

SITUATION REPORT



OMNA
TIGRAY

DECEMBER 2021



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More than a year into the state-sanctioned genocidal war on Tigray, the ensuing humanitarian catastrophe continues to endanger the lives of millions. After declaring war on the region of Tigray on November 4, 2020, the Ethiopian government, along with its allies, Eritrean forces, and Amhara special forces and militias, have overseen a campaign that has ushered in the worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world. Consequently, tens of thousands have died, 70,000+ Tigrayans have sought refuge in Sudan, and over 2.2 million have become Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, public facilities, and places of worship, have been looted and destroyed. Furthermore, weaponized Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) has been an egregious aspect of this war, affecting tens of thousands of survivors who are currently cut off from desperately needed medical and psycho-social support.

As a consequence of the campaign of destruction the Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Amhara forces have unleashed on Tigray, the region is experiencing a severe famine which threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, primarily children and vulnerable populations. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), since July 12, 2021, only 15% of the trucks necessary to meet the overwhelming humanitarian needs have been allowed to enter Tigray. Aid trucks were not allowed into Tigray between October 18, 2021, and the last week of November, leaving Tigray with no lifesaving supplies, including food and medicine, for more than a month. While there are hundreds of trucks with lifesaving supplies in Semera, in the neighboring region of Afar, these trucks have been prohibited from traveling into Tigray.

The Abiy administration uses bureaucratic roadblocks to obstruct the delivery of aid into Tigray. This siege most severely affects children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers. The Tigray External Affairs Office reported in November 2021 that the global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate among children aged 6 months to 59 months is at an alarming rate of 32%. Moreover, 28,541 children have been diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition, while malnutrition rates among pregnant and lactating mothers is at an alarming 85%.

Furthermore, with only 14% of the total population having access to health facilities and medical supplies and medicine almost non-existent as a result of the intentional targeting of Tigray's health infrastructure by invading forces and the Abiy administration's siege, there is a healthcare emergency in Tigray, in which thousands are susceptible to otherwise preventable deaths. Because of the destruction of health facilities and telecommunication blackout, it is impossible to determine the severity of the humanitarian crisis, especially in rural areas that bear the brunt of the famine.

It is impossible to overstate the severity of the humanitarian catastrophe in Tigray. Without concerted efforts to facilitate a cessation of hostilities and an all-inclusive political dialogue, this expanding catastrophe endangers not only the people of Tigray and Ethiopia but will further destabilize the entire Horn of Africa region. The international community has long called for all parties to enter into discussions to resolve the myriad of crises Ethiopia faces and alleviate human suffering. To this end, international and continental mediators, chief among them Olusegun Obasanjo, the African Union's High Representative for the Horn of Africa, have been holding consultations with the Abiy administration and representatives of the Tigray Regional Government in Tigray's capital city of Mekelle. While these mediation efforts had offered a brief glimmer of hope, true to form, the Abiy administration immediately began undermining these efforts by carrying out bombardments of civilian settlements in Tigray in the last weeks of November 2021. Moreover, instead of urging restraint and de-escalation, Abiy himself and many of the top officials from his party have vowed to go to the battlefield themselves, escalating the warmongering rhetoric and closing the window of opportunity for dialogue and peaceful resolution.

MASS ARRESTS

Since declaring war on the region and the people of Tigray on November 4, 2020, the Abiy administration has simultaneously carried out ethnically targeted attacks on Tigrayans living across Ethiopia. From the first days of the war, both domestic and international observers and institutions have been drawing attention to the dangerous trend of ethnic profiling, hate speech, and demonization of Tigrayans expressed, amplified, and echoed by the government, warning about its dire consequences. The government paid no heed to these warnings and continued its campaign of ethnic profiling and harassment, disrupting the lives of tens of thousands of Tigrayans who live and work in all parts of Ethiopia and face eviction, firing, detention, torture, and extrajudicial execution.

