily supported by United Arab Emirates and tolerated by the AU have

devastated Tigray. Closed as all communication was the world was unable to see or hear the catastrophe that was unfolding.

Hundreds of health and educational facilities were destroyed and looted; tens of major industrial infrastructure was destroyed and looted; tens of thousands of women and girls, including nuns were gang raped, sex-enslaved, and genitally mutilated, killed and wounded after violation; standing crops and in silos were destroyed or burned, farm implements were destroyed or burned, farm homesteads were burned and destroyed, farm animals were slaughtered, driven off, and even gunned down; young and old men were summarily executed; countless airstrikes killed hundreds of civilians; banks closed and roads blocked thousands of people perished due to lack of food and healthcare. Elsewhere in Ethiopia, thousands of Tigrayans were hunted and thrown into detention camps; many were killed, died due to lack medical care.

Elsewhere in Ethiopia ethnic cleansing continued in the ranks of the ENDF and on 18 November 2020 arrest warrants were issued for 76 Tigrayan army officers, on the allegation of treason: “*The officers were accused of conspiring with the leaders of the Tigray Region associated with the attack that was carried out on 4 November*” (BBC News 19 November 2020 and Reuters 18 November 2020). Abiy Ahmed was so confident about the victory on TPLF that he issued an ultimatum, on 23 November 2020, for Tigray forces to surrender in 72 hours. He also rejected AU’s proposal for talks (27 November 2020 Al Jazeera and Associated Press). Abiy cracked a joke with the AU envoys by agreeing to a “*dialogue only with the legally recognized Tigray representatives*”. He was referring to his own PP appointees.

Fig. 43 THE INVASION: November 4 to November 28, 2020



The Tigray War has seen a gross violation of the Constitutional order in which Federal Government approval was given for the Amhara allies to cross Tigray's sovereign regional border and annex Western and Southern Tigray. This was a third of Tigray's entire territory. Al Jazeera and Reuters on 23 November 2020 reported that "*Administration of the conquered parts of Western Tigray had been taken over by officials from Amhara Region.*" Abiy Ahmed had promised that the operation was selective targeting TPLF leadership and that no civilian will be harmed. However, typifying the impunity that was rife in the War a high ranking military spokesperson of Ethiopia, a certain Colonel Dejene Tsegaye, warned in public on 22 November 2020 that civilians in Mekelle have to save themselves as tank units will advance to capture the City.

BBC News and AP News reported the statement made by the officer: "*Mekelle would be encircled and shelled; civilians have to shelter in place and avoid military installations because there will be no mercy*". Where would half a million people of Ethiopia's 2nd largest city hide? In Cara Anna's article on Associated Press Human Right Watch Laetitia Bader and US National Security advisor Susan Rice condemned the warning as readiness to commit "*unlawful actions and that means a war crime*". Mekelle was captured after intensive and indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes. 27 civilians were killed, including a 4 year old child (Human Rights Watch and The New York Times). TPLF leadership left the City for the sake of the safety of residents.

Prosperity Party installed a puppet-government replacing the elected government led by TPLF. Abiy's representatives sat in the Capital helplessly and were unable to administer the rest of Tigray because most of the Region was occupied by Amhara Militia and

Eritrean troops and lawlessness had reigned. TPLF and people from all walks of life joined the resistance in the rural areas of Tigray. The government was manned by natives of Tigray who wanted to use the opportunity to replace TPLF and quench their thirst for power at the cost of devastation of their home Region, and the death and suffering of their own folks. Next day, on the 29th of November, 2020 BBC News reported Abiy announced that *“The army is in full control of Mekelle marking the completion of the (military) last phase”*. He said triumphantly *“I am pleased to share that we have completed and ceased the military operations in the Tigray Region”*.

Despite his claims of complete victory in Tigray, Abiy’s troubles were far from over. On the same day Abiy declared resounding victory Tigray Forces, Overt Defense reported, shot down an ENDF MiG-23 that crashed near Abiyi-Addi. This showed that: *“Ethiopia’s Tigray victory may prove limited”* according to Oxford Analytica 30 November 2020. On the first of December 2020 Corey-Boulet, Robbie of AFP wrote about a contradicting statements issued: *“Tigray leader vows to fight on after Abiy declared victory”*.



“Debretsion Gebremichael, the man at the heart of the conflict” BBC (22 November 2020)

Dr. Debretsion is the President Tigray deserves.

The challenges Dr. Debretsion faces are so novel that there are no tested methodologies available for solving them. Like Vasco Da-Gama he is leading the navigation of uncharted and stormy waters of politics” Yohannes Abera Aiga Forum (26 September 2020)

<http://aigaforum.com/article2020/tigray-deserves-president-debretsion.htm>



RESISTANCE



November 28, 2020-June 28, 2021

Mekelle Captured by the Invading Forces

2020	November	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPLF Members, Tigray Administration with the Defense Force, and Other Individuals and Groups who opposed the occupation evacuated Mekelle. 	
		29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENDF MiG-23 downed near Abiyi Addi-Tembien. 	
		30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debretsion urged Abiy to stop the insanity and pull. 	
	December	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eritrean soldiers Captured near Wukro. 	
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abiy dismisses TPLF capacity for guerrilla war. 	
		21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 20 ENDF tanks and armored cars destroyed, BM captured by TDF on May Keyah-Hiwane road. 	
		22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENDF pushed from Medebay Zana, lost hundreds of soldiers in Naeder-Adet and Asgede-Tsimbla, and Aircraft downed in Bet Mara. 	
		27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A man in Adigrat killed 14 Eritrean soldiers to stop them from looting his home before he was killed. 	
		31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800 ENDF and EDF soldiers retreated from Agula and May Mekden to Mekelle. 	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth Brigade of ENDF was beaten in Zongi between Adwa and Edaga Arbi. 124 killed, 144 captured. Commander Alemu Semie captured. • Eritrean forces plundering Ziban Guila chased away. 	
	0 2	u	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENDF could not dislodge TDF from mountains

February	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF in Mekelle shot at each other after refusing to fight TDF in the mountains. 	
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting in the rural areas around Mekelle. 	
	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TDF hit ENDF in Debano-Tembien 	
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A battalion of ENDF-EDF forces destroyed in Ruwa Gered by TDF while moving from Adwa to Edaga Arbi. 	
	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TDF killed 4,000 ENDF-EDF, captured lots of weapons in Daero Hafash- Axum. ● Fighting near Tsigereda and Wukro. 	
	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TDF captured 30 EDF soldiers in Wajirat. 	
	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF troops ambushed near Sero and 10 trucks, 4 armored cars, and an anti-aircraft gun were destroyed. 	
	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting continued in Daero Hafash, Semema, Mahbere Dego, Feresemay, Nebelet and Edaga Arbi in the Central Zone, and Hawzen in the Eastern Zone. 	
	February	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In Samre, Neksege, and Korem TDF killed one senior and two junior officers of ENDF.
	February	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF requested for reinforcements because TDF forces were fighting simultaneously on several fronts.
	February	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF 32nd Division destroyed in Samre.
	February	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remnants of ENDF's 32nd Division and one brigade of the 11th Division were destroyed in the Gijet battle. ● EDF's 2000 soldiers killed in Maykinetal ● After a four-day battle TDF controlled Samre, Gijet and Maykinetal

2021	March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF constructing trenches around Mekelle.
		16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting in Shire and Wajirat.
		27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting intensified throughout Tigray especially in the Central Zone.
	March	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TDF repelled an offensive by the ENDF/EDF in Alaje after killing over 640 ENDF/EDF soldiers and wounding over 1000. ● ENDF convoy struck by TDF landmines in the May Megelta area, destroying one vehicle, killing 8 ENDF soldiers and wounding 9.
		5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Over 100 ENDF and EDF soldiers killed by TDF after repelling an offensive in Keyih Gobo, Samre-Southeastern Tigray.
		9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ENDF withdrew from Abiyi Addi.
2021	April	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Abiy admitted fighting on 8 fronts.
		20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting continued in Central and Northwestern Tigray. ● TDF shot down ENDF's MI-35 helicopter near Guya killing the Ethiopian deputy commander of the East Air Base Division.
		26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TDF had entered Amhara Region and completely destroyed Amhara Special Forces, captured weapons and medicine, and destroyed heavy equipment.

2021	June	17	
		18	• TDF beat ENDF at Shiw'ate Hegum-Yechila
		19	
		21	• The TDF attacked Adigrat and Wukro taking them, destroying military vehicles, and captured some soldiers.
		22	OPERATION ALULA
		ENDF-EDF Defeated BATTLE OF TEMBIEN 18-28 June 2021	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopian divisions: 11, 20, 21, 24, 25, 31, 32 • Eritrean divisions: 21, 32 • TDF killed Over 10,000 and captured 3,356 	
	June	23	• Ethiopian Air Force Lockheed C-130 Hercules shot down near Gijet.
		28	MEKELLE LIBERATED



“Tigrayan Forces take over capital Mekelle”
Addis Standard June 28, 2021



“I Didn’t Expect to Make It Back Alive”
The New York Times July 3, 2021

AIRSTRIKES IN TIGRAY



*Out of the 38 airstrikes 18 happened on Mekelle. (TGhat)

Togoga: A crowded open market hit (AP)

- Airstrike hit a busy market in the village of Togoga and killed at least 51 people, more than 100 other people were wounded (50 seriously, and at least 33 people were missing.
- The wounded included 2 and 6 year-old children.
- Togoga is 60 kilometers away from Mekelle: the Capital of Tigray.
- Soldiers blocked medical teams from traveling to the scene.
- The road was blocked for two hours and a baby died on the way.
- A convoy of ambulances attempting to reach Togoga was turned back by soldiers at about 25 kilometers west of Mekelle.
- They told us whoever goes would be helping TPLF fighters.
- One group of medical workers reached the site via a different route.
- Red Cross ambulance trying to reach the scene was shot by soldiers.
- More than 25 of the wounded finally reached hospital next day.
- European Union strongly condemned deliberately targeting civilians.

Where to go? Dedebit: Airstrike on IDP Camp



(Washington Post, Human Rights Watch)

- Ethiopian drone struck the Dedebit school compound three times, killing and maiming displaced Tigrayans, mainly older people, women, and children, as they slept in plastic-sheeted tents and in a school building.
- Survivor Testimony:
 - It was the night of [Ethiopian Orthodox] Christmas.
 - When the first strike happened, I was asleep with my family.
 - I felt like fire hit us.
 - I stood up not knowing what was happening.
 - Before I realized what was happening, the second strike happened, and then the third.
 - At first, I thought fighting had broken out in the camp.
 - But then I could see bodies were scattered, heads separated from one another.
 - Horn of Africa director at Human Rights Watch condemned the action

Adi Daero strike: There was no military target (BBC)



- A town, northwest of Shire, was targeted in an airstrike.
- It was close to the frontline where heavy fighting was going on.
- At least eight people have died, with dozens injured
- A survivor said:
 - I was watching television with my children when out of nowhere the airstrike hit and buried us.”
 - They came to dig us out I asked them to rescue the children first
 - My pregnant daughter was dragged out unconscious and bleeding
 - They told me my grandson had died instantly”

“WE WILL ERASE YOU FROM THIS LAND”



Newly-appointed officials in Western Tigray and security forces from the neighboring Amhara region, with the acquiescence and possible participation of Ethiopian federal forces, systematically expelled several hundred thousand Tigrayan civilians from their homes using threats, unlawful killings, sexual violence, mass arbitrary detention, pillage, forcible transfer, and the denial of humanitarian assistance. These widespread and systematic attacks against the Tigrayan civilian population amount to crimes against humanity, as well as war crimes.



Antony John Blinken
United States Secretary of State

❖ March 10, 2021

“We are very focused on, particularly on the situation in Tigray where we are seeing very credible reports of human rights abuses and atrocities that are ongoing. I’ve been on the phone on several occasions now with Prime Minister Abiy of Ethiopia. I’ve talked to other leaders in the Region and the Continent and beyond...The situation in Tigray today is unacceptable and has to change...We have forces from Eritrea and we have forces from an adjoining region-Amhara. They need to come out. The forces will not abuse the human rights of the people of Tigray or commit acts of ethnic cleansing which we have seen in Western Tigray. That has to stop. We also need full accountability and independent investigation into what took place there.”

CIVILIAN MASSACRES

Key reasons for civilian massacres:

1. Revenge for losing in battles fought on the same day or before
2. Terrorize to extract information about whereabouts of TPLF leaders
3. Killing people suspected of being family members of TDF fighters
4. To terrorize the entire Tigrayan society into submission

Mai Kadra Massacre (EHRC 24 November 2020)

- Mai Kadra is a town in the Khfta Humera of Western Tigray.
- On 9-10 November 2020 about 600-1000 Tigrayan civilians were killed by the invading Amhara forces
- Accusation in a Mirror has been going on for the last two years inverting the massacre to Amhara by Tigrayans
- The invasion was a bolt from the blues for the Tigrayans living in Mai Kadra, and the only thing they managed to do was try to escape the carnage by the Amahra Fano Militia
- Ethiopian Human Rights Commission claimed to have done a preliminary investigation and used the following sources of information to reach a conclusion that Tigrayans massacred Amhara in Mai Kadra.
- The sources were victims, eye witnesses, families of victims, first responders, military personnel, government authorities who EHRC team found in Mai Kadra.
- The question to EHRC is: Who could sit in Mai Kadra and feel safe a week after the massacre? The answer is: Only Amhara residents of the town.
- How did the EHRC team expect the sources to say Amhara killed Tigrayans if the Amhara themselves did the massacring?
- It is clear that eye witnesses, military personnel, and government authorities would say “Tigrayans killed Amhara and they escaped to Sudan”.
- There are some untruths in the report such as: “Wolkait is a local name for the people of Amhara descent who were born or have long resided in Wolkait wereda.” What is ‘descent’?
- Who were so at ease and taking statistics during the massacre? This statement is no doubt fake:
“They comprised of several groups consisting of 20 to 30 youth, each accompanied by an estimated 3 to 4 armed police and militia, carried out the massacre, police and militia - strategically posted at street junctions”

Dansha Massacre (Annys et al 2021 and Tghat)

- Dansha is a town in the Tsegede Wereda of Western Tigray, located close to the border between northern Amhara and Western Tigray
- Amhara Fano militia massacred 21 civilians in a killing spree that lasted from November 5 to 19, 2020.
- Victims were often stabbed by knife or hacked to death with machetes
- Ethnic cleansing of Tigrayans the main driver of the massacre.
- EHRC reported 25 civilians dead in “crossfire” 9 November 2020.

Shiglil Massacre (Annys et al 2021, Julia steers, IRROB.org)

- Shiglil is a village in Khafta Humera wereda, Western Tigray Zone.
- 4 to 10 November 2020 Amhara Fano Militia killed seven people: the children of one family.
- The militia stripped them and beat them in public.
- All of them died afterwards

Mekelle Massacre (Shelling) (Annys et al 2021, NYT, Reuters)

- Mekelle, the Capital of Tigray, is the second largest in Ethiopia with 500,000 people. It was the main target of the invasion.
- Almost a month after the fighting started in Tigray the final assault on the City: Indiscriminate Shelling.
- On 28 November ENDF killed 27 civilians and wounded 100.

Humera Massacre (Daily Telegraphy, NYT, The Guardian)

- Humera is a large and busy town at the border between Sudan and Tigray, situated at the banks of the Tekeze (Atbara) River
- In early November 2020 Tigrayans were attacked by knife-wielding militiamen from Amhara Region
- For instance, soldiers killed a taxi driver and two others in the taxi because the taxi had a poster of the President of Tigray.
- The Fano were ordered to destroy Humera and finish Tigrayans
- The militia were cutting people's heads by machete

Shire Massacre (Human Rights Watch, The Guardian, Tghat)

- Shire is a large city, the capital of Northwestern Zone, Tigray
- On 17 November 2020, 10 civilians killed by shelling
- People said they were 'Slaughtered like chickens'
- The corpses were left to be eaten by hyenas
- 200 died after the ENDF and EDF entered the City
- Most of the killings were done by the EDF
- Factories, hotels, a mosque, churches, and condominium buildings were destroyed by the ENDF and EDF
- All government assets were destroyed and looted

Edaga Hamus Massacre (Annys et al 2021, Daily Telegraph)

- Edaga Hamus is a small town in Tsaedaemba, Eastern Zone of Tigray, and 20 kilometers south of Adigrat.
- On 21 November 2020, 24-30 civilians were murdered by EDF after it suffered heavy losses in a fight with TDF

Wukro Massacre (Annys et al 2021, France 24)

- Wukro is a medium-sized town about 50 kilometers to the north of Mekelle.
- 27-28 November 2020 ENDF and EDF killed 245 people
- When the troops entered the town residents fled to the surrounding mountains,
- Eritreans spent days looting homes, banks and factories
- EDF shot youngsters suspected of being TPLF supporters

Zalambessa Massacre (Alumni 27 March 2021-TigraiOnline)

- Zalambessa is a town in northern Tigray close to the Eritrea border. 40 kilometers north of Adigrat City (Eastern Zone)
- The massacre happened 13-17 November 2020.
- On 17th November 2020 ENDF and EDF entered the town after indiscriminately shelling it for 13 consecutive hours.
- Going house to house arbitrarily killing civilians.
- Burials were prohibited and corpses eaten in the streets by hyenas and dogs.
- Soldiers entered a house
 - Killed both spouses
 - Occupied the house and settled there
 - Feasting on the slaughtered goats of the family
 - They stayed in the house for 12 days
 - They ate 30 goats
 - After that the bodies of the spouses could be buried

Bisober Massacre (Annys et al 2021, France 24, World Radio)

- Bisober- a village in Chercher, Southern Zone of Tigray
- 14–17 November 2020 ENDF first shelled the village and killed 21 civilians
- After controlling the village ENDF killed 6 more civilians

Axum Massacre



(Martin Plaut, Amnesty International, HRW, AP, Reuters, EEPA)

-
- Axum is a city in the Central Zone of Tigray. It was the Capital City of the ancient Axumite Empire
 - The City is the Holiest City in this part of Africa as it is where Christianity was introduced as far back as early in the 4th Cent.
 - November 28-29, the great Christian shrine was drenched with blood three weeks after the allied Amhara-Ethiopia-Eritrea forces invaded Tigray.
 - On 18 November, 2020 the surrounding hills of Axum were heavily shelled and bombed by tanks, artillery and by Jet fighters. Transport and communication was cut and Tigrayan administration and security forces withdrew from the City.
 - On 19 November, 2020 EDF entered Axum and shot people on the streets; killing about ten every day.
 - Axum Hospital was looted
 - Many people left Axum, others took shelter in St. Mary Church.
 - EDF left the City but returned a week later and started massive looting of shops throughout the City, broke into hotels, jewelry shops, boutiques. They also destroyed two flour factories.
 - Militia and residents of Axum attacked Mai Kuho (EDF stronghold) and killed many of them.
 - When EDF reinforcement arrived the attackers fled.

