A portrait of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a red tie with white polka dots. He has short, graying hair and is wearing glasses. The background is slightly blurred, showing a flag with blue and yellow colors. A small, colorful circular logo is visible on his lapel.

Ethnic Profiling of WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

EXPLAINED>

Background

This is a story of an accomplished Tigrayan many are familiar with, though most may not know he is from Tigray. He has become a victim of ethnic-based defamation in recent years.



- When Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was a 7-year-old boy living in Ethiopia, his younger brother died of a disease later suspected to be measles.
- This childhood experience stayed with him and sharpened his sense of the unfairness of a world in which children could live or die based on the strength of their country's healthcare system.
- The premature death of his brother was his motivation to start a career in the health sector.

Background



- Dr. Tedros Adhanom received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Asmara in 1986.
- After working in public health, Dr. Tedros received a World Health Organization (WHO) scholarship to study at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and was awarded a Master of Science Degree in Immunology of Infectious Diseases in 1992.
- In 2000, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Community Health from the University of Nottingham.
- Dr. Tedros served as the Ethiopian Minister of Health between 2005 and 2012 and as the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2012 to 2016.
- He has also served as the chair of the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; as the chair of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership Board; and as the co-chair of the Board of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.
- **Dr. Tedros was appointed Director-General of WHO in July 2017, obtaining 133 out of 186 votes. Of note is the great support he received from the 55 African UN nations.**

Ethiopian Minister of Health (2005–2012)

- As the Ethiopian Minister of Health, Dr. Tedros led a comprehensive reform effort of the country's health system, including the expansion of the country's health infrastructure. During his tenure, from 2005 to 2012, he is credited with:
 - Building a network of more than 40,000 female health workers in rural areas who dispense malaria drugs, immunize children, and care for pregnant women.
 - Helping reduce deaths from AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis by more than half.
 - He helped increase access to HIV treatment and HIV infections decreased by 90%
 - Maternal mortality decreased
 - Mortality from malaria reduced by 75%
 - Mortality from tuberculosis declined by 64%
 - Creating around 16,000 community health posts and 3,500 health centers.
 - Expanding the health workforce by 38,000 health extension workers, trained to manage essential community needs and stationed at health posts.
 - Initiating financing mechanisms to expand health insurance coverage.

Other Accomplishments

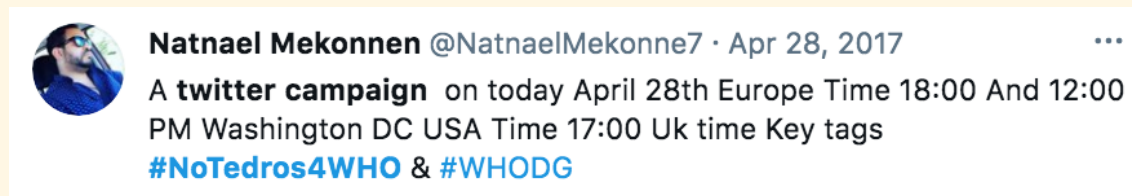
- Dr. Tedros also played a key role in advocating for women and children's health as co-chair of the multi-constituency Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH), a worldwide alliance of 700 organizations that addresses sexual and reproductive issues with the support of WHO.
- As Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, he led the effort to negotiate the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which 193 countries committed to the financing necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



- Prior to waging the war on Tigray in November 2020, Abiy Ahmed, the unelected PM of Ethiopia, was one of the Ethiopian officials who praised Dr. Tedros for his contribution to public health at the WHO.

Target of Ethiopia's Ethnic Profiling

- Prior to being appointed the WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros was working for Ethiopia's then coalition party: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).
- The defamation and ethnic profiling of Dr. Tedros started prior to Ethiopia's current administration. While running for Director-General of WHO after having ended his affiliation with the EPRDF, despite receiving support from the African Union and most Africans, some Ethiopians campaigned against him because of his former relationship with the EPRDF.

