

## Security Council

Resolving The Ethiopian Civil War



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## Introduction

The Ethiopian Civil War, an intricate and deeply entrenched conflict, demands our immediate and unwavering attention as we grapple with the multifaceted challenges that have emerged from its complex tapestry. This conflict, characterised by historical ethnic tensions, protracted political grievances, and stark economic disparities within the nation, has metamorphosed into a crisis of staggering proportions, exerting far-reaching implications not only on Ethiopia but also on the entire region. As we embark on this research report, our collective imperative is to diligently peel back the layers of this conflict, meticulously scrutinise its historical underpinnings, and proactively explore resolutions that not only bring about peace and stability but also safeguard the fundamental human rights of the affected populations.



## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution refers to the process of addressing and resolving disputes or disagreements between parties in a peaceful and constructive manner. It involves finding mutually acceptable solutions to alleviate tensions and establish a foundation for sustainable peace.

### **Humanitarian Crisis**

A humanitarian crisis signifies a situation where the fundamental well-being of a population is severely compromised due to factors such as violence, displacement, and a lack of essential resources. In the context of the Ethiopian Civil War, it pertains to the urgent need for humanitarian assistance to address widespread suffering and protect vulnerable populations.

### **Ethnic Strife**

Ethnic strife refers to conflicts arising from tensions between different ethnic groups. In the Ethiopian context, historical ethnic divisions have played a significant role in fueling the current conflict.

### **International Mediation**

International mediation involves the intervention of external entities, such as international organisations or neutral countries, to facilitate dialogue and negotiation between conflicting parties. In the context of the Ethiopian Civil War, the prospect of international mediation raises questions about effectiveness and neutrality.

## **Background Information**

The history of Ethiopia is a complex tapestry woven with various political, social, and ethnic dynamics, all of which have played significant roles in shaping the nation's current crisis. One pivotal moment in this history occurred in 1974 with the overthrow of Emperor



Haile Selassie, which marked a dramatic shift in governance and ideology. The subsequent establishment of a Marxist-Leninist government, known as the Derg regime, ushered in an era of authoritarian rule and widespread human rights abuses. During the Derg regime's reign, Ethiopia experienced heightened ethnic tensions, fueled in part by the government's repressive policies and discriminatory practices. These tensions came to a head in 1991 when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) successfully ousted the Derg regime. The EPRDF promised a new dawn for Ethiopia, but its implementation of ethnic federalism as a means of addressing historical grievances inadvertently exacerbated existing ethnic divisions.

Ethnic federalism, while intended to empower Ethiopia's diverse ethnic groups, ultimately contributed to the rise of identity-based politics and deepened inter-ethnic tensions. The EPRDF's rule, characterised by a delicate balancing act between various ethnic factions, eventually unravelled under the weight of mounting discontent and demands for political reform. The assassination of Hachalu Hundessa, a prominent Oromo singer and activist, in 2020 served as a catalyst for widespread protests and unrest across Ethiopia. Hundessa's killing tapped into long-standing grievances among the Oromo people, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, and further inflamed ethnic tensions nationwide. The confluence of these historical events and socio-political dynamics has left Ethiopia in a state of turmoil, with deep-rooted ethnic divisions and grievances threatening to tear the nation apart.

The roots of the Ethiopian Civil War run deep within the historical fabric of the nation, echoing a narrative of complex interplays between ethnic communities, political forces, and economic structures. Historically, Ethiopia has grappled with diverse ethnic identities and linguistic groups, each contributing to the rich mosaic of its cultural heritage. However, these ethnic diversities, rather than serving as a source of strength, have at times become fault lines, exacerbated by a history of political manoeuvring and economic imbalances. To fully grasp the current situation, it is imperative to embark on a historical exploration of key milestones that have significantly contributed to the escalation of tensions. One pivotal historical event is the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, a moment that marked a profound shift in the political landscape. The subsequent establishment of a Marxist-Leninist government sought to address socio-economic disparities but inadvertently sowed the seeds of ethnic tensions. This period of political transformation set the stage for the



emergence of ethnic-based politics and a legacy of identity-driven conflict. The year 1991 witnessed the overthrow of the Derg regime by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), promising a new era for Ethiopia. However, the EPRDF's implementation of ethnic federalism, intended to empower various ethnic groups, paradoxically intensified identity politics, contributing to a climate of distrust and tension. The assassination of the influential Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa in 2020 acted as a catalyst, sparking widespread protests and exposing deep-seated grievances that had been festering for years.