- Soldiers fired indiscriminately on civilians on 28-29 Nov. 2020
- Hundreds were massacred in a killing spree by Eritreans
 - On 30 November, Ethiopian Government representatives and the Federal police arrived and convinced the Eritreans to allow residents to collect corpses. The entire city from the bus station to the park was covered in bodies.
 - Eritrean soldiers said they had been ordered to kill all Tigrayan males older than four.
 - Ethiopian soldiers watched and did nothing to stop the killings and the looting. Those who tried were warned.

On 15 December 2020, 750 people hiding in the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Aksum were taken out and shot dead in the square in front of the Church by the ENDF and Amhara militias.

Mahbere Dego Massacre



(CNN=Nima Elbagir, GNN, Tghat-Mail Online-Rachel Bunyan, BBC, Annys et al 2021, Bellingcat)

-
- Dozens of unarmed men are marched across a plain accompanied by soldiers with guns.
 - This happened sometime between 16 to 18 January 2021.
 - Apparently after they reach the killing site the unarmed men sat in rows surrounded by soldiers
-

- The soldiers were wearing Ethiopian army uniforms and they were speaking in Amharic.
- One soldier says: “We should not free these people. Not even one of them should be spared”.
- Another one suggests: “We have to get this on video, how these people die.”
- The group of defenseless men were then led to a cliff edge where they were shot in the back of the head.
- The soldiers then checked to see if all of the victims were dead.
- They shot the injured men who were still alive.
- The soldiers shouted “Kill! Kill! Kill! Shoot him! Shoot him! Shoot him! Or do you want me to come and do it”.
- They were also mocking the dead. One said: “It would have been great if there was gas to burn these people. Burn their bodies like the Indians do.”
- The dead bodies can be seen strewn across the mountainous terrain.
- Victims were then picked up and flung off the side of a ridge.

Dengelat: ‘Massacre in the Mountains’



November 30 2020 Arvanitidis et al March 22, 2021; Video Story told by Nima Elbagir (Text rearranged and abridged by Author. A lot of rephrasing is done) <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/26/africa/ethiopia-tigray-dengelat-massacre-intl/index.html>

-
- Dengelat is a village in the Eastern Zone of Tigray.
 - On 30 November 2020 residents were celebrating Tsion Maryam Festival.
 - Suddenly Eritrean troops arrived and pretended to be peaceful.

- The unsuspecting people invited them to the feast.
- Later on Eritrean soldiers opened fire on the hundreds of congregants.
- People tried to flee scrambling up cliff paths into nearby houses.
- The troops followed spraying the mountainside with bullets.
- Eritrean soldiers went door to door, calling out: “Come out! Come out you bitches!”
- Some people went outside holding their IDs to prove they were civilians; but all were shot
- The soldiers dragged those who stayed inside, bound their hands or ordered others to do so, and shot them on their doorsteps.
- Mothers were forced to tie up their sons who were killed in front of them.
- Soldiers tied up and shot people on the head just to save bullets
- Survivors dragged bodies into their houses so that hyenas wouldn’t eat them.
- They slept near the bodies because they could not bury them while the Eritrea troops were around.
- On 2 December, the soldiers allowed informal burials to take place away from the Church; but threatened to kill anyone they saw mourning.
- Under their watchful eyes, survivors held back their tears as they sorted through the bodies of children and teenagers, collecting identity cards from pockets and making meticulous notes about their clothing or hairstyle.
- Among the dead were priests, elderly men, women, entire families, and about 20 Sunday school children.
- The corpses, some dressed in white church robes drenched in blood, were scattered in the fields and the riverbed.
- Some were unrecognizable, having been shot in the face
- Young children were seen everywhere; their hands were tied
- The village smelled of death and vultures were circling over the mountains, a sign that there may be more bodies left uncounted: those who were killed in the far fields while trying to escape and many of them were eaten by vultures

- In the makeshift cemetery corpses were covered with earth and thorny tree branches
- This was done in order to protect them from being carried off by hyenas and vultures
- Their shoes were put on top of the burial mounds for identification by family members
- More than a hundred are believed to have been shot dead
- The husband of a newlywed couple was killed leaving a pregnant wife
- The Church was also hit by artillery fire.

Debre Abay Massacre: Corpse Insulting soldier



(Tghat—February 8, 2021)

- The massacre took place on 5 and 6 January 2021, in Western Tigray, in an area called Debre Abay, named after the famous Debre Abay Monastery.
- ENDF and EDF started shelling a small town, Mai Harmaz, from far.
- Houses were destroyed and children killed.
- When they arrived at the small town fighting with TDF started and lasted for two days
- 500 ENDF and EDF soldiers were killed
- A reinforcement was sent to the location, but the fight was already over and TDF forces had left
- The angry reinforcement force took its revenge on the town's civilian population by massacring 100 of them, looting shops and houses.

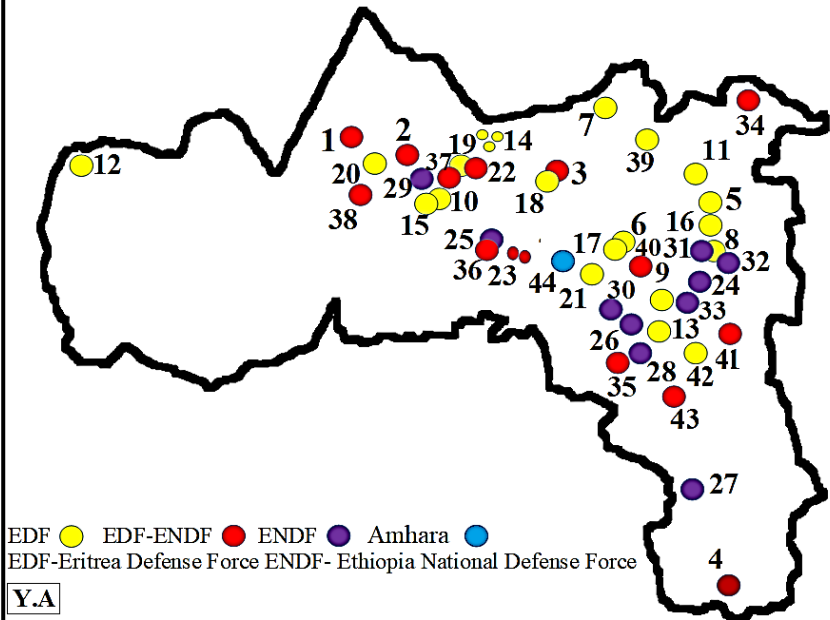
In a video footage

- About 24 killed bodies in groups can be seen.
- Amharic-speaking people are heard. They must be soldiers.
- One of them is the video-man, and saw a survivor,
- Video-man: “I think it is necessary to get rid of the survivor”
- Video-man: “Why did you get in, in the first place?”
- Dying Victim: “I have a house here”
- Video-man: pointing at a corpse “Is this who made you get in?”
- Dying Victim: “Yes, that is mine”
- Video-man: Repeat “Is this who made you get in?”
- Dying Victim: “Yes, it is mine”
- They don’t understand each other
- Video-man: “you don’t speak Amharic?”
- Dying Victim: “One of my houses is this one, the one with the corrugated iron”.
- Feminine voice: “He can speak Amharic”
- Video-man: “speak up [in Amharic]”
- Video-man: “I fuck your mother”.
- Dying Victim: “Ehe”
- Video-man: “Speak up, “Son of bitch”.

Cartography of Massacres

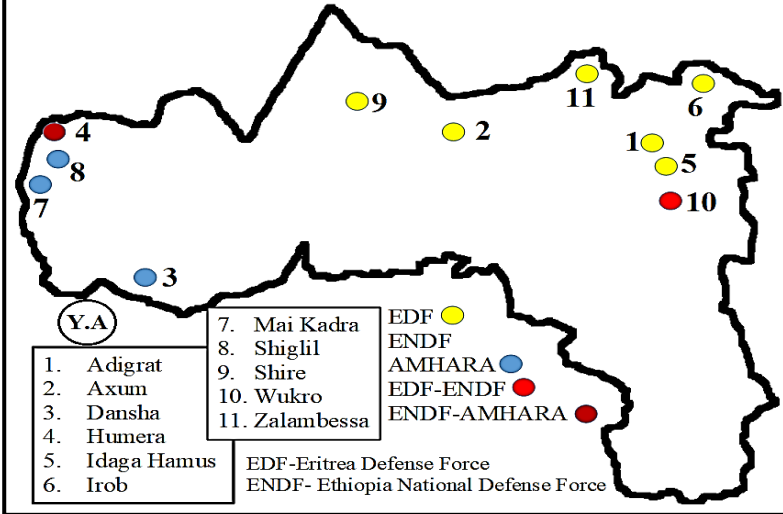
Data Sources for the Maps: Addis Standard, Africanews, Agence France-Presse, Al Jazeera English, Amnesty International, Associated Press, Bellingcat, Crisis Group, Daily Telegraph, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Financial Times, France 24, Human Rights Watch, Médecins Sans Frontières, Reuters, Situation Report EEPA HORN, Sky News, The Guardian, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Tigray TV, Annys et al 2021.

Tigray Civilian Massacre Phase II: Nov. 28, 2020–June 28, 2021

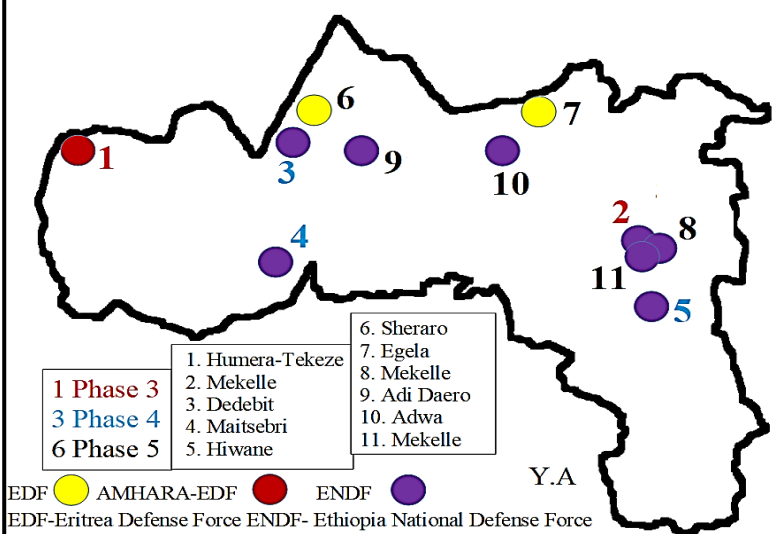


1. Zeban Gedena	12. Humera	22. Wukro Maray	33. Togoga
2. Shire	13. Grizana	23. Menji, Guyya	34. Irob
3. Adwa	14. May Atsmi, Tisha, Haddush Addi	24. Mekelle	35. Kerebera
4. Hugumburda	15. Debrekerbe	25. Kolla Tembien	36. Kolla Tembien
5. Dengelat	16. Freweyni	26. Gijet	37. Wukro Maray
6. Hawzen	17. Hawzen	27. Bora	38. Enkikumel
7. Gu'iltelo	18. Adwa	28. Ari Giorgis	39. Zamr
8. Wukro	19. Wukro Maray	29. Mahbere Dego	40. Awulo
9. Cheli	20. Edaga Hibret	30. Khisret	41. Berzeba
10. Debrekerbe	21. Guh	31. Wukro	42. Finaruwa
11. Mai Weyni		32. Enda Teka Tesfay	43. Sahrti Samre
			44. Deban

Tigray Civilian Massacre: Phase I (Nov. 4-28, 2020)



Tigray Civilian Massacre Phases 3, 4, and 5: June 28, 2021-Nov. 3, 2022



Weaponized Starvation

“Falling like leaves”: Genocide by starvation in Tigray



Reuters, The Globe and Mail, The Economist, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, France 24, Relief Web, Associated Press (Anna, Cara), OCHA, World Peace Foundation, PBS, Human Geography, (Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel), Al Jazeera English, Famine Early Warning Systems Network, BBC, UN-WFP.

- Tigray war has seen up to half a million dead from violence and starvation.
- By March 2022 in Tigray 89 Percent of people were in need of food aid; and those facing severe hunger reaching up to 47 Percent.
- Another estimate: 4.5 million people in need of emergency food assistance.
- Authorities deliberately held back food in an effort ‘to starve the rebels out’.
- It was not really aimed at the rebels but at the people: Intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare by depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival.
- Starvation was not only intentional but also systematic and widespread.
- Ethiopian and Eritrean governments were responsible for the starvation by wilfully impeding relief supplies
- 80 Percent of Tigray was unreachable by humanitarian assistance.

- Estimated one person is dying from hunger every 48 seconds in the region. There could be a million dead in a couple of months.
- United Nations Security Council: *“1.8 million people were on the brink of famine”*
- The displaced reach camps emaciated their skin directly on their bones. They were forced to eat grass and roots; many were dying in their sleep.
- The Economist: *“The main reasons for the famine are: The War which caused mass displacement and loss of harvests, the locust infestations, burning of crops, and the Federal Ethiopian government deliberately holding back food in an effort ‘to starve the TPLF.’”*
- Mark Lowcock (OCHA) said: *“Ethiopian Federal government was deliberately starving Tigray, running a sophisticated campaign to stop aid getting in, not just an attempt to starve six million people but an attempt to cover up what's going on.”*
- Teklehaimanot: *“Ethiopian and Eritrean governments used key tactics that induced famine: systematic looting and destruction of infrastructure, banking measures that blocked access to cash; and a siege obstructing humanitarian aid.”*
- Famine Early Warning Systems Network: *“Key factors for Phase-4 level acute food insecurity: Armed conflict and access constraints, low levels of economic activity and income-earning, and significant disruption to market activity.”*
- A Federal Ethiopian government official stated that there was no starvation in Ethiopia.
- Even when food is available distribution problem arose partly due to drivers fear for their security. Aid organizations were scared to leave Mekelle.
- Access blocks had many facets: Federal government authorization, authorizations from neighboring regional governments, and blocks by local armed forces citing security reasons and/or worried about food being provided to the TDF.

Situation of Tigrayans outside Tigray

Tigrayans inside Tigray have suffered massacres, massive destruction and looting, gang-rapes, and a long killer siege. The Tigrayan predicament was not restricted in geography. Tigrayans elsewhere in Ethiopia also suffered from ethnic cleansing and mass detention. Included in the selected case stories of ‘Auschwitz’ in Mizan Teferi, a wrecked marriage in Gondar, refugees in Sudan, the mass murder in the grooves of Arba Minch, High profile murder, and the ‘Benishangul-human grill’.

Auschwitz in Mizan Teferi



Aba Samuel Prison: an entrepot before the shipping of the “human Cargo” to Mizan Teferi (Photo Reuters)

The text is abridged from Reuters (June 18, 2022) ‘In Ethiopia's Civil War, Thousands of Jailed Tigrayans Endured Squalor and Disease’+ Addis Fortune and EEPA Horn.

- Mizan Teferi is the administrative center of Bench Sheko Zone of South Ethiopia Region.
- It is 580 kilometers south of Addis Ababa.
- In the Ethiopian Capital and its surroundings Tigrayans were rounded up indiscriminately just for being Tigrayans. They were

held by police after speaking their native language or showing an identity card with a Tigrayan name.

- The profiling and mass arrest of Tigrayans continued in Dire Dawa, Jijiga, Adama, and other parts of Ethiopia as well.
 - In Addis Ababa Harmony and Kaleb hotels were shut down for playing Tigrigna music; and owners of Aksum and Capital hotels were arrested as part of the campaign of profiling and arresting Tigrayans.
 - Over 48,000 businesses owned by ethnic Tigrayans were shut down in Addis Ababa.
 - They were first taken to temporary detention camps such as Gotera Condominium area; mainly to Aba Samuel prison near Addis Ababa.
 - Tigrayan detainees were also crowded into other makeshift facilities, including old cinema, university campuses, former chicken factory, industrial park, and construction sites
 - Detainees included women and children.
 - Most facilities were crowded, dirty, and smelly; beatings were common; sick prisoners were denied medical treatment for weeks
 - The United Nations estimates that more than 15,000 Tigrayan civilians were arrested when emergency laws were in force; but Reuters put the total number of arrests to at least 3,000 higher
 - Most detainees were then trucked 580 kilometers away from Addis Ababa to Mizan Teferi.
 - Nearly 3,000 Tigrayans were crammed into 18 squalid cells.
 - Water was so scarce prisoners were often frantic with thirst. Prisoners were tormented by lice, pests and disease
 - No mattress, no blanket; the cells were so overcrowded that prisoners could not sleep on their backs: they slept like “sardines”
 - Prisoners were given two 15-minute bathroom breaks a day, but often the queues were so long or prisoners so sick that inmates would soil themselves while waiting.
 - At least 17 Tigrayan detainees have died
-

Gondar: Hate Destroyed Marriage

(Ethiopia Insight: 28 December 2022)

- Hadas is a Tigrayan from Dansha (Western Tigray)
- Hadas attended Arba Minch University
- During her stay in the University she met her future husband
- They got married and moved to Gondar, her husband's home town.
- Hadas worked in the Water Department in Gondar
- She stayed in Gondar for seven years and got a son
- Her marriage was without significant challenges
- When the Tigray War broke out brutal attacks on Tigrayans and widespread confiscation of their property started in Gondar
- From that day onwards her husband's hatred for Tigrayans started to come to light
- His devotion to her also started to wane
- Hadas feared that the atrocities committed on Tigrayans in the city may happen to her too
- She feared her husband might hurt her
- Then she left her husband stayed elsewhere with her only son
- Her hopes for a happy marriage, the children she wanted to have all vanished
- Without warning, life abruptly became an emotional rollercoaster.
- A few days later the police arrested her.
- Hadas didn't know in whose care she can put her son.
- The police did not care about the fate of her son
- Luckily, a welfare organization promised to care for her son until her release
- She was taken to one of the notorious prisons in the city
- Hadas languished in that prison for six months without any visitor
- Tigrayans in the prison were interrogated, went missing during the night, and many never returned
- She was finally released and met her son again
- Unsure about staying in Gondar she fled the city
- Her son is still in the care of the welfare organization
- Hadas left almost everything she owned behind her

- She is now staying with friends in the Oromia region
- When she fled Gondar she didn't have her academic credentials with her
- When Hadas applied for replacement of her documents she was refused
- She misses her son; and she does not know about the fate of her family members

Human Grill in Metekel: Cannibal Soldiers



Global New Network (12 March 2022) Transcribe video: Ethiopia: Gruesome video shows Ethiopian national and regional army burning Tigrayan men alive, talking lust to eat human flesh.