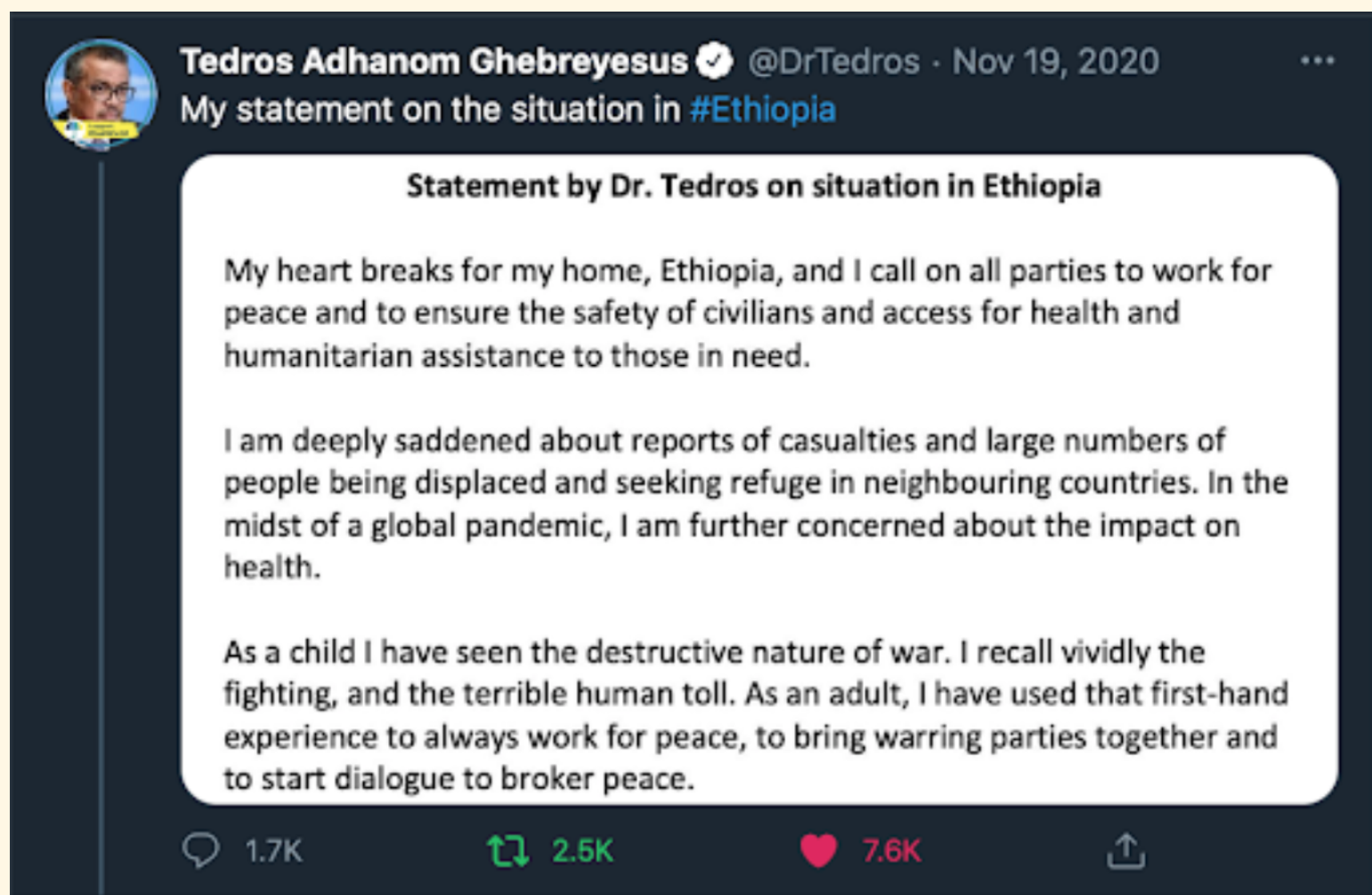


Ethnic Profiling and Attacks from Ethiopian Officials

- Ethnic profiling of Dr. Tedros has continued since his WHO campaign and has heightened since Ethiopia's current unelected Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, waged war on the region of Tigray on November 4, 2020. Abiy called the war a "law enforcement operation" to bring Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) leaders to justice.
- As a Tigrayan who had worked as a high-level official under the EPRDF, Dr. Tedros quickly became a target. Abiy's supporters were quick to criticize Dr. Tedros for his affiliation with the TPLF when he worked as the Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs under the EPRDF.
- On November 19, 2020, fifteen days after Abiy declared war on Tigray, an Ethiopian General, Birhanu Jula, gave a televised address attacking Dr. Tedros:
 - "He has been doing everything to support them. He's helped them to get weaponry... He tried to lobby people by using his international profile and mission to get support for the TPLF junta. He did that because he is one of their members, and he is himself a criminal."

Dr. Tedros Adhanom's Response to Ethnic Profiling

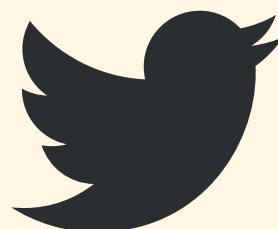
- "There have been reports suggesting I am taking sides in this situation. This is not true. I want to say that I am on only one side and that is the side of peace," Dr. Tedros Adhanom wrote on Twitter on November 19, 2020, fifteen days into the war.



Ethnic Profiling of Tigrayans Must Stop

- Dr. Tedros and his former political association with the EPRDF have not been without criticism or controversy. However, nobody can deny his dedication to public service and public health and accomplishments throughout the years.
- The Ethiopian government's ethnic profiling of Dr. Tedros demonstrates the extent of ethnic profiling of Tigrayans in Ethiopia.
- Tigrayans' ethnic identity or prior involvement with the EPRDF is being used as an excuse to attack their personal and professional life.
- This is similar to how the brutal violence against and the deaths of Tigrayans is being encouraged and celebrated by Ethiopian government officials and civilians in the country and abroad.
- Dr. Tedros plans to run for a second five-year term as the head of the WHO. Given the political situation in Ethiopia and the deliberate attacks on Tigrayans, Abiy's administration and his supporters are likely to oppose his nomination in order to diminish his accomplishments and credibility.

Stay Involved



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#TigrayGenocide, #TigrayCantWait

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