In early November 2020, shortly after the declaration of war, the Ethiopian government disarmed hundreds of ethnic Tigrayans serving in the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) Peacekeeping forces. The government rounded up Tigrayan personnel, serving faithfully in these global and continental missions, forcing some back to Addis Ababa and confining hundreds to a base in Somalia. While UN and AU officials were aware of this purging campaign directed at Tigrayans, they took no meaningful measures to enquire after their wellbeing other than issuing statements of concern about their fate.

Moreover, in addition to the Tigrayans serving as part of UN and AU missions, tens of thousands of Tigrayans members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) have been detained for more than a year. Estimates indicate that between 17,000 to 22,000 Tigrayan service members who were a part of the ENDF before the outbreak of the war have been languishing in remote prisons since November 2020. In August 2021, it was announced that a military court sentenced an unspecified number of those detained to death and life imprisonment on treason charges. Moreover, Tigrayans who were a part of the state security apparatus, including the federal police force, Addis Ababa Police Commission, and Intelligence Services, are also detained.



The New York Times, 'Mass Detentions of Civilians Fan 'Climate of Fear' in Ethiopia,' November 2021
An agricultural college near the town of Assosa where Tigrayans are detained.

In addition to those in the security sector, tens of thousands of Tigrayan civilians living across Ethiopia have been ensnared in this coordinated campaign of ethnic profiling. Reliable reporting has shown that Tigrayans have been put on indefinite forced leave or fired without cause from their jobs in both the public and private sectors. It has been reported that Ethiopian Airlines, the country's flagship airline and state-owned enterprise, has fired or put on indefinite leave Tigrayans in various positions, from pilots and technicians to janitorial staff. Many Tigrayans working in diverse fields and occupations have similarly been suspended or fired since the onset of the war. Moreover, Tigrayans have been subjected to unlawful and illegal home raids, arbitrary searches, and faced eviction from their homes. Tigrayan tenants of government-owned or private residences have been illegally evicted and left homeless in cities across Ethiopia. Even the state-affiliated Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a biased organization that has been criticized for its role in downplaying atrocities committed by the federal government, has expressed concerns at these instances of ethnic profiling.

Since July 2021, when the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) liberated most parts of Tigray, the Ethiopian government has been responding with increasing brutality to losses suffered on the battleground. Since July, the scope and intensity of the government's campaign of ethnic cleansing has dramatically increased, leading to the detention of thousands of Tigrayans across the country. On July 16, 2021, Amnesty International released a statement reporting that Addis Ababa police have arbitrarily arrested and detained Tigrayans without due process. Tigrayans are detained at random checkpoints throughout cities or in cafes, restaurants, and public spaces by officers who check their identification cards before arresting them. The detainees are not brought before court within 48 hours of their arrest, as is required by law, and are instead kept in overcrowded, unsanitary, and inhumane detention centers, facing physical assault and torture.

In an open campaign of extortion, Tigrayans are expected to pay exorbitant amounts of money in bail to be released, while those who cannot afford to do so are moved to undisclosed locations. Detainees are denied access to their families and lawyers, and the whereabouts of thousands of detained Tigrayans remains unknown. In August 2021, Human Rights Watch reported on the discriminatory arrests, detentions, and business closures in Addis Ababa, highlighting the Abiy regime's campaign of enforced disappearances of Tigrayans.

On November 2, 2021, the Abiy regime declared a State of Emergency (SOE), which gave the government sweeping powers, including the power to impose curfews, shutdown communication and transportation, and curtail movement. Most alarmingly, the SOE proclamation enables the government to arrest any person and search any person's house and vehicle upon "reasonable suspicion." The SOE proclamation does not state what amounts to reasonable suspicion, which gives the government wide latitude to apply the SOE against every Tigrayan. These measures legalize and provide legitimacy to the acts of ethnic profiling the government has been carrying out for more than a year. Amnesty International reported on November 12, 2021 that security forces and vigilante groups are conducting house-to-house searches and arresting people from the streets. Amnesty further notes that Tigrayans who have been detained have not been charged or brought before a court, lending further support to the argument that they have been targeted simply because of their ethnic identity.