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- Twelve Tigrayan men were recently detained by Ethiopian security forces inside the Benishangul Gumuz Region.
 - On 11 March 2022 in Ayisid Kebele of Metekel zone the detainees were set on fire by group of people wearing ENDF, SNNPR, and Amhara Special Force uniforms; and members of the Fano vigilante group were also there.
 - With them were armed and unarmed native Amharic-speaking young men in civilian clothes.
 - Security forces drag a naked, severely beaten man to a fire.
 - They then count one...two...three, and throw the man onto the fire.
 - Additional 3 or 4 freshly and partially burnt bodies of men are seen.
 - The perpetrators mock the burning bodies.
 - A young man in civilian clothes (Fano vigilante) adds more dry grass and firewood.
 - The Perpetrators were jubilantly burning the unarmed Tigrayan alive, taunting them, and talking about how 'delicious their roasted flesh would be' with injera or with bread.

- The attackers were repeatedly using the term ‘Junta’
- The 12 innocent Tigrayans were savagely killed as a retaliation for an attack by OLA and Benishangul Gumuz forces.

Abala/Afar: Tigrayan Massacre on the Border



Aljazeera (Lucy Kassa): Ethiopian allies accused of Abala massacre

- Abala is a small town on the Afar-Tigray border 50 kilometers to Mekelle.
- Before the Federal regionalization of Ethiopia Abala was known as “Shikhet” and was part of Tigray. Hence, 70 Percent of the town’s population was Tigrayan.
- Afar were allies of TPLF during the armed struggle against Derg.
- There has been no safety problem for the Tigrayans in Abala after the town came under Afar Regional administration.
- When Prosperity Party came to the helm the ruling party in Afar, which was friendly to Tigray joined the Prosperity Party, allied with Eritrea and turned against Tigray.
- Afar ruling party did a lot of harm to Tigray not only by facilitating and participating in the invasion of Tigray but also inhumanly blocking humanitarian aid to six million in Tigray.

- This was not enough for the friend-turned-enemy Afar militia. They went too far on Tigray to ethnically cleanse Abala town and engaged in a massacre of Tigrayans.
 - On 24 December 2022, Afar militiamen and Eritrean troops went from house to house, seeking Tigrayans out in a killing campaign that continued over five consecutive days.
 - Troops were barging into houses, looting, and gang-raping girls.
 - Hundreds of bodies were seen littered all over the street: young men, children, and even pregnant women after Afar and Eritrean forces raided Abala,
 - A woman spent days staring at her husband's corpse before she fled.
 - Perpetrators had shot her husband and 11 other Tigrayan neighbors. Among them were four boys under the age of five.
 - A list of 278 people were confirmed dead.
 - Hundreds of bodies collected with bulldozer and dumped in far-off craters.
 - One person was killed along with his 16 extended family members and their bodies dumped into the Mai Shegola crater.
 - There are four IDP centers near Mekelle for survivors from the Abala massacre sheltering almost 7,000 people including 26 victims of sexual violence.
 - Survivors in the IDP centers said seeing what they saw they have nothing left to go back.
 - Hundreds of Tigrayans were forcefully loaded into trucks and taken to detention camps in Semera, the Afar Capital.
-

Tigray Genocide: High Profile Murder in BDR

(Professor Meareg Amare)



(Addis Standards 20 December 2022)

- Meareg Amare was professor of chemistry in the Chemistry Department of Bahir Dar University.
- On 20 August 2021 police officers were looking for him in his absence.
- On 9 and 10 October, a Facebook account “BDU STAFF”, which has over 50,000 followers, posted two messages defaming him and threatening Prof. Meareg with death. The post accused the professor as “...an ethnic Tigrayan who fled to USA after leading the war in Wello, East Amhara, supporting the Tigray Forces with finance and materials”.
- The Post branding him as an agent of the “Woyane” and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) living abroad in the US and destabilizing the country through social media platforms.
- Absolutely confident of himself about his innocence, in view of the great service he rendered in his field to the University and to the community, he did not panic about what was going on around him.
- As a law abiding citizen, Prof. Meareg checked with the Bahir Dar Special Zone Police and Security Office on 10 October 2021. He also checked with Amhara Regional State Police Commission on 11 October 2021.
- He asked if they were looking for him. The response he got from both was that they had no case against him.
- On 3rd of November 2021 Professor Meareg was gunned down in front of his house. Three gunmen, wearing the Amhara Special

Force uniform fired at him. One of the murderers had covered his head with a mask.

- Bystanders who tried to take the professor to the hospital were prevented by the armed men. They did not allow call for help or covering the body. They referred to the body as ‘Junta’.
- Following the murder, the three assassins took away the victims private car.
- Prof. Meareg’s wife was forced to confirm the identity of the body. The killers were yelling at her to tell them her ethnicity.
- She begged them to kill her too. Calling her a ‘Junta’, they told her that they don’t want to waste their bullets and they want her to cry all her life.
- The body lay there for seven hours until the municipality buried him in unmarked grave.
- The police took Prof. Meareg’s wife and kept her in prison for two days.
- Assisted by the tenants living in Prof. Meareg’s compound the criminals took money, jewelry, electronics, pieces of furniture, hundreds of books, and documents.
- A few months later the Amhara Special Force confiscated Prof. Meareg’s residence forcing his wife to leave the city.
- Neither Bahir Dar University nor Amhara Regional administration issued statement or ordered investigation into the murder. The university rejected calls and emails from journalists.
- Facebook is sued as responsible for the death by not removing the post. It may pay 2 Billion in compensation.

Deadly Bajajs in Wereta: Reprisal on Tigrayans



Yonas Negussie (Twitter), The Reporter, EEPA Horn

- Wereta is a medium sized town on the main road between Bahir Dar and Gondar
 - It is located at the junction of the Wereta-Woldia and Addis Ababa-Gondar highways.
 - Hence, it is a popular stop for truck drivers to spend a night.
 - One day this peaceful and vibrant town turned into a monster on its own longtime residents.
 - It was a conventional logic in wars that those who go to kill in battlefields must expect to be killed instead.
 - The militia men went to Tigray to kill but they were killed.
 - Following every defeat by the TDF it became customary for the ENDF, EDF, Amhara Special Forces, and Fano (militia) to take a dishonorable revenge on Tigrayan civilians all over Tigray, and later on Tigrayan residents of towns of the Amhara Region.
 - They kill Tigrayans and loot their houses and shops.
 - On 10 July 2021, in the Fiyelwiha battle a large group of Amhara militia from Wereta and the surrounding Fogera district occupying the Dima district in Tigray were defeated by the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF).
 - Several militiamen from Wereta, including the head of the Peace and Security Bureau of the Fogera district were killed in the battle.
 - On the 11th day of July 2021, a mob of Wereta residents murdered three civilians of Tigrayan origin residing in Wereta.
 - They were killed after the body of an Amhara militia, who was killed in Fiyelwiha battle by TDF arrived in the town.
 - Corpses of the murdered Tigrayans was dragged behind three Bajaj tri-wheelers.
 - Houses, hotels, and other businesses of Tigrayans in the town were also looted, burned, and destroyed by the Amhara youth.
-

Refugees in Sudan and IDPs in Tigray



(Nariman El-Mofty AP, UNOCHA, UNHCR, Ethiopia Insight, World Aid)

- Over 50,000 Tigrayans have fled to Sudan when the war started in Western Tigray.
 - As of 23 March 2021 UNHCR registered over 62,000 refugees from Tigray.
 - Refugees were moved from the transit center at Hamdayet near the border to Um Rakuba 70 kilometers away,
 - The need was so huge and aid agencies were overwhelmed
 - Nigsty was enjoying her life at home as a housewife with her husband, who worked on a farm as a truck driver.
 - The conflict forced them to leave everything behind.
 - She is worried about her extended family left behind whose whereabouts are unknown.
 - This is the story of Nigsty, but also the story of the over 50,000 refugees who suddenly found themselves in the sandy plains of Sudan.
 - They lost their plans for the future. Everything they worked for is now gone.
 - There are 2.1 internally displaced (IDPs) inside Tigray.
-

Carnage in Banana-grove and Lake-shore



Katharine Houreld (Washington Post) Ethiopian guards massacred scores of Tigrayan prisoners

- Mirab Abaya is a district in Gamo Gofa Zone of South Ethiopia.
- It is on the Western Shore of Lake Abaya as its name indicates.
- The place is known for its extensive banana orchards.
- War broke out in November 2020 in Tigray and Tigray forces seized military bases across the Tigray region
- Abiy government detained thousands of Tigrayan soldiers serving elsewhere in the country.
- They have been held in prison camps for nearly two years with no access to their families, phones or human rights monitors.
- Other Tigrayan soldiers were disarmed when war broke out but continued working in office jobs.
- Many of them were detained in November 2021 as Tigrayan forces advanced towards Addis Ababa.

- One of the detention camps where about 2,000 to 2,500 active and retired Tigrayan soldiers were jailed is the Mirab Abaya Prison Camp.
- One day, detained Tigrayan soldiers were celebrating the holy day of Saint Michael in November 2021. Then the killings began.
- Some were shot by their guards, others hacked to death by villagers who taunted the soldiers about their Tigrayan ethnicity.
- Around 83 prisoners were dead and others were missing.
- Their bodies were stacked on top of each other like wood.
- A female voice was heard crying “My son! My son!” shot heard, then she was dead.
- One was a female major and had served as a peacekeeper in Sudan, Another was a major who was an engineer passionately teaching in the Defense Engineering College. He was also a U.N. peacekeeper in Abyei.
- Many run into the surrounding bush as Ethiopian soldiers pursued them.
- When the locals found them they begged them for help. Instead the locals told them that they will give them what they deserve and started attacking them.
- They were misinformed that the escapees were prisoners of war who killed their men from the locality during the battles.
- A crowd of about 150 to 200 people hacked and bludgeoned the escapees with machetes, sticks and stones.
- Most were killed as they begged for mercy.
- During the attack, many prisoners run into the crocodile infested Lake Abaya to escape the mobs.
- Town Officials used loudspeakers to call on locals to kill the prisoners
- A prisoner’s hands were cut off and his legs bleeding. When he begged to be killed they dragged him up and down the street.
- The attackers told the man they would kill him as slowly as possible. Eventually, he was dragged to the camp gate and shot.
- Another body was being dragged behind a motorbike.
- Attacks continued into the next day.

- The camp was littered with the bodies of the dead and the earth slick with blood.
- Most of the guards who did the killing were Amhara
- Bodies were dumped in a mass grave by the prison gate.
- Taking pictures of the grave yard was not allowed.
- There were also killings in other prisons: Near Jijiga, Hawassa, Didessa, and Bilate
- Many of the victims served in peace keeping in Sudan and Somalia.
- Many were asked to dig their own graves; shot long after they were dead and throwing the corpses outside for the hyenas; shot fired so many times that the bodies of the victims were torn to pieces; bodies dragged from cells.

WEAPONIZED SEXUAL VIOLENCE



“Every genocide has a signature, and this one is sexual violence”
Millete Birhanemaskel *“Sexual violence with a level of cruelty beyond comprehension”* United Nations. *“Unimaginable nightmare”* Global voices

World Peace Foundation (Dyan Mazurana), Al Jazeera English (Pramila Patten), BBC News (Weyni Abraha-Yikono), The Daily Telegraph, CBS News, CNN, OCHA (Mark Lowcock), Eritrea Hub, EIPA HORN, The Irish Times, Lucy Kasa, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, FORBES (Dr. Ewelina U. Ochab), Global Voices, UNFPA, New York Times, Omna Tigray

Who the victims are:

1. Little girls and teenage girls.
2. Women of all ages (including pregnant and nursing women).
3. Grandmothers and Great grandmothers
4. Boys and Men.

Rape by Moving troops

- They would capture girls and women and hold them as sexual slaves.
- When they moved on, they dump them or take them along.
- In their new locations, they captured and raped more Tigrayan girls and women.

How Rape is done and the effects on the victims

- Rapes occur in victims' homes in front of their families.
- Soldiers scared away the men
- Soldiers shot people who witnessed or tried to help women residents. Then they stopped reacting.
- They raped the women and slaughtered the men
- People forced to rape family members
- Mothers and daughters raped side by side
- Dragged out and raped in public.
- Raped when they search for food and water.
- Rape in exchange for basic commodities.
- Raped on their way to classes.
- Perpetrators humiliate their victims, frequently using ethnic slurs, insults, threats, and degrading comments.
- Penetrated by multiple men at the same time.
- Forced to participate in sexual acts that are taboo (Gay, Anal, Oral, use of other objects)
- If refused to the taboo they were beaten and forced into submission.
- Scratches and bruises on and around their breasts.
- Significant injuries around the genitalia due to rape.
- Survivors sustained serious physical, mental, and emotional injuries.

- Victims were in addition traumatized for witnessing the killing of their family members and neighbors and the destruction of their homes and communities.
- Some had ruptures and punctures around and through their anuses and vaginas due to anal and vaginal rape with sticks, heated metal, nails, gravel, metal and plastic shrapnel and other objects.
- Those who resisted rape had knife cuts on their inner and outer thighs; and others had burning hot metal pressed against their thighs and external genitalia
- Vaginally raped with burning hot pieces of metal, the tissue becomes fibrous and rupture during childbirth; or the birth canal can be infected destroying the uterus; thus requiring the surgical removal of the uterus.
- Worse is some survivors of the sexual violence are now pregnant.
- Some sought health service for abortion; most health service is destroyed and medical aid is blocked. So they are forced to perform dangerous abortion by themselves. Rape and lack of health service doubly victimize survivors.
- Others have contracted HIV and hepatitis.
- Rapists told their victims that they are HIV positive and want to infect them.
- Male survivors (boys and men) were traumatized by injuries due to anal rape.
- Serious stigma is experienced by rape survivors of all ages.

Some extraordinary cases

- ENDF raped a priest's wife in front of her husband and killed her husband.
- A mother was gang-raped in front of her young son for several hours by members of the ENDF. She lost consciousness. After she woke up, she found her four-years-old son had been murdered and lay dead across her legs.
- They raped a woman one after the other. The survivor said: "I don't know if they realized I was pregnant. I don't know if they realized I was a person."

- Attempted rape on Monalisa left her with seven gunshot wounds and an amputated arm. When her grandfather objected to the rape as being against religion rapists shot him on the leg and locked him in the kitchen.
- They took photos of the victim, poured alcohol on her and laughed. The assailants also shot dead her 12-year-old son.
- Students in the Ayder Referral Hospital in Mekelle were raped by the ENDF while en route from the library to their dormitories.
- 15-year-old raped by the ENDF in front of forced witnesses including her brother.
- Women in the outer parts of Mekelle were kidnapped for several weeks by soldiers, serving as forced domestic workers and sex slaves.
- Six women gang-raped by the EDF for 10 days.
- Eritrean soldiers joked, took photos, injected her with a drug, tied her to a rock, stripped, stabbed and repeatedly raped her.
- A woman's two daughters, were raped in front of her and they beat them on their genitals after the gang rape.
- A girl was gang-raped and found dumped in a town street; Eritrean soldiers had burned her external and internal genital parts using a match and hot metal rod. Unreached the girl died.

What Rapists say to their victims

"We are given a directive by the government that we can kill you, we can rape you without accountability. We can do to you whatever we like. If we get rid of Tigrayans, we can give this land to Eritrea. We want to clean you all, cleanse you of your Tigrayan identity. We do not want you to perpetuate the life of Tigrayans in Ethiopia."

Why they do it

- It is symbolic in the sense that perpetrators use violence to demonstrate their power over Tigrayan women and girls, and through it over their fathers, brothers, husbands and over the larger Tigrayan ethnic community.
- This is being done purposely to break the morale of the people, threaten them and make them give up the fight.
- Systematically used as a weapon of war. They say: "The girl's father is Dr. Debretsion and the soldier's father is Dr. Abiy".

- Cleansing Tigrayan blood, ethnically Amharise them or remove their Tigrayan identity and blood line.
- Tigrayan men would feel they failed as men to protect their women, girls, and their ethnic group.
- The strategy to terrorize, degrade, and humiliate both the victims and their ethnic group
- Perpetrators know such physical and psychological violence has potentially irreversible physical, psycho-social and economic consequences for Tigrayan girls and women now and in the future.
- Abortion after rape may kill hundreds of girls and women in the absence of medical facilities. The medical facilities are destroyed. It is a well-planned genocidal operation
- Sexual violence is a deliberate sterilization of societies by permanent harm of reproductive capacity.
- Army officers encourage their subordinates to rape, making jokes about it.
- Sexual violence is pre-planned as a weapon of war is proved by the fact that soldiers who refuse to rape are penalized by friends and by their superiors.
- Most of the violence and rape comes from the Eritrean troops and Amhara forces.
- Rape is on an industrial scale. What is reported is only a tip of the iceberg

Rape Camps

- The Rape camps are in Hospitals, construction sites, and along river banks.
- Captured girls and women from nearby locations are held captive in hospital rooms and beds. The beds are used for rape of girls, women, and men.
- The victims would be tied to the bed so that they don't escape; or doors are sealed.
- Some soldiers raped in the IDP camps
- Military camps and houses or grounds in rural areas were also used.
- Others were raped tying up their hands to a bark of tree.

- The men stand in line and take turn to rape.
- A rape was interrupted in one case to allow the women to feed her child.

