



# UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



*The Situation in Ethiopia.*

DIPLOMACY ——— DELIBERATION ——— DISCUSSION



## **Letter from the Executive Board:**

Dear Delegates,

It takes us immense pleasure in welcoming you to the SSN

Model United Nations 2022. We are honoured to serve you as Executive Board members of the United Nations Human Rights Council in this edition of the conference.

We believe that each and every delegate should go through this guide, to have a clear understanding of the agenda at hand. However, this would only serve as a “Background” of the agenda and would not be covering all the aspects linked to it. Your real research lies beyond this guide and we are eager to see all of you discussing possible solutions together, applying all of your extensive research and great knowledge of the topics discussed in this committee.

Understanding both the importance and complexity of this agenda, we strongly recommend you to be prepared and well researched in committee, and at the same time request you to participate at all times, making it a learning experience for all of us. Also note, it will be important for you to have a basic understanding of how various rights get affected in the socio-legal context.

If you are participating in a MUN conference for the very first time, we would request you to have an idea of the UNA USA rules of procedure followed in committee, links to the same would be provided at the end of this guide. The rest of the work as a delegate remains the same for you, wherein you research about the agenda, your foreign policy and laws relating to the same. Please take the initiative and research accordingly.

We strongly hope that you all will come prepared and motivated to discuss the situation at hand, brainstorm together to find out solutions of the same, applying legal frameworks and in the process, take back a lot from committee. Our goal for you in this committee is to have an enriching experience by learning the art of diplomacy and at the same time see you solve real life problems happening in this world.

We look forward to seeing you in the committee,

Regards,

Executive Board,

United Nations Human Rights Council,

SSN-SNUC MUN 2022

**DIPLOMACY ——— DELIBERATION ——— DISCUSSION**



## Welcome to the Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva. The Council is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The Human Rights Council replaced the former of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva. The Council is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The Human Rights Council replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.



### Membership

The Council is made of 47 Member States, which are elected by the majority of members of the General Assembly of the United Nations through direct and secret ballot. The General Assembly considers the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.

The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:

1. African States: 13 seats
2. Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats





3. Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats

4. Western European and other States: 7 seats

5. Eastern European States: 6 seats

Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms. Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.

## Presidency and Bureau

The Bureau of the Council consists of five people - one President and four Vice-presidents - representing the five regional groups. They serve for a year, in accordance with the Council's annual cycle.

## Mandate

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all human rights. The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international human rights laws and treaties established those rights.

UN Human Rights was created by the General Assembly in 1993 through its resolution 48/141 which also details its mandate.

UN Human Rights is mandated:

- Promote and protect all human rights for all
- Recommend that bodies of the UN system improve the promotion and protection of all human rights
- Promote and protect the right to development
- Provide technical assistance to States for human rights activities
- Coordinate UN human rights education and public information programmes



- Work actively to remove obstacles to the realization of human rights and to prevent the continuation of human rights violations
- Engage in dialogue with Governments in order to secure respect for all human rights
- Enhance international cooperation for the promotion and protection of all human rights
- Rationalize, adapt, strengthen, and streamline the UN human rights machinery

## Agenda: **The Situation in Ethiopia**

### **Timeline**

Nov. 4, 2020 - Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sends troops into the northern region of Tigray, accusing its governing party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), of mounting surprise attacks against military bases in the area.

The TPLF, which dominated national politics until Abiy took office in 2018, says it seized military equipment and took thousands of soldiers prisoner because Abiy was preparing to send troops into the region after it held a vote in September in defiance of federal government orders.

In the subsequent days, Eritrean soldiers and forces from the neighbouring region of Amhara mobilise to reinforce Ethiopian troops.

Nov. 9, 2020 - The first of two rounds of ethnic killings begins in the town of Mai Kadra, claiming hundreds of lives. First Amhara civilians say they are attacked by Tigrayan militiamen. Then Tigrayan civilians say they are attacked by Amhara militiamen. Tens of thousands of Tigrayans begin to flee from Western Tigray into Sudan.

Nov. 14, 2020 - The TPLF fires rockets at two Amhara airports and at the Eritrean capital Asmara, accusing Eritrea of sending soldiers into Tigray.