Vigilante groups check residents' ID in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In the wake of the SOE proclamation, mass arrests and detention of Tigrayans have dramatically increased, with elderly priests, persons with disabilities, nursing mothers, and children getting caught up in the government's crackdown. This campaign of ethnic profiling has targeted every single Tigrayan, from ordinary working-class people to well-known academics. Two professors of law at Addis Ababa University, Drs. Assefa Fissiha and Mehari Redeai, who are ethnic Tigrayans, have been arrested following the SOE. A number of UN staff have also been arrested in this campaign, and some are still being detained, with their whereabouts unknown to their families. Detainees are held in prisons, informal detention centers, and what some describe as concentration camps. These waves of mass arrests are not confined to Addis Ababa and are occurring in all parts of the country, from Gondar and Bahir Dar in the Amhara region to Jijiga in the Somali region.

This terrifying element of the Abiy's administration's ongoing genocidal campaign is taking place in full view of the international community and the whole world. Photos, videos, and accounts of people being harassed, arrested, and taken to makeshift concentration camps are widely available. Reporters have spoken to family members of those detained or those recently released who describe the hellish conditions in these camps. Yet, the international community and states who profess to uphold values of international human rights have not taken meaningful action to stop the Ethiopian government's unlawful and immoral actions. Tens of thousands of Tigrayans sent to concentration camps where they are vulnerable to all forms of torture is an alarming violation of all international humanitarian and human rights laws. An even more terrifying prospect is what the Ethiopian government may choose to do with all of those civilians that are now at its mercy. The regime has shown that it will freely and openly carry out extrajudicial executions of imprisoned people, which means that the life of every single Tigrayan currently in detention is under imminent threat.

FAMINE

As the Abiy administration persists in obstructing humanitarian operations through bureaucratic impediments and continues to impose a de facto humanitarian blockade, the people of Tigray suffer and perish as a humanitarian catastrophe unfolds. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights to Mekelle were suspended on October 22, 2021 because of government airstrikes and did not resume until November 24, 2021. Yet, the resumption of the humanitarian flights does not mean that humanitarian aid came into Tigray. This first flight only enabled the United Nations to rotate staff in and out of Tigray and transfer a limited amount of operational cash. Humanitarian workers on the ground still report that the siege has made their work extremely difficult. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected, with worst-affected households in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

In Tigray, partners continue to reduce their operations due to the lack of cash, fuel, and supplies. UN OCHA's summary of resources needed to deliver humanitarian response shows that the overwhelming majority of humanitarian activities are partially active with minimal resources left to actualize implementation.



ETHIOPIA

Tigray Humanitarian Operational Capacity

As of 11 November 2021

Summary of resources needed to deliver humanitarian response

CASH (ETB)

300M

NEEDED WEEKLY TO DELIVER TARGET

FUEL (LITERS)

200K

NEEDED WEEKLY TO DELIVER TARGET

SUPPLIES (TRUCKS)