Reactions

- The Prime Minister's initial reaction in Parliament was a comparison between troops of the Northern Command and the rape victims: "*The women were raped by men; whereas our troops were raped by bayonets.*"
 - Another day he told the Parliament: "*Anyone who rapes our Tigrayan sisters will be held accountable in the court of law.*"
 - Ethiopian authorities announced that three Ethiopian soldiers were convicted and 25 others indicted for rape and other acts of sexual violence. Nothing is heard about the court case ever since.
 - Amnesty International wrote to the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and the Minister of Women, Children and Youth, to Eritrea's Information Minister and to a senior advisor to President Isaias Afwerki about its findings; but no response from all.
 - Entire government apparatus and the pro-government camp mobilized to silence survivors.
 - Propaganda was being disseminated that there is no need to exaggerate the rape in Tigray: "Gender relations in pre-war Tigray were worse than elsewhere in the country." Some would say!
 - The Attorney General of Ethiopia said he takes the accounts of rape with "grain of salt".
 - Ethiopian ambassador to US said that the survivors' testimonies are "not true".
 - Estimated 120.000 women were victim of rape and gender-based violence in Tigray since the war started in November 2020 (Ethiopia Cable).
 - Not a word was heard from Ethiopian feminists.
-

Tigray War: Minorities and the Ecosystem

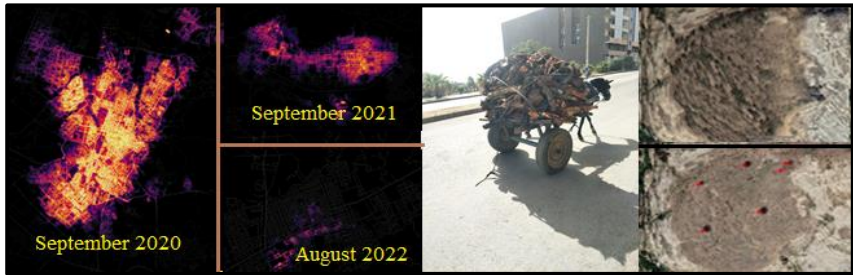
Tigray War Threatens Irob and Kunama



[Ethiopia Insight (Jan Nyssen, Kjetil Tronvoll), Davide Tommasin]

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- Irob is a minority group in Tigray that is particularly vulnerable because it is found in both Eritrea and Tigray.
 - Irobs live in a rugged mountainous terrain in the northeastern corner of Tigray.
 - Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission had partly granted Irob-land to Eritrea.
 - The implication of this is grave to Irob community.
 - Eritrean troops do a lot of killing, looting, and coercive re-identification of Irobs as Eritrean.
 - The looting is so much that the only thing people have are the clothes they are wearing.
 - Many have fled to the mountains and are hiding in caves.
 - An old man reports he has no food, no money, and two of his grandchildren were killed.
 - Kunama are the second ethnic minority in Tigray found in the Adiabo Plains of Northwestern Tigray.
 - They live in the Sheraro Plains which is a conflict prone area.
 - Smaller numbers of Kunama live in Tigray, but the majority are in the Gash-Barka Region of Eritrea.
 - The fate of Irob and Kunama people is uncertain. They are dangerously located at the border between two fighting forces.
-

Tigray War: Damage to the vulnerable ecosystem



Ethiopia Insight (Emnet Negash, Emiru Birhane) War and siege inflicted damage on Tigray's ecosystem 22 February, 2023. NASA Black Marble Image (Left) power blackout, Firewood (Mistir Sew), Forest to Charcoal holes

- Continued ecosystem damage could eventually turn Tigray into uninhabitable desert.
- Over the past century wars have caused dramatic environmental consequences.
- Tigray is a desertification hotspot, encircled to the west and northwest by the Sahel.
- Over the last thirty years life-changing and award-winning land restoration was accomplished.
- Vegetation cover in Tigray improved from below three percent to seventeen percent.
- The War abruptly washed away the dream of building a climate-resilient green economy in Tigray.
- Overwhelmed by the devastation to human lives and livelihoods ecosystem damage due to the War has not received enough attention.
- Entire people of Tigray were under siege for two years and 2.6 million are internally displaced.
- Firing of heavy artillery and other destructive weaponry killed people and also destroyed vegetation and other natural resources.
- Seedlings planted were trampled by troops and vehicles.
- Deliberate destruction of the land restoration efforts: Example Destruction of 237 seedling nurseries.

- Even sacred land was not spared: Forest reserves in and around Waldiba monastery were exploited after the monks who protected them were killed or displaced.
 - Amhara and Eritrean troops ravaged sacred Church forests.
 - Afromontane forest landscapes were favored as offensive and defensive positions. Hence, extensive ditches, bunkers, and temporary roads were built there.
 - People were forced to eat tree leaves and branches eking out a living from Tigray's forests.
 - People of Tigray were denied access to basic services one of which was cutting off Tigray from the national electric grid.
 - The backup power supply from the Tekeze Dam was insufficient, but was also hit by a bomb and could not be repaired.
 - In the absence of electricity and other fuel, households resorted to firewood and charcoal for cooking, heating, and other domestic uses, causing severe pressure on forests.
 - Forests near urban areas were most affected. The image in the title shows an area east of Adigrat called Koma Siwiha where entire hill was completely deforested in a few months.
 - The shift from electricity to firewood and charcoal dramatically increased smoke related health problems especially among women.
 - Collection and transportation of firewood became additional burden on women.
 - Consuming half-cooked or raw food has become a common practice, especially in urban areas and IDP centers.
 - Many indigenous and flag forest species and wild animals severely affected by the destruction of their habitats and by hunting.
 - In the elephant sanctuary in Kafta Sheraro National Park elephants were displaced, killed, and poached. Park vehicles were stolen and infrastructure destroyed.
 - The Amhara armed groups opened a 'bush-meat restaurant' in Adebay town located near the Park.
 - Wildlife displaced from their habitats and /or came in contact with domestic animals leading to the spread of rabies, anthrax, and others.
-

Destruction of Infrastructure

Destruction of Health Facilities in Tigray



MSF: Doctors without Borders (March 15, 2021) Widespread destruction of health facilities in Ethiopia's Tigray region. + Hailay et al (2022)

Health system in Tigray before the War (Hailay et al 2022)

- There were two specialized hospitals, 16 general hospitals, 29 primary hospitals, 233 health centers and 712 health posts.

Extent of Damage to the health system due to war (Hailay et al 2022)

- Six months into the war, only 27.5% of hospitals, 17.5% of health centers, 11% of ambulances and none of the 712 health posts were functional.
- The whereabouts of 90% of the 280 ambulances which have been serving before the onset of the war is unknown.
- After the onset of the war, more than 50% of members of the regional health work force were unable to report to their working institutions. 2000 healthcare workers were reportedly registered in IDP camps in Mekelle.
- Estimated 180, 000 patients with chronic communicable and non-communicable diseases in the Region, including 24, 000 with diabetes, 20, 000 with hypertension, 43, 000 with HIV and more than 1,500 with active tuberculosis, have missed clinical follow-ups and disease management plans in the first 3 months of the war.

Extent of the Damage to the health system due to war (MSF)

- Health facilities across Tigray have been looted, vandalized, and destroyed in a deliberate and widespread attack on health care.
- Of 106 health facilities visited by MSF nearly 70 percent had been looted and more than 30 percent had been damaged. Only 13 percent were functioning normally.
- Put in another way; 65 Percent were completely non-functional and had no staff or supplies; 73 Percent had been damaged or looted; and 20 Percent had been occupied by armed groups and were inaccessible to civilians.
- Attacks on Tigray's health facilities are having a devastating impact on the population.
- Health facilities in most areas appear to have been deliberately vandalized to render them nonfunctional.
- In many health centers equipment such as ultrasound machines and monitors is destroyed, doors and windows are smashed, and medicine and patient files are scattered across floors.
- Health facilities were looted and then set on fire; they were hit by rockets destroying the buildings and treatment facilities.
- Few health facilities in Tigray now have ambulances, as most have been seized by armed groups. For instance 20 ambulances were taken from Adigrat Hospital and nearby health centers and some of these vehicles were being used by soldiers near the Eritrean border to transport goods.
- Patients had to travel long distances, sometimes walking for days, to reach health services.
- Many health facilities have few or no staff. Some have fled in fear; others no longer come to work because they have not been paid in months.

Outcomes and impacts of the collapse of the health system (MSF)

- Women have died in childbirth because they were unable to get to a hospital due to the lack of ambulances, rampant insecurity on the roads and a nighttime curfew.
- Other women are giving birth in unhygienic conditions in informal displacement camps.
- Few pregnant women have received antenatal or postnatal care.

- Children have gone unvaccinated, raising the risk of future outbreaks of infectious diseases.
- Patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and HIV, as well as psychiatric patients, are going without lifesaving drugs.
- Survivors of sexual violence are often unable to receive medical and psychological care.

Tigray: Industrialization nipped in the bud



Ethiopia Insight, Martin Plaut, Eritrea Hub, World Peace Foundation

- Until the 1990s Tigray had only flour and oil mills that barely covered the needs of the local population.
- The 17 years of arduous armed struggle to liberate the people of Tigray from the age old grinding poverty came to a conclusion and the people got the freedom to unleash their entrepreneurial energies and talents to the expansion of manufacturing industries.
- In a span of 20 years a significant number of manufacturing establishments sprouted in Tigray.
- Before the nascent industrialization managed to grow deeper roots, it was nipped in the bud by the allied forces.

- Martin Plaut lamented: “*The vindictive looting and destruction of the industrial infrastructure of Tigray by Eritrean and Ethiopian forces is one of the saddest and most pointless aspect of Tigray war.*”
- Initially, air raids had damaged Welkait Sugar Factory and the Tekeze Dam; but most of the infrastructure destruction took place after Mekelle was captured.
- Eritrean forces looted and destroyed the major factories in the Region.
- For instance, Goda Bottle and Glass Share Company were destroyed on 2 December 2020, a week after the capture of Mekelle.
- Addis Pharmaceutical Factory, which previously covered 70 percent of national demand, was looted and destroyed on 19 December 2020.
- On 26 December 2020, Almeda Textile Factory was looted and destroyed in the hands of Eritrean soldiers.
- Almeda textile factory was one of the leading textile manufacturers employing more than 5,300 people.
- Heavy trucks belonging to Mesobo Cement Factory were also taken outside of Tigray.
- Trans Ethiopia P.L.C. was robbed of its 179 trucks by the Ethiopian Government.
- By late February, almost all factories in central and eastern Tigray were destroyed and rendered useless. It is estimated that restoration would require at least 100 billion birr.

Destruction of Holy Places



Mosques and Monasteries destroyed in the Tigray War EEPA-HORN, TGHAT

- While Arabian authorities were hunting Prophet Mohammed and his small number of followers, it was for the first time in history that a

Christian king in the Axumite Kingdom accepted Islam as another way to God similar to his.

- The Al Nejashi Mosque located between Addigrat and Wukro towns of Eastern Tigray Zone has for centuries symbolized how Islam was rescued in the hands of the Axumite King.
 - The Mosque is thought to be the oldest mosque in Africa, dating back to the 7th century. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and was recently restored.
 - In a month after the Tigray War started the Mosque was first bombed and later looted by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops.
 - People died trying to protect the Mosque.
 - Early in the fourth Century there were a few places in the Middle East where Christianity was introduced. Axum was one of those.
 - For this reason Christianity in Tigray is not only religion but also history and culture embodied in the ancient churches and monasteries found strewn all over Tigray.
 - The most notable of such religious-historical treasures is the 6th Century Debre Damo Monastery which is perched on an elevated flat-topped mesa.
 - Thousands of pilgrims and international tourists flock to the site to feel the proximity to God in this ancient adobe of the Almighty. Visitors also test their courage and faith with the rope climbing up the formidable cliffs the Monastery is famed for.
 - Debre Damo Monastery was heavily shelled by Eritrean troops destroying buildings and killing one monk.
 - Other churches elsewhere in Tigray were also targeted. On 20 November 2020, Cherkos Orthodox Church in Zalambessa was shelled and vandalized by Eritrean troops.
-

Marauders versus Defenders in Tigray



Eritrea Hub, Reuters, Ethiopia Insight, Associated Press (Cara Anna)

- Photo in the title shows residents of Mekelle trying to prevent looted goods by Eritrea and also Amhara from leaving the City.
 - Eritrean troops have been seizing food, vehicles, gold, and even doors and windows from homes.
 - The Eritrean soldiers' pockets clinked with stolen jewelry.
 - They even tried on dresses and other clothing looted.
 - They took everything of value, even diapers.
 - Trucks were full of boxes addressed to places in Eritrea for the looted goods to be delivered.
 - Eritrean forces kidnapping people with relatives abroad for ransom.
 - Eritrean soldiers were hindered from exiting Tigray with looted goods because of clashes between ENDF and TDF along the major roads into Eritrea. Eritreans were busy moving loots instead of helping ENDF.
 - They used camels, tanks, trucks, and donkeys to ship the loot to Eritrea.
 - It is the most disgraceful act of vandalism for a state army, which was in a 30 year armed struggle to liberate Eritrea from Ethiopia.
 - A long Eritrean camel caravan loaded with looted furniture and kitchenware was passing by. Young men taking video were mocking the dishonorable act of Eritreans: "Shabia Quralew" (used goods seller) <http://www.aigaforum.com/article2021/are-eritreans-not-worried.htm>
 - What Eritrean troops are killing and looting are the Tigrayans who have fought alongside them and helped them gain independence.
-

Accusation in a Mirror: Stealing the Pain

**Tigray
Genocide**

**Amhara
Genocide**

What significantly reduced international sympathy to the genocide and destruction in Tigray is the claim on the part of the perpetrators themselves being the victims of the atrocities. Since the Amhara were complaining more loudly than Tigray about the atrocities that they themselves inflicted on Tigray, as if it happened to them, the world was deceived into calling for “both sides” to stop committing atrocities. According to Mucchielli (1970) Benesch (2008) and Gordon (2017) ‘Accusation in a Mirror’ is *“hate-speech incitement technique, which falsely imputes to one’s opponent the intentions of action that one is in the process of enacting”*. While dehumanization makes genocide seem acceptable, Benesch (2014) asserts, accusation in a Mirror makes it seem necessary”. The Analysis Framework of Genocide issued in 2022 by the Office of the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide describes ‘Accusation in a Mirror’ as a common strategy of fabricating events whereby a person accuses others of what he or she does or wants to do.



THE BLOCKADE

July 2021 – November 2022



TIGRAY: NO ENTRY NO EXIT

- ❌ The stiff resistance on the part of Tigray for seven months and the finishing blow in the Alula Operation on the ENDF-Amhara-EDF put the Federal Government in a state of denial.
- ❌ The Federal Government declared a face saving decision naming the Defeat-Retreat as a humanitarian gesture to allow the people of Tigray to ‘resume their agricultural production’.
- ❌ The “humanitarian gesture” which came in the form of a “unilateral truce” in reality was the most inhuman gesture history has ever seen.
- ❌ Tigray was locked to entry and exit. Over six million people were put literally in an open-air prison cell. Worse than a prison cell is food supply, access to potable water, medicine, power, cash, internet, education, air and land transport was blocked.
- ❌ It was believed by the Federal Government and its supporters inside and outside Ethiopia that the people of Tigray will surrender along with the TPLF leaders allowing the genocide and the destruction of Tigray as a political geographic entity to continue.
- ❌ For Ethiopians and the world community, who turned a blind eye to the cruelty, it was hard to believe that the people did not surrender even when they were dying in hundreds of thousands as a result of the blockade. Tigray was never to be a Biafra.
- ❌ When Tigray saw that few were bothered about the blockade and the suffering in Tigray, it decided to hit the blockade at its core.
- ❌ TDF advanced far into the interior of the Amhara and Afar regions destroying tens of thousands of ENDF and Amhara troops, and

reached 100 kilometers close to Addis Ababa. The Federal Government was on the verge of collapse. Genocide dogs panicked.

- ❌ The West had a covert and overt agenda to protect the Abiy government from falling. Hence, it put a lot of pressure and did a great deal of persuasion on the TDF to withdraw and return to Tigray.
- ❌ The law abiding and trusting TDF declared withdrawal from Amhara and Afar on the 20th of Decembers 2021. This was five months since Mekelle was liberated and the 'Kill-the-killer Blockade' military campaign started. For all this time people of Tigray were dying of starvation and lack of medicine.
- ❌ In an unprecedented betrayal and callousness the West, which persuaded TDF to move back to Tigray, got into its own business as usual totally oblivious to the fact that thousands were dying in Tigray due to weaponized hunger.
- ❌ For Ethiopians who were happy that the 'Junta' are dying naturally without them sending their sons to die in battle, the blockade was something not to make any noise about.
- ❌ As time passed the War and sanctions had crippled the Ethiopian economy to the extent that except for the Amhara and Eritrean pressure the Federal Government seemed in no mood to continue fighting. On March 24, 2022 a 'humanitarian truce' was agreed upon between the TDF and the Federal Government.
- ❌ The 'humanitarian truce' was meant to allow unfettered access to humanitarian food and medical aid into Tigray; but Federal Government and Afar Region Authorities were playing a gruesome political game of telling the international community that the humanitarian corridors are fully open and aid is flowing unhindered.
- ❌ The international community prefers to believe those who imposed the blockade on Tigray and surprisingly takes them at their word.
- ❌ The people of Tigray continue to suffer and die while the West showers the Federal Government with praises. This emboldened the Federal Authorities and continued their game of hide and seek at the

cost of the people of Tigray.

- ❌ There were also calls for talks by both sides of the War, but what could be believed as genuine was only the Tigray side of the call.
- ❌ It could be conjectured that something surreptitious was going on in the Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea alliance which was smoke-screened by the ‘humanitarian truce’: Preparation for another round of invasion of Tigray after the TDF is believed to have been weakened enough by lack of food and other supplies with the passage of time.
- ❌ From May, 2022 onwards the voices for negotiation were getting louder and everyone took it seriously as a blessing. However, from the contradictory statements the Prime Minister, his communication officers, and the national security advisor were making; and from the rigidity Eritrean and Amhara leaders were showing, it was hard to hope that an end to the War and lifting of the blockade will happen soon enough.
- ❌ On August 24, 2022 Tigray was attacked by a massive force, in all directions, by the ENDF-Amhara-EDF. This attack must have been the desire of the Amhara-EDF factional alliance; and Abiy Ahmed may most likely been arm-twisted into it. The core of the driving force of the War lies in the Amhara. Eritrea is an interested partner having its own inhuman agenda on Tigray. Power ambitions of Abiy Ahmed threw him into an unholy-alliance of two forces whose desire is to see Tigray erased from the map.
- ❌ Despite the resounding victories in Adiabo over the might of the invading armies the leaders of Tigray and its defense force soon realized that the battle tactics of the invading force were to shell and bomb Tigray into extinction.
- ❌ Abiy, the less determined partner accepted the Pretoria Peace deal though reluctantly. His worst fears came: Rejected by Amh-Eritrea.