This historical backdrop is crucial for understanding the present complexities of the Ethiopian Civil War. The conflict, which erupted in November 2020, primarily involved the Ethiopian government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a former dominant force in Ethiopian politics. The TPLF's resistance to the central government's authority has escalated into armed conflict, leading to widespread displacement, humanitarian crises, and allegations of human rights abuses. Furthermore, the conflict has witnessed a swift internationalisation, drawing in neighbouring countries such as Eritrea and Sudan. Eritrea's involvement in support of the Ethiopian government has raised significant concerns, while Sudan, grappling with its own transitional challenges, has been impacted by the spillover effects of the conflict, hosting a considerable number of refugees and managing border disputes. The sub-regional dynamics underscore the urgent need for a nuanced understanding of the motivations and roles of these neighbouring nations.

In conclusion, the Ethiopian Civil War is not merely a contemporary challenge but a manifestation of deep-rooted historical dynamics. This comprehensive overview seeks to shed light on the historical events, key actors, and regional complexities that have shaped the present crisis. As we navigate the complexities of the conflict, the Security Council must consider these historical intricacies in formulating resolutions that address the root causes, promote peace, and safeguard the rights and well-being of the affected populations.

### **CURRENT Situation**

The Ethiopian Civil War, which erupted in November 2020, primarily involved the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF, once a



dominant force in Ethiopian politics, resisted the central government's authority, leading to armed conflict and widespread displacement.

### **ESCALATION and Internationalisation**

The conflict has witnessed a rapid escalation, drawing in neighbouring countries, most notably Eritrea, raising concerns about the potential regionalization of the crisis. Reports of human rights abuses, including sexual violence and ethnic cleansing, underscore the urgent need for international intervention.

### **SUB-REGIONAL Dynamics**

Sudan, another neighbouring country, has also been drawn into the conflict due to the influx of refugees and territorial disputes. The involvement of Eritrea and Sudan adds layers of complexity to the regional dynamics, necessitating a nuanced understanding of their motivations and roles.



## **Major parties Involved**

### **Ethiopia**

Ethiopia, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse ethnic makeup, is at the heart of the conflict. The Ethiopian government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, seeks to restore order and maintain the territorial integrity of the nation. Understanding the government's perspective is crucial for crafting resolutions that address its concerns while ensuring human rights protections.

### **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)**

The TPLF, once a dominant force in Ethiopian politics, has become a key player in the conflict. The group's resistance to the central government's authority has fueled violence and displacement in the Tigray region. Examining the TPLF's historical role and grievances is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the conflict.

### **Eritrea**

Eritrea's involvement in the Ethiopian Civil War has drawn international attention and condemnation. The nature of Eritrea's support for the Ethiopian government and its impact on the conflict's dynamics must be carefully examined to devise effective resolutions. Eritrea's own history of conflict with Ethiopia adds a layer of complexity to its role in the current crisis.

### **Sudan**

Sudan, grappling with its own transitional challenges, has been impacted by the spill-over effects of the Ethiopian Civil War. Understanding Sudan's role, particularly in hosting refugees and managing border disputes, is critical for regional stability. Sudan's willingness and capacity to engage in conflict resolution efforts, despite its domestic challenges, can significantly influence the outcome of the Ethiopian conflict.

### **Somalia**



Somalia's proximity to Ethiopia and its own internal struggles with political instability and insurgency make it a significant player in the regional dynamics of the Ethiopian Civil War. Somalia's potential role in facilitating dialogue or exacerbating tensions in the region cannot be overlooked.

### **Djibouti**

As a key strategic partner to both Ethiopia and Eritrea, Djibouti's involvement or neutrality in the conflict can have significant implications for regional stability. Understanding Djibouti's interests and potential contributions to conflict resolution efforts is essential for crafting effective strategies.

### **Kenya**

Kenya, as a regional economic powerhouse and a key ally of Ethiopia, plays a crucial role in mediating conflicts and promoting stability in the Horn of Africa. Kenya's diplomatic efforts and support for regional initiatives could influence the trajectory of the Ethiopian Civil War.

### **United States**

The United States, with its longstanding strategic partnership with Ethiopia and interests in regional stability, wields considerable influence in the resolution of the Ethiopian conflict. U.S. diplomatic engagement, aid, and potential sanctions can shape the behaviour of key actors and contribute to conflict resolution efforts.

### **China**

China's growing economic and strategic interests in Africa, including investments in infrastructure and natural resources in Ethiopia, position it as a significant player in the region. China's approach to the Ethiopian conflict, whether through diplomatic channels or economic incentives, can impact the trajectory of the crisis.