100

NEEDED DAILY TO DELIVER TARGET

Resource availability by cluster activity

				HOW LONG DO THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES LAST TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIVITY			# PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE (UPCOMING) SUSPENSION
				0 – 14 days	15 – 28 days	29 – 60 days	+ 60 days
	Food						
	Food distribution	5.2M	Partially active (10%)	0 days	0 days	7 days	5.1M
	Health						
	Delivery of emergency kits	2.3M	Suspended	0 days	N/A	0 days	2.3M
	Vaccination for cholera (second dose)	1.5M	Suspended	0 days	N/A	0 days	1.5M
	Nutrition						
	Management of severe acute malnutrition, in OTP	56K	Partially active (50%)	0 days	0 days	21 days	40K
	Management of severe acute malnutrition, in SC	4K	Partially active (20%)	0 days	0 days	21 days	4K
	BSF/TSF	1.4M	Partially active (40%)	0 days	0 days	14 days	1.4M
	Vitamin A supplementation	574K	Partially active (20%)	0 days	0 days	14 days	574K
	ESNFI						
	Provision of ESNFI kits	525K	Partially active (5%)	0 days	0 days	21 days	525K
	Provision of NFI items	1.1M	Partially active (5%)	0 days	0 days	21 days	761K
	Emergency shelter assistance	998K	Partially active (5%)	0 days	0 days	30 days	944K
	WASH						
	Water supply through trucking to IDPs living in collective sites	525K	Partially active (3%)	0 days	0 days	1 days	525K
	Water supply through durable solutions	2.1M	Partially active (14%)	0 days	0 days	7 days	2.1M
	Constructions of sanitation facilities for IDPs living in collectives sites	525K	Partially active (6%)	0 days	0 days	N/A	452K
	WASH NFIs	525K	Partially active (3%)	0 days	0 days	7 days	525K
	Agriculture						
	Livestock vaccination, drug and vet supply	370K	Partially active (40%)	0 days	N/A	0 days	370K
	Livestock feed	200K	Suspended	0 days	N/A	0 days	200K
	Improved Vegetable Seed	250K	Partially active (100%)	0 days	N/A	0 days	250K
	Protection						
	Protection monitoring and CRIs for PSN and PwD	300K	Active	0 days	0 days	0 days	300K
	Child Protection						
	MHPSS services for children, adolescents, and caregivers	11K	Active	0 days	0 days	N/A	10K
	Prevent and respond to separation of children from families	18K	Partially active (1%)	0 days	0 days	N/A	18K
	GBV prevention and response	436K	Partially active (10%)	0 days	0 days	0 days	424K
	Protect children & affected populations from SEA	288K	Partially active (10%)	0 days	0 days	N/A	218K
	Gender-Based Violence						
	Provide health, social work or justice/law enforcement services	7K	Partially active (1%)	0 days	0 days	0 days	7K
	CP and GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and response services	180K	Active	0 days	0 days	0 days	71K
	Provide dignity kits to women and girls of reproductive age	299K	Partially active (10%)	0 days	0 days	0 days	256K
	PFA and MHPSS	43K	Active	0 days	0 days	0 days	27K
	CCCM						
	Site improvement	651K	Partially active (5%)	0 days	0 days	N/A	651K
	Information management and coordination	651K	Partially active (50%)	0 days	0 days	N/A	651K
	Capacity building	651K	Suspended	0 days	0 days	N/A	651K
	Education						
	Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM)	40K	Suspended	0 days	0 days	0 days	40K
	School meals/snacks	6.5K	Suspended	0 days	0 days	0 days	6.5K
	Teacher/facilitator training (PSS, etc.)	8.4K	Suspended	0 days	0 days	0 days	8.4K
	Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS)	2.1K	Suspended	0 days	0 days	0 days	2.1K

* Where cash, fuel and supplies have been exhausted, partners have been able to sustain some limited activities through temporary arrangements and coping mechanisms including borrowing.

**Access impediments include movement restrictions, bureaucratic impediments and insecurity

OCHA ReliefWeb. "Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 18 Nov 2021." November 2021.

Displaced populations face significant difficulty accessing food due to low income and limited supplies. For instance, out of the total 2.2 million IDPs in Tigray, 420,000 live in 131 IDP sites in Tigray, and they need more than 6,200 cubic meters of water every day through 3,113 water truck trips. This operation requires 2,200 liters of fuel per day, but due to Tigray's lack of fuel, humanitarian partners had to significantly reduce response programs and activities. Out of 46 water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) partners, only 11 operate in 22 woredas in Mekelle, Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern zones. Since mid-October, only 157,000 people have been assisted with food. IDPs and host communities are provided with emergency shelter and/or non-food items (NFIs) reaching only 35 percent of the 2.4 million people targeted in Tigray since the start of the year.