INVASION OF TIGRAY II

August 24-Novemeber 3, 2022 (EEPA-HORN)

August

24

- ENDF and Amhara militia launched large-scale attack in Southern Tigray (Chobe Ber, Janora, Gubagala, Yalow, Alamata, Bala, and Biso Ber). ENDF 6th and 8th infantry commands and 2th, 6th, and 8th mechanized divisions.

29

- TDF repulsed the attacked and captured Kobo, Weldiya, Gugudo, Fokisa, Zobl, Mendefera, Robit, Shiwoch Mariam, and Tuklosh in Amhara Region.

September

1

- Eritrean troops launched an offensive in Northern Tigray.
- EDF and ENDF launched four-pronged attack: 1. Fiqya Gebre to Adameyti, 2. Selamo to Shiraro, 3. Gobo Tsinan to Irdi Matheos, 4. Adi Aser.
- Heavy shelling from Adi Goshu to Adi Aser.
- Col. Mekuanint, Commander of ENDF 11th infantry division captured on the Southern Front.

2

- Fighting has continued on multiple fronts.
- ENDF units move into Eritrea to attack Tigray from Eritrea.

7



- Abiy dismisses TPLF capacity for guerrilla war.
- TDF fighting EDF in Dedebit.
- EDF taking offensive positions on multiple fronts: Rama, Tserona, Zalambessa and Dallol. –
- The ENDF captured Adi Arkay from TDF but hospitals in Debark and Dabat flooded with wounded soldiers.
- TDF engaging ENDF from Sudan.
- Fighting taking place on the Tekeze River; on the highway

	<p>towards Debarq; Abergele front, and around Kobo in Amhara.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TDF engaged EDF around Shiraro and border areas.
8	<p>The International Crisis Group (ICG): “Avoiding the Abyss”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The war in Ukraine distracted Western powers. ● Ethiopia and Tigray don’t have much to win. ● It is risky for both side: Ethiopia would face major escalation with Sudan and Tigray would remain under the blockade. ● Talks must start with AU as mediator.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tigray and Ethiopian peace negotiations in Djibouti. ● TDF IS HOLDING THE LINE ● EDF 34 heavy artillery fire at Shiraro destroying houses and killing and injuring many civilians. ● President of Tigray Debretsion Gebremichael sent messages to UNSC, France, and UN Secretary General: Tigray and its people are fighting for their own survival and dignity against forces who want them exterminated and vanquished: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Immediate and unconditional lifting of blockade and resumption of services, ● Unfettered humanitarian access, ● Withdrawal of Eritrean forces, ● Return of Tigray’s land and borders to the pre-war situation ● The war is still raging on multiple fronts. ● Humanitarian truce was sabotaged by allowing food and medicine but denying fuel and cash.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government of Tigray announced its readiness to participate in an African Union-led peace process. ● US call for the TDF to withdraw from Amhara without call for Amhara forces to leave Western Tigray is unacceptable.
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intense fighting going on day and night for more than three weeks now.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDF fought 100 divisions from ENDF-Amhara-EDF and defeated most of them • TDF defeated 23 ENDF infantry and one mechanized division • TDF defeated 3 divisions of Amhara forces at the Dedebeit and Adi Arkay fronts.
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDF STILL HOLDING THE LINE • TDF could advance, but decided against it for strategic reasons. • Shiraro and Ademiti were captured by EDF and ENDF; but further advance is halted. • The 70,000 ENDF troops that crossed the Tekeze River at Dedebeit are halted. • General mobilization in Eritrea: Every Eritrean age up to 55 required to enlist.
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy fighting in May Kuhli, Zban Gedena, and Adi Awala (Adiabo), Rama, Tserona and Zalambessa (Northern border) • ENDF Eastern Command, Northwestern Command, and three commando divisions fighting side by side with EDF forces. • Eritrea deployed its entire army and reservists.
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ENDF and EDF fronts stretch from Tekeze (extreme northwest of Tigray) to Irob (extreme northeast of Tigray). • TDF recaptured Adi Arkay and ENDF and Amhara Forces retreated to Zarima.
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDF shelling Irob and Adigrat; ENDF rocket attacks on Shire, airstrikes Mekelle and Adi Daero (EDF?).
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDF attacked Tigray from Berhale (Afar). • EDF Divisions: 22, 30, 38, 61 and 67 were defeated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDF airstrike on Adi Kokob near Shire.
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eritrean army to be suffering from logistical challenge of maintaining troops in various locations.
October	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDF continues to successfully neutralize the large-scale offensive by ENDF-Amhara-EDF forces. • TDF killed and wounded over 93,000 ENDF-Amhara-EDF troops in 39 days. • Over 10,000 soldiers captured. • Large number of heavy weapons destroyed including 16 tanks; and large number of heavy weapons including 3 T-72 tanks, medium and light weapons and military communication radios captured.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated 750.000 ENDF troops and 250.000 TDF fighters involved in the operation.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offensive on Zalambessa, Rama and Tserona fronts continue with tens of thousands of EDF troops and mechanized units. • Indiscriminate artillery bombardments on Adigrat, Rama and other areas bordering Eritrea • Heavy fighting in Zalambessa. • Drone strike on Dongolat, near Mekelle. • EDF accused of attempting to exterminate the Kunama.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENDF and EDF captured Adi Daero and Adi kokob. • ENDF and EDF heavily bombed Shire and are advancing towards the town.
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy fighting continues on Tigray-Afar border near Berahle. • After failing in the Adiyabo, Zalambessa, and Rama fronts, ENDF-Amhara-EDF forces launched a new invasion in the southern and Adi-Arkay fronts.

17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF fired heavy artillery on Waja, Timuga, Ayer Marefeya and Alamata in Southern Tigray. ● Tigray welcomed the AU call for an immediate ceasefire; but vowed to continue to fight for survival. ● EDF and ENDF carpet bombing Tigrayn cities and towns. (Tewodros Adhanom). ● Leaflets warning people around Mekelle to leave residence and go to the 'safer' ENDF side. A similar warning to the one in November 2020.
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tigray Central Command called for all able-bodied Tigrayans to join TDF and all Tigrayans to continue to fight to ensure their existence. ● ENDF-EDF captured Shire, Alamata, and Korem. ● Fighting in Selehleka on the way from Shire to Axum. ● Drone strike on Axum killing and injuring many people.
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDF looted WFP stores for IDP in Shire. ● In Shire EDF and ENDF killed young people, and shipped looted goods to Eritrea.
20	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CRITICAL JUNCTURE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The invading force was doing everything under the sun to defeat the TDF and control all of Tigray, using an overwhelming force. ● However bravely TDF fought it could not defeat an endless Tsunami of arms and humans. ● It was the time for a bitter decision on the part of TDF. ● William Davison of ICG advised against TDF decision to launch Guerrilla War. He argued that EDF and ENDF may target civilians in an attempt to break the spirit of resistance. ● Some diplomat leaked that Ethiopia and Eritrea could be planning concentration camps to isolate TPLF from its support

	<p>base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PM Abiy’s calculation may be to control a depopulated Tigray as a trade corridor to Djibouti and Sudan ● General Tsadkan of TDF warns that the world is about to witness another genocide. Tigrayan forces refuse surrender as their survival as a people is at stake.
<p>21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ENDF and EDF converging on Axum. ● TDF released 9000 POWs. ● From 437 to 914 Tigrayans die of hunger every day (Nyssen). <p style="text-align: center;">Where western priority lies:</p> <p><i>“EU will not condemn Turkish sales of drones to Ethiopia because it would put drone sales to Ukraine up for discussion.”</i> Jan Nyssen</p>
<p>23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drone strike on Abiyi-Addi killing several people including children.
<p>24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDF and ENDF heavy weapons attack on densely populated towns and villages of Irob. ● Airstrikes targeting civilians in Adwa, Maykenetal, Werkamba and surrounding areas. Drone attack on Mekelle. ● ENDF and EDF occupied Aksum and moved to Adwa.
<p>25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDF control Adigrat and parts of the highway from Adigrat to Mekelle and to Adwa, and advancing along the road. ● ENDF and EDF forces captured Debre Genet and Legamity and are advancing towards May Kinetal.
PEACE TALKS IN SOUTH AFRICA STARTED	
<p>26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  TDF destroyed more than 40 EDF-ENDF armoured vehicles in Gendebta, Adwa.  ENDF-EDF Military vehicles destroyed near Almeda

Textile Factory in Adwa.	
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US supporting the talks by creating conducive environment. • Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and discussed the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities. • EU’s role in the peace process has become invisible.
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDF did not abandon any strategic terrain. • ENDF-EDF killed civilians in Adwa sheltered in churches and homes. <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #002060; color: white; padding: 5px;"><i>The success of the peace talks partly depends on the amount of pressure put on Eritrea.” Mark Lowcock</i></p>
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty-nine ENDF and EDF divisions were deployed aiming to control Hawzien. (TMC). • TDF inflicted huge damage on ENDF-EDF in Felafil. • TDF defeated 5 EDF infantry divisions, 2 ENDF infantry divisions, and one EDF mechanized division while moving from Adwa towards Mariam Shewito. • There were battles going on in Endabaguna, Selehleka, Wukro-Maray and other areas in northwestern Tigray. • EDF forces advanced towards Wukro from Berhale. • TDF held back repeated incursions by EDF on the Berahle front, especially via the Des’a Forest. • ENDF and Fano control the entire road from May Tsemri to Shire. • Intense fighting around Zalambessa where ENDF-EDF tried to break TDF defenses to control Adigrat. • ENDF/EDF tried to break TDF defenses to enter Adigrat. • TDF was holding the defense line while artillery shelling of Adigrat by EDF continued. • EDF soldiers continued to kill civilians and loot vehicles and household items during the negotiations.

- EDF-ENDF troops killed civilians in Waja, Lambadina, Korem, and Alamata.

November

2

- Huge number of IDPs into Mekelle from Adwa, Axum, Adigrat, Wukro, Korem, and Alamata.
- Airstrike on Endachiwa near Indaba Tshama (Central Tigray).
EDF officers told Isaias: *“War unwinnable. No troop morale”*

Mesfin Hagos:

EDF supports ENDF first by intelligence, then heavy weapon cover, then direct involvement”

PRETORIA AGREEMENT



Terms of Agreement

1. Permanent cessation of hostilities

- All forms of hostilities are forbidden.
- Both direct and indirect proxy wars
- Hate speech, propaganda, airstrikes or landmines
- Collaborating with hostile external force against one another.

2. Protection of civilians

- Protect civilians from human rights violations.
- Sexual and gender-based violence,
- Violence against children (including the use of child soldiers)
- Violence against women and girls
- Violence against the elderly

3. Humanitarian access

- Allow humanitarian aid into the country as soon as possible
- Reintegrate internally displaced persons and refugees reunite families
- Not misappropriate aid, and make sure it is actually used for humanitarian purposes

4. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

- Open communication channel should be created within 24 hours of signing the agreement
- Tigrayan rebel forces should demobilize and reintegrate and completely disarm within 30 days of signing.

5. Confidence-building measures

- The TPLF agreed to:
 - Respect the authority of the government.
 - Refrain from aiding and abetting, supporting, or collaborating with any armed or subversive group in any part of the country.
 - Respect the constitutional mandate of the Federal Government to send troops and security forces into Tigray.
 - Not conscript, train or deploy military forces, or to act in preparation for conflict.
 - Respect Ethiopian sovereignty, and to not undermine it, either on their own, or through relations with foreign powers.
 - Not force a change in the government through unconstitutional means.
- Meanwhile, the government agreed to:
 - Stop all military operations against “TPLF combatants.”
 - Restore basic, essential services to Tigray as soon as possible.
 - Stop designating the TPLF as a terrorist group.
 - Provide unhindered humanitarian access to Tigray.

6. International boundaries and federal facilities

- ENDF will be deployed along the international borders of Ethiopia to safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the country from foreign incursion and ensure that there will be no provocation or incursion from either side of the border.
- Federal authorities will also take full and effective control of all aviation space, airports and highways in Tigray.

7. Restoration of federal authority and Tigrayan representation

- Ethiopian federal government must be allowed to reestablish authority in the Tigray Region including in the capital of Mekelle.
- ENDF and other relevant Federal Institutions shall have an expeditious, smooth, peaceful, coordinated entry into the city.

- In exchange, government guaranteed that Tigray will be properly represented in government institutions, so as to not violate the Ethiopian constitution.

8. Transitional measures

- Within a week of the TPLF's terrorist designation being removed – but before elections are held – an inclusive "Regional Administration" should be established
- A week after the removal of the terrorist designation, both parties must engage in a political dialogue to find lasting solutions.
- Ethiopia also agreed to institute a transitional justice policy that will aim to be accountable and truthful, and give justice to victims.

The seemingly inevitable mutual elimination called for intervention from the international community. UN Secretary General (18 September 2022) warned that the Tigray War was: *“Spiraling out of control...violence and destruction have reached alarming levels; the social fabric is being ripped apart...Hostilities in Tigray must end now.”* USA heavily intervened and then the Pretoria Peace Agreement. Pretoria Peace Agreement brought relief to both sides; but also invited uproar from individuals and groups on both sides.

THE DOVE and THE GUN

THE PEACE PROCESS

From Peace Agreement to Transitional Government

European External Programme with Africa (EEPA-HORN), TGHAT, HRW, Tigray TV, DW International, Tigray Regional Government.

November 3

- 📄 Fighting continued.
- 📄 Airstrikes on Maichew, Adigrat, and Enticho

November 4

- ✉ Government of Tigray says: Peace Agreement will not be implemented if it harms the interests of the people of Tigray.
- ✉ Tigray signed because it believed that the Constitution is at the center of the agreement.
- ✉ Implementation of the agreement could face challenges because of the absence of formal accountability for the crimes committed during the war. Those who oversaw the crimes are still in positions of power.
- ✉ Peace agreement does not directly address about the status of Western Tigray.
- ✉ There is a need for external monitoring partners.
- ✉ Full access to International Commission of Human Rights Experts.
- ✉ The peace agreement does not constrain Eritrea.
- ✉ Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed contradicted by his statement implying it was unilateral: *“Ethiopia’s peace proposal has been accepted 100%”*.

-
- 📄 Airstrike in Kilte Awulaelo.
 - 📄 Heavy artillery attacks on civilians in Maichew (Southern Tigray)
 - 📄 Heavy fighting continued.
 - EDF attacking TDF defense lines in Zalambessa.
 - Heavy battles in Edaga Arbi and Nebelet (Central Tigray).
 - Heavy fighting in Southern Tigray.

November 7

- ✉ Nairobi meeting to work out the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement
- ✉ Destruction of infrastructure in Tigray valued at around 20 billion US dollars.
- ✉ GSTS welcomed the Agreement but objected to the disarming of TDF on the ground that the security of the people of Tigray is of utmost importance.

November 8

Eritrea called on Amhara regional government to reject the Peace Agreement as against the interest of Amhara.

November 9

- ✉ Tigray insists that Eritrean and Amhara troops must leave Tigray before disarmament begins.
- ✉ Ethiopia insists that heavy arms must be surrendered first, then ENDF will take charge of security and borders, and then the Eritrean and Amhara forces will leave Tigray.
- ✉ Fano militia denounced the Peace Agreement as against the interest of Amhara because it is based on the Constitution.
- ✉ National Movement of Amhara says Peace Agreement failed to recognize Amhara claims to Welkait and Raya.

- 📖 EDF shelled Edaga Arbi, Nebelet and surrounding areas near Adwa.
- 📖 EDF mass killings in Kerseber
- 📖 TDF and ENDF soldiers exchanging food and cigarettes on the front line.
- 📖 EDF blocked hundreds of buses returning from Eritrea to Ethiopia in Teseney.
- 📖 TDF and EDF fighting continue around Zalambessa and Edaga-Arbi
- 📖 EDF Shelling Adigrat and residents flee to the surrounding mountains.

November 10

- 📅 EDF patrolling road from Endabaguna-Shire-Adwa-May Kinetal.
- 📅 EDF fighting TDF around Adwa.
- 📅 EDF large scale looting, killing, and destruction in many areas of Tigray.

Tigray Independence Party called for TPLF to be removed from political life of Tigray because TPLF signed the agreement without broader consultation with other parties and the people of Tigray.

- ✉️ ENDF soldiers burying their dead in areas controlled by the TDF upon mutual agreement.
- ✉️ WHO warns that a week after the Agreement no food and medical aid is coming into Tigray.

November 14

- 📅 EDF show no signs of leaving Tigray.
- 📅 The Ethiopian National Disaster Risk Management Commission announced that all humanitarian corridors into Tigray have been opened. However, aid organizations were still waiting for permission.
- 📅 ENDF and federal police arresting people in Shire.
- 📅 ENDF house to house looting in Shire and Axum.
- 📅 EDF still looting and killing especially in Sheraro

November 15

- ✉️ AU declined to recognize the government of Tigray in the Pretoria agreement, pressurizing Tigray delegation into signing in the name of TPLF.
- ✉️ TPLF signed to prevent the failure of the achievement of the Cessation of Hostilities.
- ✉️ Right to self-determination, will be addressed through political dialogue.
- ✉️ Eritrea the spoiler of the Agreement working with Demhit (anti-TPLF Tigrayan armed group in Eritrea and with Fano Militia.
- ✉️ Although aid started to arrive much more is expected.
- 📅 Amhara officials relocated 3.000 Tigrayan men from concentration camps in Western Tigray to an unknown location.

November 16

- ✉ Salsay Weyane Tigray (SWT) said: Agreement does not represent the interests of the people of Tigray, does not address the root causes of the conflict, and the Party will continue to struggle to achieve referendum-based independence and territorial integrity of Tigray, and holding perpetrators of crimes accountable.
- ✉ The National Congress of Great Tigray (NCG) says: Agreement fails to ensure sustainable peace but urges Tigrayans to maximally use the opportunities of the agreement.
- ✉ Ethiopia Electric Power (EEP) repairing power lines in Humera and Sheraro.
- ✉ A test flight by the ICRC in Shire.
- ✉ Convoy has reached Mai Tsemri.

🚩 Amhara Fano militia sent to the Shire, Aksum, and Adwa to rape, kill and loot religious and cultural heritage.

November 17

- ✉ Government of Tigray briefing the civilian administration and TDF leadership at all levels on the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and Nairobi declaration of modalities.
- ✉ No indications that neither EDF nor Fano are leaving Tigray.