### **European Union**

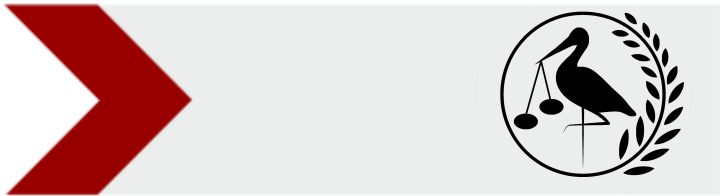




The European Union, as a major donor to Ethiopia and advocate for human rights and democracy, has a stake in promoting stability and addressing the root causes of the conflict. EU diplomacy, aid programs, and potential sanctions can influence the behaviour of Ethiopian actors and contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

### **International Community**

The international community, including the United Nations, African Union, and various Western and regional powers, plays a pivotal role in addressing the Ethiopian Civil War. Examining the interests, interventions, and challenges faced by the international community is paramount for crafting resolutions that garner broad support. For example, the United Nations can potentially contribute to conflict resolution through a peacekeeping mission. This section explores the feasibility, challenges, and potential impact of UN involvement in the context of the ongoing crisis.



Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
Early 1970s	Ethiopia is facing serious economic and social difficulties paired with a drought and famine in the northern parts of the country. The Ethiopians blame the imperial elites for the crisis and the dissatisfaction results in the creation of the Derg. The organisation consisted mainly of representatives of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army and was distinguished by its open communist beliefs.
1974	The Derg seizes power and overthrows the emperor Haile Salassie I. He is murdered the following year.
1975	Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) was founded. The nationalist paramilitary group firmly opposes the Communist regime and fights against it until its end.
1977	Marks the beginning of the Socialist Ethiopia with Mengistu Haile Mariam as its leader. A tyrannical regime is introduced, many of the political opponents are murdered (also known as the Red Terror), however, the previous problems the country is facing remain unsolved.
1991	Mengistu’s regime is overthrown by a coalition of opposing forces - the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The front consisted of four major parties - Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), Amhara Democratic Party (ADP), Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) and the Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM).



1993	Eritrea gains its independence from Ethiopia after a UN-supervised national referendum.
1994	Ethiopia adopts its first constitution according to which the country was divided into eleven ethnically based regions.
1995	The first multiparty democratic election is held in Ethiopia, EPRDF wins and its leader Meles Zenawi is appointed the first prime minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
1998	A border dispute between Ethiopia and neighbouring Eritrea emerges, which eventually develops into the Eritrean-Ethiopian border war.
December, 2000	A peace treaty between Eritrea and Ethiopia is signed, unfortunately, hostilities still occur thereafter.
2007	Ethiopia rejects the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Demarcation Commission, leading to more than a decade of tense relationship between the countries.
2012	Meles Zenawi dies and is replaced by the Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam Dasalegn.
2018	As a result of anti-government protests Hailemariam resigns, his position is taken by the ethnic Oromo Abiy Ahmed Ali. The new Prime Minister endeavours to conclude a peace treaty with Eritrea and succeeds. A peace agreement is signed and the mutual border is reopened.
2019	The coalition EPRDF merges into one single nationwide party - the Prosperity Party. The



	<p>leading coalition party until this moment, TPLF, refuses to join.</p> <p>Strongly anticipated general elections are postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This raises tension within the TPLF, as it accuses Abiy of deliberately using the situation as an excuse to extend his mandate. The party creates their own regional commission and then holds separate elections in Tigray in defiance of federal orders, leading into the increase of enmity between the government and the TPLF.</p>
August-September, 2020	
4 November 2020	<p>Abiy Ahmed accuses Tigrayan troops of attacking a federal military base in the Tigrayan capital and as a response sends troops from the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) there. This marks the beginning of the so-called Mekelle Offensive, which escalates quickly, as the ENDF are able to invade further into Tigrayan territory defeating the Tigrayan Defense Forces (TDF).</p>
Spring, 2021	<p>The Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed admits Eritrean intervention in the conflict after months of denying it.</p>
March 2021	<p>The United Nations Human Rights Council conducts a joint investigation with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) regarding the alleged human rights violations in the civil war.</p>
May, 2021	<p>The Ethiopian government designates the TPLF as a terrorist group</p>