An estimated 1.6 million children under five years old and lactating women in Tigray need malnutrition preventative and treatment interventions. In November 2021, the Tigray regional government revealed that more than 28,000 children under five who were screened for malnutrition were diagnosed with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), and more than 240,345 or about 32 percent of those assessed were diagnosed with acute malnutrition. More than 18,800 pregnant and nursing women were screened, and more than 11,600 or 69 percent were diagnosed with malnutrition. The Tigray External Affairs Office has documented that at least 186 children under the age of 5 have died over the last three months of malnutrition, as health facilities across Tigray have run out of therapeutic nutrition for children. The fatality figure is based on the reporting from the only 14 barely-functioning hospitals across Tigray. The true magnitude of the crisis is likely greater than reported since the blockade has made it virtually impossible to send and receive timely updates from remote areas.

The humanitarian crisis in Tigray is the world's worst hunger crisis, and it is an entirely man-made catastrophe. The international community must take a firm stand against the use of hunger as a weapon of war and genocide and immediately demand Ethiopia end its blockade on Tigray to save the lives of vulnerable millions.



Shelters at a newly installed IDP camp in Mekelle in June

Millions of people across Ethiopia are experiencing internal displacement as war continues to rage on. In Western Tigray, over 70,000 Tigrayans have fled and sought refuge in Sudan after becoming victims of targeted ethnic violence. In other parts of Tigray, civilians have fled to neighboring towns, escaping massacres and sexual violence, hoping to find resources like food and medical supplies. The continued blockade of humanitarian access to the Tigray region and parts of the Amhara region is causing thousands more to become internally displaced everyday.

Tens of thousands of Tigrayans have been forcefully displaced from their homes in Western Tigray towns, including Humera, in November 2021 alone. Many shops, homes, and businesses owned by Tigrayans have been closed or destroyed. After facing significant and gruesome violence, civilians from cities like Mai Kadra and Humera are reluctant to return to their homes as they are fearful of retaliation from Amhara militia and Ethiopian soldiers who are currently controlling and occupying Western Tigray. The forceful removal of Tigrayans from their homes into neighboring cities and temporary refugee camps is deeply concerning as they are attempts to ethnically cleanse Tigrayans from their ancestral lands. There is a growing food shortage, a lack of clean water and medical supplies, and few accommodations for IDPs. Living conditions for IDPs are difficult as areas are overcrowded, allowing diseases to spread quickly against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Ethiopian government and allied forces restrict aid organizations from accessing the Tigray region, IDP host cities are responsible for food and medical aid. With the severe food insecurity and famine, cities already struggling to provide for their residents, struggle to provide for IDPs. In addition, IDPs who do not possess their identification cards face restrictions in receiving governmental aid as some towns do not recognize them as IDPs. Tigrayan IDPs in the Amhara region have also reported facing discrimination and receiving secondary care and resources. Those with severe medical issues were often left to deal with their fatal wounds and illnesses alone due to the debilitated healthcare system. The lack of food and medicine has led to widespread malnutrition, specifically among nursing mothers and children—leading to death. IDPs were also found to be suffering from severe mental health issues after witnessing and surviving horrific and inhumane violence. The poor conditions of the camps are only worsening their mental state.

IDPs continue to face difficult living situations and suffer from food, water, and health supply shortages. The blockade on the Tigray region is only causing more harm to the IDPs, as there is little for them to receive from their host communities. Without their basic needs being met and the continued violence in the region, the chances of IDPs returning to their homes are low. For some, there is no home to return to as their properties and assets were seized or destroyed. It is imperative that aid access is allowed into the Tigray region to prevent death from starvation and lack of healthcare access among internally displaced populations across Ethiopia.

DISINFORMATION/MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS



Throughout the year-long conflict between Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Amhara forces and Tigray Defense Forces, an ongoing digital war has ensued as the Ethiopian government and its supporters have taken to social media to discredit Tigrayan activists and spread misinformation. In November 2020, when the war began, all telecommunications across the Tigray region were shut down, and full access has yet to be reinstated. The suppression of Tigrayan voices has made it difficult for journalists and independent organizations to enter the Tigray region and report on the situation. By controlling the narrative and stories emerging from Tigray, the Ethiopian government and its allies are creating effective misinformation campaigns that are causing irreparable harm to Tigrayans.