🚩 No further aid has arrived to Tigray government-controlled areas of Tigray after the arrival of three trucks this week.

November 18

Pretoria Agreement can be attributed to the use of starvation by the Abiy regime, forcing the Tigray leadership to surrender (Alex de Waal-WPF)

- ✉ Only two trucks of the ICRC have arrived in the Tigray capital.
- ↓ EDF continues to kill civilians, looting and destroying property.

November 21

- ↓ Eritrea deploying more troops into Tigray after the Agreement.

November 22

- ↳ Adigrat hosts over 142, 000 IDPs.
- ↳ IDPs continue to arrive from Gulomekeda, Zalambessa, Erob, and Ganta-Afeshum.
- ↳ IDPs are also arriving from the Central and North Western zones of Tigray.
- ↳ EDF located only 7 kilometers north of Adigrat.

November 23

- ✉ TDF fighters briefed on disarmament protocols and disengagement.
- ✉ Tigray's leaders are wavering on the Agreement because they feel it is one sided: e.g. Federal slowing down of aid flows to Tigray.
- ✉ Tigray seeks Addis Ababa to break with Asmara and Amhara.

November 24

- ↳ EDF continues to kill, loot and destroy in various parts of Eastern Tigray.

November 28

- ✉ Power substations are being repaired here and there: Shire, Axum, and Adwa.

November 29

Eritrean officials shuttling to Somalia and Ethiopia could indicate an attempt to create a regional “defensive alliance” aimed to provide rationale for keeping Eritrean troops inside of Ethiopia.

- ↳ EDF abducting youth to Eritrea for forced labor and sexual slavery.
- ↳ Aid reaching Tigray is still not enough to meet the needs: 5 million people remain in need of food aid.

Officials say no timeline for the restoration of services in Tigray!?

November 30

- ✉ Federal government is slow to fulfil its obligations per the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.
- ✉ Biden administration called for the government of Ethiopia to restore telecommunications to Tigray.
- ✉ Major maintenance of power transmitting lines in Humera, Shire, Axum and Adwa.

- 📌 Fighting continues in Tigray against EDF.
- 📌 In two weeks' time over 600 people killed in Mai Abai, 1,300 killed in Adiabo, and 1,000 killed in Asgede Tsimbla. 2,500 houses were burned in Adi Daero and surrounding areas by EDF.

December 1

- 📌 EDF prevented humanitarian staff from reaching Mekelle. Adwa, Axum, and Shire.
- 📌 EDF stole 1,080 animals from Asgede Tsimbla.

December 2

- ✉️ Tigray president briefed religious and civil society leaders.
- ✉️ TDF disengaged and repositioned from the front lines of May Kintal, Zalambesa, Nebelet, Chercher, Kukufto, Hugumbirda, Beriteklay and Abergele.
- 📌 Eritrean troops have continued to kill civilians and widespread loot in Tigray.

December 5

- 📌 EDF killed around 60 civilians in Igela, Central Tigray.

December 6

- 📌 EDF 80-90 trucks of troops moved from Eritrea Sheraro towards Axum and Adwa.
- 📌 EDF and Fano continue to murder, kidnap, loot and burning in the Central Zone of Tigray.

December 7

- ✉️ Power and telephone service returned to Mekelle but it is not satisfactory.
- 📌 Amhara forces attempting to recruit in Western Tigray.

December 8

- ✉️ People in Tigray are still dying due to shortage of medical supplies even after the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.
- ✉️ The Ethiopian National Disaster Risk Management Commission claims the Ethiopian Government and partner organizations provided 95% of the food needed in Tigray; whereas Tigray

Emergency Coordination Center reported that 76% of the target population had yet to be reached.

December 9

📄 EDF on a killing spree in Nebelet.

ENDF soldiers' response is irresponsible: "It is beyond our capacity; we can only alert you about the EDF coming so that you can escape."

December 15

✉ The reality on the ground is the continuation of the siege.

December 16

📄 EDF and Amhara troops killed more than 550 civilians and raped an unknown number of women in May Kinetal, Hahayle, Embasneiti, Ahferom, Enticho, Egela, Adwa, Ahsa'a, Rama, and Adi Arbaete in Central Zone.

December 19

- 📄 Regional armed forces from Amhara, SNNP, Benishangul, and Gambella are present in all areas from which TDF withdrew.
- 📄 All towns between Humera, Adi Goshu, May-Kadra, and Adi-Remets are destroyed during the past two weeks.
- 📄 Amhara forces are destroying houses preventing the population from returning.
- 📄 People displaced from Western Tigray are being hunted down and killed from camps in Tselemti, Asgede, Axum, and Adwa.
- 📄 Aid crossing from Gondar into Tigray is sold before reaching target.
- 📄 ENDF control roads, EDF controls off-road between May-Kinetal and Nebelet. This is meant for long-term occupation.
- 📄 No signs of restoration of banking services and internet.
- 📄 More than 100.000 newly displaced people arrived from border areas to Adigrat.

Starvation as a weapon of war continues in Tigray

Plausible Conspiracy Theories

- 📄 Federal Government internally desires Western Tigray to remain under Amhara because Tigray will remain encircled forever.

- ✘ Unequal distribution of aid to undermine Tigray authorities as if they are depriving their people of basic needs.

December 20

- ✉ According to Tigray Regional Emergency Center 58% of those in need have yet to be reached and 63% of food needed is physically available in the area.
- ✉ Outrage at Ethiopian Federal government for calling for the termination of the mandate of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE).

December 22

- ✉ Banks reopened in Shire allow no cash withdrawals but only deposits and overseas cash transfers.
- 📄 EDF continued to block aid delivery in Tigray and is still committing atrocities.

December 23

- 📄 Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki strongly rejects the Peace Deal and vows to start new war in collaboration with Amhara militias.
- Services and humanitarian aid, critical to the survival of Tigrayans, have yet to be restored and fully allowed in by Ethiopian authorities.
- ✉ Federal government has not yet allocated a budget to pay the salaries of the over 250.000 regional and federal civil servants in Tigray.

December 26

- ✉ Speaker of the Ethiopian parliament travelled to Mekelle with his team to oversee the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

December 27

- 📄 Erob, Ganta Afeshum, Gulo Mekeda, Zalambesa, Adet, Adwa, Aheferom, Ahsea, Chila, Edaga Arbi, Egela, Emba Sienti, Endafelasi, Enticho, Rama, Asgede, and Zana reported unreachable.

December 28
✉ Tigray officials asked PM Abiy’s government ensures compliance with the terms of the peace and remove foreign and non-federal forces still present in Tigray.
December 29
Some of the technicians repairing bank networks, communication systems and power lines in Tigray are suspected of being trainees of Eritrean intelligence.
2023 2023 2023 2023
January 4
✉ TPLF handed over heavy weapons to ENDF. ✉ Safeguarding the security of Tigray will be a joint responsibility of ENDF and TDF ✉ TPLF will deploy selected and trained forces to protect Tigray.
January 5
📄 EDF and Fano in Shire kidnapping people returning from banks and arriving at airport and rob their money. ✉ Ethiopian government wants to exploit remittances sent through reopened banks in Tigray.
January 9
✉ Ethiopia Airlines has imposed restrictions on passengers travelling from and to Mekelle.
January 10
TDF handed over heavy weapons to ENDF.
📄 EDF setting up and operating businesses in the Central Zone of Tigray: transport and trade in May Kinetal. 📄 Eritrean ID distributed in some areas of northern Tigray. 📄 EDF looted thousands of domestic animals from Enguya, in Egela and Ziban-Guiyla.
January 13
✉ Amhara Special Forces withdrew from Shire. Eritrean troops are still present in Tigray including in Shire and Axum.

Report came out: The Tigray War made 18,000 hectares of cultivated land and 81% of fruit nurseries and 70% of vegetable farms unusable. More than 40% of the 1.9 million draft oxen were stolen or slaughtered, more than 90% of the 1,990 farm tractors were stolen, and 176 of the 198 rural veterinary clinics were looted or destroyed.

January 16

- 📄 EDF kidnapped 50 young Tigrayans around Adwa and their whereabouts is unknown. (Wurayna)

January 16

- ✉ Expert team studying reconstruction needs of industries damaged by the conflict in Tigray.

January 18

- ✉ Mesebo Cement Factory resumed production.

January 20

- 📄 EDF and ENDF digging up corpses from Axum airport and relocating them to unknown places.

Demeke Zewdu said: "If more than 1 million Tigray people who were displaced from Western Tigray return home we will lose Western Tigray. So we will not allow them to return to their place."

January 23

- 📄 EDF still in Shire and Adwa.
- ✉ EDF withdrawal was expected simultaneously with the handover of heavy weapons from Tigray combatants to the ENDF.
- 📄 Since Pretoria agreement Amhara troops raped 211 women, killed 2116 people, injured 298, and kidnapped 680 people in North Western Zone of Tigray.

January 24

- ✉ No significant step has been taken to return IDPs home.

January 25

- 📄 EDF blocking humanitarian aid to Tahtay Adiabo.
- 📄 EDF still present in Aksum, Sheraro, and Adwa.

January 26

Estimate about death in Tigray: 518,000 (lower estimate 311,000 and upper estimate 808,000); 10% due to massacres, bomb impacts, and other forms of killings; 30% due to the total collapse of the healthcare system; and 60% due to famine; Josep Borrell's estimate of 800,000 deaths plausible. (Nyssen).

January 30

📖 EDF still in Tigray although reported as “withdrew”.

New proxy Cold War conflict on the African continent:

- Abiy Ahmed likely forming new alliances with Sudan to decrease the power of Eritrea and Amhara.
- Isaias is forming alliances with Russia.

📖 EDF and Amhara Forces present in the entire Western Zone and Adi Awala and Sheraro in the Northwestern Zone of Tigray.

📖 EDF are present in Gerhu Sirnay, Adi Shiquano, Edaga Rebut in the Central Zone of Tigray and in Gulo Mekeda and Irob in the Eastern Zone of Tigray.

✉ Land transport soon to start to Mekelle, Axum, and Shire.

✉ Cross border trade has also started with Tigray.

January 31

📖 Amhara troops continue to occupy Adi Goshu, Ketema Nigus, Embagala, and the entire Western Zone of Tigray.

📖 Amhara troops are also occupying parts of Northwestern Zone of Tigray: Emba Madre, May Tsebri, Tsaeda Kerni, Adi Woseney, May Dagusha, May Teklit, Serako, Sekota Silassie, May Lomin, Michara, Babeko, Bar Geza, Fiyel Wuha.

📖 Amhara troops also occupies Alamata and areas around Korem.

February 2

📖 More than 300 trucks loaded with grain-related goods transported from Addis Ababa to Tigray were stopped by Amhara authorities and Fano in North Wello; charging 20,000 birr per truck.

📖 The 300 trucks were ordered to return to Addis Ababa after four days of roadblock.

✉ Tigray still remains shut off from the internet and digital services.

Those who got access are struggling with low speed.
February 3
✉ Ethiopia’s proposal to defund the ICHREE was rejected by majority vote.
February 7
✉ The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) has reinstated full banking services in its branches across Tigray.
February 10
🚫 The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church (EOTC) sent letters to five Archbishops of Tigray; but Tigray Orthodox Church said its position remains unchanged.
February 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚫 EDF are manning checkpoints and blocking roads. 🚫 EDF actively evicting residents, digging trenches, and arming explosive devices. 🚫 EDF still in Gulomakeda, Eastern Zone. 🚫 EDF fired at humanitarian workers. <p>Tigray Independence Party, Salsay Weyane Tigray, and the National Congress for Greater Tigray demanded for representation in the recently announced Transitional government establishing committee.</p>
February 20
GSTS called for a wider inclusivity in the process of establishing a Transitional Administration for Tigray.
March 1
✉ Three Tigray-based opposition parties have sent a letter to the representatives of 32 countries, calling them to give attention to “Tigray genocide”.
March 2
✉ Formation of the Transitional Government delayed due to internal differences and slow responses from the Federal Government.
March 13

- ✉ Eritrea training Amhara troops and deploying them in Addis Ababa in secret.

March 14

- ✉ Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed does not want Debretsion Gebremichael to stay on as the regional president of Tigray and blames him for starting the war.
- ✉ A majority of people on the streets of Mekelle expressed support for Debretsion.
- ✉ Traders and rich persons withdrew all their money in cash in the two weeks after 5 billion birr was sent to the banks in Tigray.

March 15

- ✉ US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Ethiopia.

March 20

- ✉ TPLF Central Committee nominated Getachew Reda to be the president of the Transitional Regional Administration

March 22

The House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia removed the designation of terrorist organization from the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

March 23

Council of Ministers FDRE approved a regulation to establish the "Tigray inclusive Transitional government" and Abiy Ahmed confirmed Getachew Reda as the President of the Regional Transitional Government.

EPILOGUE

“AFTER A LONG HOPELESS WAR PEOPLE WILL SETTLE FOR PEACE AT ALMOST ANY PRICE”

Salman Rushdie

PRO-ET-CONTRA PRETORIA

The Pretoria Peace Agreement invited both hope and anger. Hope for those who endured unimaginable horrors and anger for those who were determined to perpetuate the horrors. There were also sick ‘spectators’ who considered the War as a multiple-series action movie and were saddened by the interruption of their pleasure. Still others were making fortune from loots and bribes. The vested interest of big business had been escalating the War beyond what can be explained by political reasoning alone. Most of those who populated party leadership positions and cabinet posts, at all levels of the power hierarchy by war-mongering and nepotism rather than by meritocracy, felt the end of the War would mark the end of their privileges.

By a combination of Divine Intervention, wisdom of the leaders of Tigray, and USA’s timely intervention Pretoria Agreement came at a time when the last invasion of Tigray was taking a doomsday scenario. Great men warned of a catastrophe that the world must stop before it happens in Tigray: Antonio Guterres, William Davidson, Tsadkan Gebretensay, and Tewodros Adhanom. The guns by and large fell silent; but the spoilers continued to push the patience of the people of Tigray to its limits. The aftermath turned

out to be more complex than the War itself. There was a great deal of ambivalence in Tigray about the ‘half water and half fire’ nature of the peace process.

Eritrean forces and Amhara militia, whose political survival lies squarely on the continuation of the War, engaged in widespread extrajudicial killings of civilians, raping of women and girls, and looting of property almost all over Tigray. Politicians from Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar, who rejected the peace deal or those who wanted the deal to work in their favor are busy provoking Tigray leaders into abandoning the peace process out of frustration by the persistent propaganda offensive directed at them. Foot dragging in the resumption of services and the intermittence of the flow of humanitarian aid put the people of Tigray between hope and despair. It is hard to live in a real war; but it is equally painful to remain in a state of peace with a mood of war and in a state of freedom in a mood of siege.

REALIGNMENT OF ACTORS IN THE ALLIED BLOCK

Side switching is a prominent feature of many civil wars. Shifts in alignment have far-reaching consequences, influencing key outcomes such as civil war duration and termination, military effectiveness, levels of civilian victimization, and state-building prospects (Seymour, 2014). The Pretoria Agreement has caused significant realignment of actors especially on the Ethiopia-Amhara-Eritrea side. The realignment is more intensified with the removal of TPLF from the terrorist list by the House of Peoples Representatives of FDRE. The crack within the main Abiy-Isaias block first appeared soon after the withdrawal of ENDF from Mekelle with the declaration of Abiy’s unilateral truce in July 2021. Isaias strengthened the link with the Fano trying to isolate Abiy. In fact the

rift was not deep enough to significantly affect the alliance. By the end of July 2022 ENDF and EDF launched final onslaught on Tigray.

The alliance took an unprecedented turn in which ENDF and its commanders were moved to Eritrea and came under the command of Eritrean Generals. The partnership with Eritrea supposed to be based on equality of decision making disappeared. Isaias rejected the Pretoria Agreement and called for the Fano-Amhara to come to his side and put pressure on Abiy for his alleged collaboration with TPLF. Fano-Amhara and the entire Amhara political elite rose against Abiy Ahmed and continued to threaten to remove him. The chasm created between Amhara and the Prime Minister after the Pretoria Agreement is not a personal matter for Abiy Ahmed. It is a manifestation of Oromo-Amhara confrontation. The two dominant ethnic groups had in a marriage of convenience allied against Tigray by creating the ‘Oromara’ Block.

Fig. 44 Alliance built on shaky ground



Federal Government is dominated by the Oromo Prosperity Party, which shares power with its ally the Amhara Chapter of the Prosperity Party. With the Peace Agreement the Amhara-Oromo Prosperity bond was shattered and infighting in the party reached a

point where Prosperity Party could come to an end as an amorphous political group. While the two component chapters of the Prosperity Party squabbled Amhara Extremists in the opposition took the opportunity to get rid of Abiy Ahmed, who they believe leads ‘Oromo domination’ of Ethiopian politics. The Amhara extremists are not fighting Oromo dominance as defenders of the virtues of democracy. They are fighting to change Oromo domination to Amhara domination; all that in the name of ‘saving Ethiopia from destruction’. For the Amhara extremists Oromo or Tigray in power at Arat Kilo is a ‘threat to the existence of Ethiopia’. So, alliance between the two must be stopped.

Fig. 45 Proxy Confrontation? Oromo and Amhara Archbishops



The most lethal weapon Amhara extremist used against Abiy Ahmed, by extension on Oromo politics, has been the Ethiopian Orthodox Church leadership. Historically, the Church has spearheaded and/or facilitated the political domination of the Amhara elite. The aftermath of the Peace Deal saw the worst of the confrontation within the allies against Tigray: Abiy and the EOTC. When the disgruntled Oromo Archbishops came to the end of their patience about the domination of Amhara ethnicity in the Synod,

they took the Church canons into their own hands and appointed bishops without Synod approval. This action enraged the EOTC Synod and the latter rushed to excommunicate the Archbishops and expectedly put the blame on Abiy Ahmed and Oromia political leadership. EOTC mobilized its zealous followers and put the Federal Government on its head. On the 9th of February 2023 allAfrica.com captured the gravity of the collision between Federal Government and its staunch former ally in the Tigray War: Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church EOTC Synod.

“In a sign of a deepening fracture between the government and the EOTC Holy Synod the government claimed it was in possession of intelligence about a group that wanted to seize the Church's schism as an opportunity to shake the government with armed violence. The Holy Synod responded defiantly that regardless of a ban on unauthorized rallies, its plan to conduct nationwide demonstrations would go ahead as scheduled.”