June, 2021	The TDF retake the capital of Tigray Mekelle from the ENDF.
July, 2021	A national parliamentary election is held and Abiy Ahmed is reelected as a Prime Minister.
Late summer, 2021	The conflict escalates as the TDF reach the Afar and Amhara regions, approaching the capital Addis Ababa.
November, 2021	Tigrayan troops march closely to Ethiopia's capital but the ENDF forces manage to dislodge them
June, 2022	Local military group, the Oromo Liberation Party (OLA), uses violence against Amhara people in Oromia with approximately two hundred casualties; the Prime Minister condemns the acts of OLA.
2 November, 2022	After a series of failed attempts to reach an agreement the Ethiopian government and the TPLF sign a permanent cessation of all hostilities.
April, 2023	The Ethiopian government announces that all regional armed forces will be dismantled and will join the national army, which raises tension among the regions, because they see it as an attempt to degrade their autonomy. Protests are triggered in the Amhara region; Amhara militants are accused of killing ethnical Oromos in their region. Peace talks between the Ethiopian government and OLA are held in Tanzania.
2023	The government fights against the Amhara forces, as they refuse to join the national army.



August, 2023	Ethiopia declares a six-month regional state of emergency; hostilities are reported by civilians.
November, 2023	The peace negotiations between the government and the OLA end abruptly.



## **Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

- International Commission for Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, December 2021
- Pretoria Agreement, 2 November 2022
- Nairobi Declaration, 7 November 2022
- OLA Peace Process, April-November 2023



## **Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

Although the Ethiopian government has put effort in resolving the civil conflicts, tormenting the country, it has not been entirely successful. Thanks to the Pretoria Agreement and the following Nairobi Declaration, signed between Ethiopian officials and officials from Tigray, a cessation of the Ethiopia-Tigray war was established and the implementation of the disarmament of Tigray was discussed. Hope arose that the armed riots in the region would come to an end. Unfortunately, it has been claimed that the situation in Tigray has seen little improvement since the treaties.

A UN-appointed Human Rights Experts Commission reports that war crimes in Tigray, such as killings, destructions of facilities, rapes, displacement, have continued to take place almost a year after the treaty was signed. The commission further declared that in the context of the ongoing atrocities in Amhara human rights violations have been occurring. Moreover, the disarmament of Tigray was supposed to happen simultaneously with the withdrawal of Eritrean forces, which remained in the region even after that.

Despite all agreements, the humanitarian crisis remains unsolved, with thousands fleeing Ethiopia, and more than four million displaced people. Furthermore, the attempted peace talks between OLA and the Ethiopian government have also remained fruitless, as the Oromo Liberation Army blamed Ethiopian officials for failing to recognise and address the fundamental issues, causing national unrest, which eventually caused the end of the discussions.

The attempts to solve the conflict until today have made one thing clear; it is high time to find a resolution, long-lasting and beneficial for all parties. To achieve this mission one must be mindful of all the intricacies and the complications, which may arise, and act accordingly.





## Possible Solutions

As aforementioned a solution is urgently needed to end all atrocities in Ethiopia once and for all. In the following paragraphs You will find a few possible solutions, however, do keep in mind that those are just suggestions and You do not need to strictly comply with them.

One possibility is arranging peace talks between all parties involved with an objective UN commission as a mediator. By resuming the attempts to reach a multilateral agreement and thus hopefully finding a sustainable and beneficial solution for all sides, Ethiopia will be able to recover from the riots and strengthen its economy, which was damaged by the unrest.

Encouraging Foreign Investments in Ethiopia is a further way to approach the consequences of the Ethiopian civil war. After a permanent peace is achieved in Ethiopia, boosting its economy through foreign investors could be a sensible way of dealing with the repercussions of the war. Creating new workplaces and opening Ethiopia to the world are just a couple of possible advantages of this method.

Lastly, increasing the humanitarian aid in the affected regions is another major point to be considered, when tackling the problem. After the war the region of Tigray remained severely damaged, with millions displaced and suffering from food and fresh water scarcity. Unfortunately, as atrocities continue to take place in other regions of Ethiopia, the humanitarian crisis further grows. Encouraging all UN Member States to actively participate in the provision of aid for the suffering could not only improve the situation in Ethiopia, but it could also strengthen international relations.

Whatever approach to the problem You prefer, a more traditional one or something more unconventional, what remains truly important is the feasibility of the suggested solutions and the cooperation between the UN Member States, when implementing those.



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## Appendix or Appendices

- I. [Ethiopian Civil War of 1916-1921: Every Day](#)



- II. [Lij Iyasu | The Boy King of Ethiopia | African History](#)
- III. Human Rights Council. (2023). *Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia*\*, \*\* (A/HRC/54/55). ohchr.org.  
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