Diaspora Tigrayan activists have created numerous online campaigns to reclaim the narrative, push for aid, and build awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Tigray. Throughout this process, Tigrayan activists are battling the false claims and intentional disinformation created and disseminated by Ethiopian officials and supporters online. Although there are multiple credited and official reports of war crimes committed in the Tigray region, Ethiopian officials and allies dismiss all accusations as propaganda. The dismissal and denial of war crimes committed in Tigray by official Ethiopian government social media accounts primarily rely on a damaging and outdated stereotype that Tigrayans are using looted money to fund and influence all investigations, evidence, and reports that emerge.

This conspiratory narrative makes it difficult for evidence-based facts to circulate widely on social media platforms. The communication and media suppression in Tigray fuels these conspiracies because online Tigrayan activists rely on independent investigations and journalism for news and updates. By discrediting these organizations and journalists who report on Tigray, Ethiopian government officials have attempted to control the narrative of the war and are gaining support for the continued war crimes in the region. Moreover, in November 2021, the Abiy administration further strengthened its disinformation campaign by passing a decree that only government-affiliated media are allowed to report on the ongoing war, barring all independent domestic and international journalists.

Recently, leaked Facebook documents show how radicalization and hate speech were spread in Ethiopia through their platform, and little was done to stop or slow it down. Posts that target ethnic minorities with harmful rhetoric and violence are shared hundreds of times, and despite violating Facebook guidelines, the content remains online. Facebook has acknowledged the divisive posts in Ethiopia and stated, “We have worked to improve our proactive detection so that we can remove more harmful content at scale [...]” [1]. Ethiopian researchers and journalists say that Facebook is not doing enough to limit the hate speech on its platforms as it does not have the adequate number of staff to detect and flag hate speech in local languages. Researchers have also pointed out how Facebook's report tool relies on artificial intelligence (AI) that often does not deem hateful posts as content that violates their guidelines. Further, Facebook's AI is also limited in that it may not track hate speech in languages other than English and is heavily geared towards U.S. politics. For the millions of Facebook users in Ethiopia, posts that incite hate speech and violence have real-world consequences as they serve as the basis and justification for horrific crimes committed in Tigray and toward other ethnically marginalized communities.

REGIONAL AND GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS

The Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) routed the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) from the vast majority of Tigray in June 2021. Since then, the ENDF continues to experience heavy military losses, as the TDF and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) make considerable military gains and progress towards the capital, Addis Ababa. The TDF and OLA, along with other members of the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces, are coordinating to oust Abiy Ahmed's genocidal regime that is inflicting indescribable atrocities on civilian populations in Ethiopia. Experts and foreign governments anticipate that Addis Ababa will fall, and it is solely a question of when and not if. Numerous embassies located in Addis Ababa have issued warnings, advising their nationals to consider immediate departure. The United States issued a level 4 "do not travel" advisory urging all Americans to leave Ethiopia “as soon as possible,” stressing that there are no plans to fly the U.S. military into Ethiopia to facilitate evacuations or replicate the contingency efforts undertaken in Afghanistan. In addition, the United Nations has ordered non-essential staff and their dependents to leave the country.

Mediation efforts continue as the African Union Horn of Africa Envoy President Olusegun Obasanjo and the United States Horn of Africa Envoy Jeffrey Feltman remain engaged. President Obasanjo traveled to Mekelle, the capital of Tigray, on November 7, 2021. President Obasanjo also met with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the President of Ethiopia, and the President of Oromia and had "discussions with them on the ongoing escalation with reflections on how to de-escalate tension to pave the way for dialogue"[2].

In addition to foreign envoys and leaders liaising with critical stakeholders in Ethiopia, regional and global leaders have also been discussing the ongoing crisis. For example, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and President Uhuru Kenyatta met on November 23, 2021, to discuss the "grave situation" in Ethiopia, urging all parties to commit to an immediate negotiated ceasefire. It seems that the international community is strongly backing the efforts of President Obasanjo and hope that his actions will bear fruit. A few days after President Obasanjo's trip to Ethiopia, the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he believed there was still a window of opportunity in Ethiopia, noting that the alternative is a "conflict that overtakes Ethiopia spills out to the country into the region" [3].