However, the Holy Synod of EOTC released a statement refuting the Prime Minister's position on the Church. According to All Africa Abiy had earlier called on leaders of the church to resolve their differences through dialogue and Abiy remarked that:

“Religious institutions should cleanse their insides from politics, thievery and racism, which are contrary to the principles and values of religion.”

What started with the intra-EOTC feud flared into an all-out political confrontation between Amhara and Oromo. Amhara extremists in the diaspora held conventions or individually issued provocative statements against Oromos. Oromo politicians felt the threat coming from their former ally against TPLF and used the Pretoria Peace Deal as an opportunity to forge an alliance with TPLF and Tigray. The realignment is even more dramatic than the

initial alignment. The initial alignment only meant that the arch rivals turned allies had buried their hatchets in a shallow grave in order to pool their capacities to destroy Tigray: a common enemy. It was clear that after dealing with Tigray they were destined to turn against each other.

Fig. 46 ‘Bolt from the Blues’: Abiy-Tigray Rendezvous Alarms Amhara (4 February 2023. Addis Standards)



What aroused the fury of the Amhara elite is because the Pretoria Agreement implied that Amhara forces must evacuate from Western and Southern Tigray. The claim of almost a third of the territory of Tigray by the Amhara has been one of the key structural causes of the war. Abiy is being accused of favoring Tigray by returning the annexed territories of Tigray by the Amhara. A more fundamental issue related to the Pretoria Agreement which disadvantages the Amhara is the freedom of action in Ethiopian politics the Deal provided for Tigray. The initially conceived postwar scenario, painted by Amhara politicians, was: Tigray weakened or eliminated and out from Ethiopian politics; Oromia weakened by war without Tigray to help; then Amhara would get a level field to ban the Federal Constitution, restore the unitary system and/or the former Imperial Era in Ethiopia without any strong enough opposition.

On 2 January 2023 Bertelsmann Stiftung wrote: *“Isaias previously used foreign forces to threaten neighboring leaders with the use of*

force. Eritrea has begun training militia from Amhara.” For Isaias’s ambition in the Horn of Africa he first tried to use Federal Ethiopia as a bridge. When he started feeling that the strategy may be failing by the refusal of Abiy Ahmed to continue the War in Tigray he switched his tactics. By continuing the War Isaias can hit three birds with one stone: Weaken Tigray and remove it from being a threat to his ambitions in Ethiopia; weaken Abiy in the Tigray war and create easy access for Eritrea to control Ethiopia with greater ease; and controlling Ethiopia enables him to be the master of the Horn of Africa.

Fig. 47 Eritrea’s Amhara Proxies in Ethiopia.



Abiy Ahmed is likely forming new alliances with Sudan to decrease the power of Eritrea and Amhara; while Isaias is seeking a possible replacement for Abiy in Kenya and Somalia. Joining the EGAD would give Isaias a firmer grip of the regional body and by extension of the entire Horn of Africa region and beyond. The rapprochement of Abiy and TPLF, with USA sidelining Isaias, is pushing him further away to Russia. This would invite superpower rivalry in the Region.

Two months after the Pretoria Agreement Abiy Ahmed lost a key internal ally (Africa News 17 January 2023). The Chief Justice

Meaza Ashenafi was either fired or forced to resign allegedly accused by the Prime Minister of behaving like an activist. Meaza had been pushing for the invasion of Tigray and has a clear political skew towards Amhara supremacist politics. The most earth shaking change in the actor alliance of the Abiy camp is the prime mover Andargachew Tsegie who claims to have provided the ‘road map’ to Abiy Ahmed. He was a key link who facilitated the Ethiopia-Eritrea alliance against Tigray. On 2 March 2023 Andargachew Tsegie stunned his viewers on Abbay Media. He was complaining about being stopped from joining the celebration of the 127th Adwa Victory Day held in the Meskel Square, Addis Ababa. This is clear evidence that he has lost his position as a key individual actor on the Federal Government side and a key proxy of Eritrea in Ethiopia.

It was not only Andargachew who lost favor with Abiy Ahmed. His political twin holding a key position in the Abiy Cabinet is also not in good terms with Abiy Ahmed. Professor Birhanu Nega is Chairperson of the EZEMA: a political replica of the Prosperity Party posing as opposition party. His hatred for whatever is Tigrayan is pathological. He ‘fell ill’ when the Pretoria Agreement was signed and reached crisis level when the terrorist designation was removed from TPLF in Parliament. His and his party’s madness at the decision was shared by another right-wing nationalist party: The National Movement of Amhara (NAMA).

Reporter, on 25 March 2023, quoted statements from EZEMA and NAMA denouncing the decision of the House of Peoples Representatives to delist TPLF from terrorist designation. Both EZEMA and NAMA are among the few opposition parties that are working with the incumbent (Prosperity Party). Apart from having MPs in the House, some leaders of EZEMA and NAMA are also

given ministerial positions in Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s cabinet. Here is EZEMA and NAMA statement:

“TPLF is still a threat to the country and that the decision taken by the government came too early; it did not fully disarm; ENDF did not fully overtake the Tigray region; TPLF officials who launched the war were not held accountable; TPLF is leading the Tigray Transitional Administration exclusively; TPLF should be banned legally; The decision to delist it is giving the TPLF another chance to become a national threat again,”

NAMA was not limited to releasing a press statement alone. On 28 March 2023 in Question and Answer session of Parliament Christian Tadelle- NAMA Parliamentarian- challenged the Prime Minister.

Fig. 48 Pretoria turned former allies into bitter enemies



“The objective realities these days are that the key threat to the security of citizens and the sovereignty of the Country is the government you are leading. You in theory promise that Ethiopia will never be destroyed, while in practice Ethiopia and Ethiopians are being demolished by your government. Aren’t you planning to resign and be part of the solution? Are you ready to take accountability for the crimes against humanity committed, the genocide, ethnic cleansing and ethnic profiling?”

“WE CAN’T LIVE WITH THOSE WHO MASSARED US”

Worse than what the EOTC did to help destroy Tigray it tried to cover up and turn the table on the Tigray Orthodox Church for the ‘illegal’ establishment of a Church Authority independent from the Holy Synod headquartered in Addis Ababa. The EOTC Synod is cleverly addressing the outcome rather than the cause for the schism. It conveniently shifted the burden of blame, for its ‘failure to denounce the violence’, to politicians and a ‘political conspiracy’. The EOTC Synod is the home of a few smart bishop-cum-politicians who can outwit their opponents and go stark free with their ungodly deeds.

Fig. 49 Evasive words and actions of the EOTC Synod on Tigray



Taking the opportunity, brought by the Pretoria Agreement in which some uneasy peace has prevailed between Ethiopia and Tigray, the EOTC is quick to capitalize on the peace and re-impose its authority on the Tigray Church. The latter had declared its autonomy during the War as “Menbere Selama Tigray Orthodox Church”. On 10 February 2023, three months after the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, Addis Standard reports, the EOTC Synod Secretariat

sent letters to five Tigray Archbishops seeking ‘reconciliation’ and blaming ‘political conspiracy’ for rift. Abuna Petros, head of the Secretariat, acted with a great deal of irresponsibility and cold heart when dealing with a matter related to Tigray in which nearly a million lives perished and entire livelihoods destroyed. Although he knows what terrible role himself and other members of the Synod played to help realize the death and destruction in Tigray he sent the letters to the Archbishops separately as if the recipients were misbehaving kids. As if supporting and justifying the destructive war was not enough the Secretary was trying to use some trick left in his toolkit to divide the Archbishops of Tigray:

“The unnecessary war among brothers, which was caused by political problem, heavy loss of life and destruction of properties have occurred and it is known to the world. Despite being saddened by the problem during the time, the Synod failed to express its grief due to political conspiracy. No matter how late it might be, we will do whatever necessary after our meeting. Politicians shouldn’t separate the Ethiopian Orthodox Church from the Tigray people, the source of the religion and its doctrine. As a result, it is necessary to leave behind the mistakes committed in the past and serve our people and our Church as before.”

EOTC not only turned a blind eye to so much brutalities in Tigray on fellow believers of the Orthodox Church but also ill-treated the Tigray-born Patriarch, supported the War with blessings and hate speech motivating Ethiopians to kill and destroy in Tigray. Followers of the Orthodox Christian Church in Tigray were embittered by the role the EOTC leadership played against them and had distanced themselves from them: *“We can’t live with those who massacred us”* (Addis Standards 10 February 2023):

“Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church (TOTC), which came into existence with the blood of the Tigray people, is non-negotiable, and is

not up for sale. Nothing will be changed from our side. We trust, like, and respect” the Patriarch of EOTC, His Holiness Abune Mathias, but with regard to the letter, it is known that we have previously said our relationship is severed; we said we have cut the rope. Whatever is written, we will respond, but our aim is one, which is to march forward. Our stand is the same; we are living by respecting the dignity of the Patriarch. However, Menbere Selama can only be strengthened, not weakened, from here onward. The position of all the four Archbishops in Tigray is the same.”

In the meantime, the Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church (TOTC) put its autonomy into practice and appointed Archbishops for its overseas Diocese. This action, on top of the negative reaction to the letters from the Synod to the four Archbishops of Tigray, infuriated the EOTC Synod. Now the EOTC is crying foul about Church Canons being violated instead of crying about the murdered priests, destroyed churches and monasteries, and the violation of Axum, the original seat of the EOTC Synod. While the Tigray Church is the offended party the EOTC Synod is unashamedly pointing its finger at Tigray as the offender. The reaction of the EOTC Secretariat to the reply by the TOTC was still defiant and incriminating.

Fig. 50 Abuna Petros can't feel the pain in Tigray from his paradise



“The religious leaders in the Tigray region created a new illegal regional structure called ‘Menbere Selama Tigray Archdiocese Office’ in a way that violates the institutional unity and existing structural organization of our church. Religious leaders in Tigray appointed bishops for dioceses abroad against what is clearly stipulated in the church’s constitution, which dictates bishops can be appointed in all dioceses by the decision of the plenary session of the Holy Synod and the signature of His Holiness the Patriarch. While His Holiness the Patriarch is still in office and the Synod’s unity is strong, the religious leaders in the Tigray region deliberately violated the canonical and administrative procedures of the Church by appointing bishops for dioceses abroad without the Holy Synod’s decision and without the Holy Patriarch’s signature. In the great Diocese of Tigray, which is the foundation of faith and history, such a structure that endangers our church and saddens all the followers of the faith in the world is a behavior that is not suitable for the historical people and scholars of Tigray. The newly established Transitional Regional Administration (TRA) of Tigray should play its role in stopping the organizational structure that violates the institutional unity and the canon of the religion to maintain the institutional unity of our church. We call on all believers in the Tigray Region to play a part in prayers and vows to stop the canonical violations and illegal organization, just as you have been steadfast in prayers and vows, so that the challenge that has happened to our church can be removed and its unity to remain strong.”(March 24, 2023. Addis Standards)

EOTC is denying what it did to help destroy Tigray, it is only deliberately focused on the formation of a separate Church council in Tigray as a ‘violation’ of Church Canons. EOTC’s dangerously evasive gesture to avoid embarrassment after failure would only alienate the Tigray Church much further and consolidate its separation. The EOTC Synod Secretariat is trying to trivialize the situation as arising from the difficulties of budget transfer to the Tigray Church due to the War. It is belittling Tigray Church leaders as if they acted out of anger motivated by the lack of finance.

Wound cannot heal if it is constantly pricked by nail. EOTC cannot succeed to bring the Tigray Diocese under its control by carelessly scratching its huge wound. It is too much and too late for apologies.

TIGRAY'S DIFFICULT PEACE

The most challenging turn of events in Post Pretoria Tigray came from the least expected source: within itself. Members and leaders of the opposition parties in Tigray have partly participated in the resistance. Even during the resistance they had become a source of discomfort for TPLF on matters pertaining to who and how the war of resistance should be led. Since before the War opposition parties demanded for the total removal of TPLF not as such for a power sharing scheme. The demand was not only unfair but also dangerous in a time when even small cracks in the ranks of the resistance were being translated into military advantage through a divisive propaganda campaign by the enemies of the resistance.

On the eve of the War, and also after the resistance started, opposition parties of Tigray were divided into a least three groups: those that support and were directly involved in the resistance (Home-based SWT, Baitona, and TIP), those that preferred to remain neutral (Arena-Addis Ababa) and those who supported the invasion and participated in the political facet of the War (PP-Tigray and TDP-Addis Ababa). Initially, it was the home-based opposition parties that started to lash out at TPLF for signing the Pretoria Agreement as a Party rather than as Tigray Government. Since what the parties wanted was the removal of TPLF at any cost, interviews and press briefings lacked euphemism and threatened to derail the peace process by dividing the ranks of politicians in Tigray to the satisfaction of the anti-Tigray political groups and individuals.

The dangerous division in Tigray allowed Amhara and Eritrea forces to roam Tigray unhindered to kill, rape, and loot. Armed robbery and other forms of attack inside the major cities in Tigray went out of control. Local administration at all levels went terribly wrong; engaged in bad governance and tampering with humanitarian aid. Traders in the Cities of Tigray became unsympathetic to the plight of fellow Tigrayans making huge profits by inflating prices in collaboration with dealers outside Tigray. Traders were behaving like ‘opportunistic infections that kill HIV-positive patients’. A Tigrayan singer in one of his recent songs used the pumpkin metaphor to describe the “un-Tigrayan” traders’ manipulation of the market of basic necessities.

What made the ill-timed political squabble unacceptable was the fact that there were hundreds of thousands of IDPs and tens of thousands of refugees waiting to be returned home, hundreds of thousands of children out of school, and hundreds of thousands of public servants without salaries, to attend to. The off-Tigray opposition parties stationed in Addis Ababa were emboldened by the riotous tumult in Tigray politics. Emerging from their hideouts they claimed positions in the transitional government in Tigray. In a united Tigray the parties based in Addis Ababa were considered as traitors. Ethiopia Insight on 1 March 2023 captured a clear picture of the Post-Pretoria political turmoil in Tigray as follows:

“The tension between the TPLF and Tigrayan opposition over the formation of the transitional government is approaching boiling point. The opposition is, arguably, seeking a greater role in the IRA than their political clout warrants. However, a power-sharing arrangement that reflects the diversity of Tigray’s political landscape is crucial. Unless Tigrayan scholars and the business community take the initiative to help broker a compromise, tensions between the TPLF and opposition parties may destabilize Tigray’s post-war transition.”


Fig. 51 Postwar political crisis in Tigray described by poet Awet



Fig. 52 Difficult but successful setup of the Transitional Government



The political crisis notwithstanding a modus operandi was formulated by a high level committee led by General Tadesse Werede. With a great deal of rough ride a shortlist of candidates was presented to a composite assembly in a conference boycotted by the opposition parties. The process was buzzing with lobbies and factionalism; harsh verbal exchange and vilification abounded. This has subsided, but is still tense.

US Secretary of State Held Talks with Getachew Reda	
 A. Blinken March 20 2023	<p><i>“The conflict was devastating. Men, women, and children were killed. Women and girls were subject to horrific forms of sexual violence. Thousands were forcefully displaced from their homes. Entire communities were specifically targeted based on their ethnicity. Many of these actions were not random or a mere product of war. They were calculated and deliberate”</i></p>

Although Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael was elected by his party to be a candidate for the presidency of the Transitional Government Abiy Ahmed is reported to have accused Debretsion of starting the War and refused to endorse him. Debretsion accepted the rejection with grace and supported the election of Getachew Reda for the presidency. Getachew Reda is endorsed by the Federal Government as the President of the Transitional Government of Tigray replacing the wartime President.

Statement by Getachew Reda

“In the last two years the people of Tigray were in an arduous struggle for survival. In these years Tigray has experienced a virtual doomsday. We have faced a threat of extinction never seen in our history. Tigray has been thrown decades back from the higher level it had reached before the War. Now we have embarked on a journey of peace where our suffering will end and usher a new and bright future. Based on the Pretoria Agreement we have established a Transitional Government. Through this mechanism we will ensure our self-determination. On the basis of Pretoria Agreement the Constitutional territorial integrity of Tigray will be restored. The IDPs must return home immediately.”



Statement by Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael

“The fundamental goal of the struggle of TPLF present and past is the national interest and unity of Tigray and its people. We find ourselves at a critical juncture to shape the future of Tigray. Hence, we must exercise extreme caution in handling the mission and ensuring that it gets the right leadership. If we are united and march forward to accomplish this we will for sure solve our problems and move on to attain our vision. Ensuring the territorial integrity, peace, and dignity of Tigray will be our top priority. For the Transitional Government led by Getachew Reda to be successful we must unite all our capabilities and give it full support.”

POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM TO AVOID ACCOUNTABILITY

Political opportunism is an attempt to maintain political support or to increase political pressure in a way which disregards ethics or morality. The Pretoria Agreement, major world states, and global organizations are unequivocal about the need for accountability for the crimes committed in Tigray by the allied invaders. It has become quite clear soon after the Pretoria Agreement that the perpetrators and their political and military leaders are working day and night to avoid accountability for the crimes in which at least a million people died. Recently, Ethiopian and UN bodies for human rights held an informal meeting in Mekelle and were preaching a ‘forgive and forget’ kind of reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators. They want the people of Tigray to drop the reference to what happened in Tigray as ‘Genocide’. This is how the world continues to experience genocide. Genocide cannot be prevented from happening again and again just by forgetting it. There is no lasting peace without justice.

FIRST MOVES: TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TIGRAY

A team of the Postwar Transitional Government officials of Tigray led by President Getachew Reda travelled to Addis Ababa (Finfine) and held discussions with Federal officials. The discussion included key issues on the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. During its stay the team visited Oromia Regional State and was encouraged by the promise Oromia made to Tigray to help in the rehabilitation. The Team also held a meeting with Tigrayan residents of Addis Ababa and discussed what their role would be in the effort to restore Tigray. With a reluctant Federal Government and a stubbornly anti-Tigrayan Amhara politics, strongly backed by Eritrean government, Transitional Government of Tigray has a heavy burden on its back. Hence, more of actions less of ceremonies and exchange of pleasantries is expected. Beware of enemies suddenly turned friends.