Yet despite the efforts of mediators and the reality on the ground, Abiy Ahmed announced that he would "march on the battlefield to lead the defense" in an attempt to "ensure Ethiopia's freedom." Abiy Ahmed's declaration to join the battlefield evokes feudal imagery that rouses his Ethiopianist base, aiming to mobilize supporters to join the war effort. It is also widely speculated to be a desperate PR attempt. The Continent, in their article titled, "Leading from the front, or PR stunt?" wrote, "some analysts have suggested that this is a propaganda stunt designed to divert attention from the Ethiopian army's recent reverses" [4].

The international community must remain engaged. As the problems facing Ethiopia are multidimensional and deeply rooted, to ensure long-lasting peace, global and regional actors should make efforts to support an inclusive national dialogue.

More than a year into the genocidal war on Tigray, the Abiy administration and its allies have been completely unresponsive to calls for de-escalation and peaceful resolution, as Tigray suffers through a widening humanitarian catastrophe Abiy and his allies' actions have created. There are growing humanitarian needs, primarily in Tigray but also in other parts of the country, where food insecurity, displacement, and instability are affecting the lives of an increasing number of people across Ethiopia. As has been repeatedly underscored, the multitude of crises in the Ethiopian state can only be resolved through an all-inclusive political dialogue that brings together all stakeholders.

The international community has thus far continued to support Abiy because of its prioritization of the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. However, instead of utilizing this support to ensure the safety and protection of the Nations and Peoples of Ethiopia, Abiy has exploited the global community's leniency to continue his genocidal campaign. It is past time for states in the international community to recognize that the Abiy administration is a threat to the peace and stability of Ethiopia and a danger to the broader Horn region as well. The policy of appeasement the international community has pursued thus far has failed and cost thousands of lives and incalculable damage to both people and property in the process.

It is time for the international community to move past expressions of concern and take decisive action to stop this expanding humanitarian catastrophe, mitigate the effects of the genocidal war, and bring perpetrators to justice. Therefore, we are calling for:

- **Immediate protection of Tigrayans who are experiencing ethnic cleansing in occupied Western Tigray;**
 - **Increased and immediate humanitarian access** into all of Tigray via the opening of a humanitarian corridor and a consistent humanitarian air bridge to airdrop food;
 - **Immediate internationally monitored and verifiable withdrawal** of Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Amhara forces from Tigray and the restoration of pre-war territorial boundaries;
 - **Implementation of economic sanctions** on Ethiopian and Eritrean government officials to increase pressure to stop the blockage of aid;
 - **The halt of bilateral and multilateral trade relations** with Ethiopia and Eritrea and prohibit new investments in either country;
 - **Immediate restoration of all essential services**, including banking, electricity, telecommunications, transportation, and trade;
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- **An immediate end to the state-sanctioned ethnic profiling and ethnically-motivated attacks against Tigrayans** living across Ethiopia, including evictions, firings, arbitrary arrests, detention, forced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial execution;
 - **Release of all Tigrayans detained on the basis of their identity**, including dissident journalists and the 22,000 Tigrayan ENDF members unlawfully held;
 - **The UN Human Rights Council to pursue establishing a Commission of Inquiry (COI)** to investigate the war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Tigray, as well as the atrocities across Ethiopia in relation to the ongoing war, via an independent, UN-led team of experts;
 - **An arms embargo and limited no-fly zone** that does not hinder humanitarian delivery;
 - **A negotiated ceasefire and an inclusive national dialogue** that includes the democratically elected and constitutionally mandated government of Tigray and other stakeholders, and
 - **Official recognition of Tigray Genocide** committed by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, Eritrean Defense Forces, Amhara Special Forces, and Amhara Fano Militia against the Tigrayan people.
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