Fig. 53 Transitional Government Team in Addis Ababa and Oromia



The release from jail of over 60 high-level former TPLF officials and close to 20,000 former members of the ENDF held for over two years without trial, was also prominent on the agenda for discussion with Federal officials. The civilian political prisoners were released soon, but the story with the tens of thousands of Tigrayan military personnel in high security jails in different parts of Ethiopia, has become complicated. Federal officials at different levels, are not full hearted about the peace process. Kassa Hailemariam tweeted on 9th April 2023:

“The Ethiopian gov’t, by breaching the Pretoria peace agreement, has asked the over 17,000 ethnic Tigrayan members of the ENDF- who were ethnically profiled and remained detained for over two years -to sign a guilty plea in exchange for their release. ‘If you want to be released, you have to formally admit that you betrayed ENDF and the Ethiopian Government by allying with TPLF’ states the ultimatum set by the Ethiopian gov’t and presented to the prisoners. The gov’t authorities further warned the prisoners that if they reject the offer that they would be left to rot in prison for years. However, the detainees in protest, collectively rejected the injunction and refused to sign.”

WEDGE POLITICS

Wedge politics is a strategy used by politicians intended to have a divisive effect on one's political opponents. Eritrean leaders are alarmed by the growing closeness of Tigray and Federal leadership. Actors of the ETH-AMH-ERI alliance are in disarray after Pretoria. Eritrea is losing its firm grip on Abiy's government. It knows well that an alternative alliance with Amhara against Abiy would not help Isaias's big ambitions in Ethiopia and beyond. Eritrean leaders survive on war alone; if they lose one they must get another. Their long adhered formula was the elimination of TPLF and the destruction of Tigray as the only avenue towards the Ethiopian economy and the dominance over the Horn of Africa. Although at an enormous cost the Eritrean road-map has utterly failed. The only option for Isaias and his team of septuagenarians is to put a wedge between Tigray and the Federal Government. Eritrean politicians are trying to sow mutual distrust between Tigray and Federal leaders. Statement made by 'Shabia' was read on Dehay Meneseyat Channel 3 April 2023:

“The crisis which prevailed in Ethiopia came to an end by the political decision in the Pretoria Agreement, and the necessary work of implementation is being done on the ground. Federal Government of Ethiopia is restlessly working on the strategic-tactical moves to implement the Agreement. Although the leaders of Woyane (TPLF) are using the Agreement to create divisions between the people of Amhara and Oromo, between the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia, between governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia, and to this end, they have forged what looks like a tactical alliance (Tigray-Oromo), the government of Eritrea and the government of Ethiopia have chosen to overcome all the temporary hurdles to foil US agenda and put the leaders of Woyane (TPLF) in a trap. As a result of the temporary flexibility of the Woyane leaders they are cancelling the demands they put for negotiations one by one. The talk we know about genocide, engineered in Washington, is gradually fading away.”

Although on the one hand Isaias pretends to be in good terms with Abiy and that both are working to trap and destroy TPLF he strongly denounces Abiy Ahmed for power mongering and serving US interest. Amanuel Eyasu of Assena on 7th April 2023 described the commotion in the political circle in Asmara as: *“PFDJ forgetting the duty and responsibility for Eritrea is struggling to become more Ethiopian than TPLF”* Amanuel Eyasu also expresses his bewilderment about the state of mind among the PFDJ leadership: *“In recent days, Transitional Government of Tigray held meetings with Federal and Oromia governments. This did not go well with the bunch of PFDJites and they are in crisis like a pregnant mother expecting delivery.”* Remarks made by PFDJ on Abiy Ahmed (Assena 7 April 2023):

“Abiy Ahmed for the sake of his personal interest and staying in power is determined to put into effect US interest and demands one by one. To stay at Arat Kilo he would never hesitate to do everything he is asked to do. He does not have the slightest concern or worry for Ethiopia. He has completely trampled on Amhara demands. Instead of implementing disarmament (TDF) he is providing unlimited basic services (to Tigray). TPLF is playing a media game to create tension between Amhara and Federal government and between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Some of the Federal officials, who are unable to pay attention to the media game, are courting and flirting with Woyane.”

PFDJ FROM STICK TO CARROT

PFDJ first lashed out at both Abiy and TPLF turn by turn for coming close and warned Abiy of TPLF’s possible ‘betrayal’. The words from Asmara fell on deaf ears and the team of Transitional Government Officials visited Addis Ababa and Oromia. Green with envy top PDFJ officials acted childishly and flew to Addis Ababa to visit exactly the same places Tigray officials had been to. They posed for photo ops wearing traditional Oromo costumes in the same way Tigray officials did. They visited high security military and intelligence facilities in

Addis Ababa. It was amusing that the Eritrean delegation even stayed in the same hotel as the Tigray officials did. Of course, the Eritrean delegation did not pack and fly to Addis Ababa without prior notification to Ethiopian authorities. It was soon reported that the ENDF invited the large Eritrean delegation of high ranking military officers led by B. General Abraha Kasa. Many in Tigray were deeply worried by the gesture of friendship to Eritrea by the Federal Government. The fact that the Chief of Staff thanked Eritrea for helping Ethiopia in Tigray was even more disconcerting.

At the end of the visit the team leader Abraha Kasa had this to say in a beaten-track appeasement tactic: *“If the Pretoria Agreement is implemented in all its facets and if the law is enforced, the people and government of Eritrea would be eager to see secure peace prevail between the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia.”* Behind the back of this statement is the truth that what Eritrea wants from the Pretoria Agreement is not its implementation in “all its facets” but only the disarmament of the TDF. Sajid Nadim of My Views on News was asked to comment on the controversial visit; and he said: *“Ethiopia wants to ensure that Eritreans do not feel isolated. Otherwise they would back disgruntled elements in Ethiopia.”*

Fig. 54 Eritrean controversial visit to Addis Ababa and Oromia



AMHARA REGION CRISIS



“Increased tension between the Federal Government and Amhara Special Forces (ASF) will likely persist in the Amhara Region through at least mid-April after Ethiopian officials announced they would begin dissolving Regional Special Forces units to integrate into several security structures, including the federal or regional police and the national army. Amhara activists opposed the decision and viewed the move as a way to reduce autonomy and leave the Region vulnerable to attacks. However, officials assert that the action is to form a centralized national security force. Moreover, related protests and disruptions were reported in areas in Amhara Region as of April 7. Fighting between the federal government forces and ASF may occur if the latter refuses to hand its weapons to authorities. The federal government will likely maintain a heavy army presence, including deploying armored vehicles across the Amhara Region, particularly in major cities such as Bahir Dar, Gondar, Dessie, Mota, and Kombolcha, over the coming days. The army may further implement a security lockdown of the affected urban centers through curfew, patrols, and checkpoints. Ongoing security operations may result in travel restrictions and short-term ground transport disruptions. Intermittent internet disruptions are also likely in the coming few days.” Crisis 24 (7 April 2023)

Photo Essay of the ‘God Father’ of the Amhara Diaspora

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed travelled to USA. 01 August 2018 met the largely Amhara Diaspora. Mission was ‘Break the Wall and Build the Bridge’. Time revealed the wall to be broken was Tigray.



Abiy said to the wild cheer of the crowd: *“We will break the wall by an embrace with your representative Tamagn Beyene”* Notice the body language of Abiy’s face: Cold in the midst of the deafening cheer. Notice the Genocide Preacher Daniel. Calculating about 10 bombs!

In the assembly hall it seemed that no one was left back home. The grim reality was the demography of the massive crowd that cheered Abiy Ahmed: Most were priests! In 2020-2021 these were members of the clergy who blessed the Tigray War



When the name of Tamagn Beyene was mentioned by Abiy Ahmed the crowd became hysteric and accompanied Tamagn to the stage. It was much more than Jesus was received in Nazareth days before his crucifixion. Jesus’s was to save lives, whereas, Tamagn’s was to destroy lives.



Daniel Kibret



Tamagn reached the stage with great difficulties and dived straight on Abiy Ahmed’s shoes to kiss them



Abiy, his wife, and the rest on the stage were alarmed by what Tamagn did; Abiy picked him and embraced him.



Tamagn Beyene was overwhelmed and got lost in his own emotions. May be his wildest dreams of power, wealth, and the destruction of Tigray came true for him and his likes at last!



01 August 2018 *“Your Excellency Dr. Abiy Ahmed! In many parts of the world leaders steal and rob ballot boxes. I haven’t seen one like Dr. Abiy Ahmed who steals people’s hearts without ballot boxes. They tried to kill him. Even if he dies we shall erect the largest monument in Ethiopia for him and his name will be remembered forever.”*

Successful resistance of Tigray.

Pretoria Agreement. Abiy and Tigray working for peace. Abiy and Amhara OROMARA came to a violent end. AMHARA DISARM!



Tamagn Furious!

12 April 2023
“Abiy Ahmed is not trustworthy! This resistance in Amhara should continue.”

LAST CRY ABOUT POLITICAL BANKRUPTCY



Mesay Mekonnen:

Referring to the Amhara PP and Oromo PP Alliance as Amhara 'servitude' to Oromo

What must be done now is to publicly denounce Amhara officials and exert pressure on them to be on the side of the people. Their eyes not blinking and neckties around their necks they appear on TV screens as if they got something good for the people. There is nothing more boring and depressing than this. There is a limit to slavery.

LAST CRY ABOUT POLITICAL BANKRUPTCY



Andargachew Tsige: "TPLF did not Disarm"

TPLF and Prosperity Party have forged an alliance to implement the Pretoria Agreement and are preparing to fight against Amhara and Eritrean Forces, who opposed the peace agreement.

LAST DECISION ON EXPANSIONISM (BEGINNING OF END)



Field Marshal Birhanu Jula (Chief of Staff ENDF)

From 15 April 2023 No Regional Special Force

From this day onwards neither is there an organization nor a structure known by the name Regional Special Force. It is no more legal,

This decision turned out to be game changer in Ethiopian politics

Abel Tesfaye Ethiopia Insight 7 April 2023 described the new political developments as follows: *“The developments show Ethiopian politics coming full circle after initial maneuvering to dislodge Tigray’s ruling party from national pre-eminence. Many Amharas initially supported Abiy’s government during the early stages of his tenure. This was partly built on a belief, which Abiy nurtured, that he would revise or replace the existing constitution.”*

Fig. 55 ‘Heroes’ to Villains: Fed-Amhara alliance upside down



When Abiy failed to live up to his promises for the Amhara every one of them turned against him. Several key members of Abiy Ahmed’s diaspora support group have been publicly accused as extremists for allegedly conspiring to overthrow first the Amhara regional government and the Federal government next. The demise of the anti-Tigray alliance was heralded by Abiy Ahmed in a public speech retrieved from Zara Media on 2 May 2023:

“I would like to remind those forces, especially non-Ethiopian forces who want to meddle in the internal affairs of Ethiopia everytime a political hiccup occurs, to refrain and be restrained from their actions. They have to know that there is no political profit gained from messing up Ethiopia; they must leave our affairs to us. They have a lot of work that has remained undone. They have to do their own work in their own land.”

Western Tigray could be the last or possibly a lasting hotspot. Amhara forces refused to leave Western Tigray. They are settling tens of thousands of Amhara. Eritrea has continued to train Amhara forces and is considering Western Tigray as entry point to Ethiopia. Eritrean spies who pervaded all aspects of Ethiopian life are hunted.

TIGRAY'S SHOPPING LIST

	Done	Not Done	Partly Done
1. Justice for victims of massacres			
2. Justice for victims of gang rape			
3. Re-settlement of the IDPs, Refugees			
4. Restoration of the sovereignty of Tigray over Western, Southern Zones			
5. Compensation for the personal properties destroyed and looted			
6. Compensation for destroyed and looted social, economic infrastructure			
7. Return of everything looted to Tigray			
8. Referendum on the future of Tigray			
9. Complete backpays, promotions, compensations for civil servants			
10. Release of three years annual budget			
11. Resumption of schools, universities			
12. Stop eroding Tigray's self-rule			
13. Stop eroding the culture of Tigray			
14. Stop hate propaganda against Tigray			
15. Stop restriction on free flow of goods, people to and from Tigray			
16. Stop Eritrea interfering in the affairs of Tigray /Ethiopia			
17. Stop the claim of Amhara as super Ethiopian higher than other nations			
18. Stop pressure on TOTC from EOTC			
19. Punish crimes in Tigray severely			

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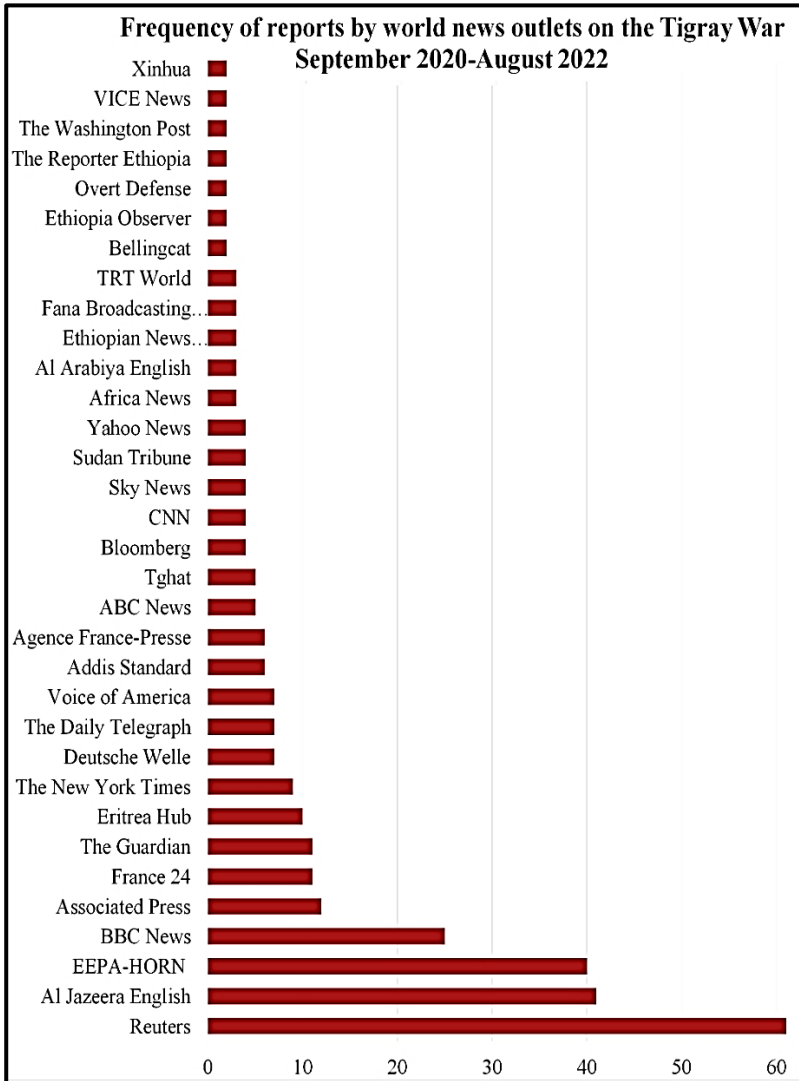
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Annex I Global Media Reporting the Tigray War



Annex II Oxford Analytica Briefings 2020-2022

Oxford Analytica is an international consulting firm providing strategic analysis of world events. Founded 1975.

Before the War (Before November 4, 2020)

May 5, 2020 Tigray poll may deepen Ethiopian constitutional crisis
June 17, 2020 Tigray party shifts pressure onto Ethiopian government
August 3, 2020 Ethiopia's Tigray-federal standoff may escalate
September 9, 2020 Tigray election will entrench Ethiopia impasse
October 7, 2020 House order will entrench Ethiopia's Tigray standoff
October 13, 2020 Eritrea visit will deepen Ethiopia-Tigray tensions

War Started (November 4, 2020)

November 25, 2020 Ethnic massacre will harden Eth-Tigray tensions
November 26, 2020 Ethiopia's Tigray troubles are far from over

Mekelle Captured by ENDF (November 28m 2020)

November 30, 2020 Ethiopia's Tigray victory may prove limited
December 3, 2020 Aid access to Ethiopia's Tigray may prove critical
December 9, 2020 Concerns will grow over access to Tigray
December 11, 2020 Amhara-Tigray tensions risk new flashpoints
February 5, 2021 Ethiopia will face rising pressure over Tigray access
February 12, 2021 Tigray aid crisis may damage Ethiopia's standing
March 1, 2021 Ethiopia faces deepening Tigray dilemmas
March 25, 2021 Ethiopia's Tigray crisis puts privatizations at risk
March 26, 2021 Ethiopia's Tigray shift will elicit cautious optimism
June 14, 2021 Ethiopia faces undiminished Tigray famine risk
June 23, 2021 New offensive underscores Ethiopia's Tigray problem
June 25, 2021 Ethiopia faces backlash as it compounds Tigray errors

Mekelle Captured by TDF (June 28, 2020)

June 29, 2021 Ethiopia's Tigray loss offers fragile chance for peace
July 1, 2021 Ethiopia's Tigray ceasefire generates fragile hopes
July 19, 2021 Ethiopia's Tigray standoff may yield painful stalemate
August 19, 2021 Ethiopia's Tigray tensions will deepen
September 20, 2021 Ethiopia will resist US warning shot on Tigray talks
October 12, 2021 Ethiopia faces a major humanitarian disaster in Tigray

November 1, 2021 Tigray advances will shake Ethiopia's government
December 13, 2021 Tigray advances may presage bloody stalemate
TDF withdrawal from Afar and Amhara Regions (Dec. 20, 2020)

December 21, 2021 Tigray withdrawal alone will not buy peace.

January 13, 2022 Eritrea may play spoiler in Tigray conflict

January 26, 2022 Afar fighting complicates picture in Tigray

April 6, 2022 Ethnic cleansing will harden Tigray impasse

August 8, 2022 Ethiopia Tigray talks face coherence problem

August 24, 2022 New fighting in Tigray jeopardizes Ethiopia's peace

October 17, 2022 Calls for calm in Ethiopia's Tigray may be ignored

October 28, 2022 Tigray standoff will challenge aid response

November 25, 2022 Tigray-Amhara claims may delay Ethiopia peace

December 5, 2022 Unrest in Ethiopia's Oromia clouds peace in Tigray



ZEKRE SEMAITAT



THE END



The New York Times



Yohannes Aberra
PhD-Associate Professor

And so it was told; And so it happened...!

We may pay a price. This is not being stubborn. So where should we go? They're saying we'll wipe you out if you don't kneel down, if you don't bow down without any objection. That is what is being said. We are not going to bow down. We never bowed down to the Italians, Egyptians, Haile Selassie, Menilik or Derg. Same thing now. We won't accept anyone who comes by force. That's it. If this requires a sacrifice, so be it. As long as we are united and we have good leadership and we stay firm, our goal is clear.



ABAY TSEHAYE