Nov. 28, 2020 - Abiy tells parliament that operations in Tigray are over and soldiers control the Tigrayan capital Mekelle.



Nov. 28-29 - Eritrean troops kill hundreds of people in the town of Axum, Amnesty International says, describing it as a potential crime against humanity.

February-March 2021 - Tens of thousands of civilians move east, deeper into Tigray, as they flee Western Tigray, whose fertile fields are also claimed by Amhara. Some fleeing Tigrayans accuse the Amhara forces that are now in control of rapes, killings and looting - accusations Amhara denies. In March, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken says "acts of ethnic cleansing" are being committed.

March 23 - Prime Minister Abiy confirms for the first time that Eritrean troops entered Tigray, after months of denials from both nations.

April 4 - Ethiopia says Eritrean forces are starting to withdraw. Residents later say they did not withdraw and report that Eritrean troops continue to kill civilians. Eritrea denies it has been involved in any abuses.

April - A regional official says Eritrean soldiers are holding Tigrayan women as sex slaves amid a wave of reported gang rapes. Eritrea denies the accusation.

June 11 - The United Nations says 350,000 Tigrayans are experiencing famine with millions more at risk; the U.N. aid chief accuses Ethiopia of using food as a weapon of war. Ethiopia denies blocking aid.

June 23-24 - An air strike in Tigray's town of Togoga kills at least 51. Health officials say victims are civilians and show pictures of injured children. The army says it hit combatants.

June 29 - Tigrayan forces take control of Mekelle, after months of battles in the surrounding countryside. Ethiopian and Eritrean troops withdraw from most of Tigray except Western Tigray.

July 13 - Tigrayan forces push south and west into land claimed by the neighbouring Amhara region.

July 19 - Tigrayan forces push east to attack the neighbouring Afar region, towards a road and railway linking the capital of landlocked Ethiopia to Djibouti's port.



Aug. 23 - The United States imposes sanctions on the chief of staff of the Eritrean Defence Forces, alleging serious human rights abuse in the conflict in Tigray.

Sept. 29 - Only a trickle of food aid reaches Tigray. The U.N. accuses the government of a de facto blockade, which it denies

Oct. 11 - Ethiopia launches a ground offensive aimed at pushing Tigrayan forces out of Amhara and Afar. The next week, Ethiopia restarts air strikes in Tigray.



## Why did Ethiopia's prime minister begin an offensive in Tigray?



Even before the war, Mr. Abiy appeared bent on breaking the power of the T.P.L.F., a one-time rebel movement which had dominated Ethiopian politics for nearly three decades.

A former intelligence officer, Mr. Abiy was once a minister in the T.P.L.F.-dominated government. But after he took office in 2018, he set about draining the party of its power and influence in a manner that infuriated the Tigrayan leadership, which retreated to its stronghold of Tigray. Tensions grew.

The feud reached a boiling point in September 2020 when the Tigrayans held regional parliamentary elections in defiance of Mr. Abiy, who had postponed the





vote across Ethiopia. Two months later, it turned violent.

In November 2020, T.P.L.F. forces attacked a federal military base in Tigray in what they called a pre-emptive strike against federal forces preparing to attack them from a neighbouring region. Hours later, Mr. Abiy

ordered a military operation against the Tigrayan leadership. But his promises of a swift and bloodless victory quickly crumbled.

The T.P.L.F. and its armed supporters fled to rural and mountainous areas, where they waged a guerrilla war. The Ethiopian military suffered a humiliating defeat in June when it was forced to withdraw from Tigray, and several thousand government troops were captured.

By early November, the rebels were advancing on the capital, Addis Ababa. But then Mr. Abiy, backed by armed drones, forced the Tigrayans back to their northern homeland. Fighting has since died down, although clashes continue in the Afar and Amhara regions that border Tigray.

Through it all, civilians have suffered most. Since the war started, witnesses have reported numerous human rights violations, many confirmed by a U.N.-led investigation, of massacres, ethnic cleansing and widespread sexual violence.

On March 2, the United Nations appointed a team of investigators led by Fatou Bensouda, a former prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to collect evidence of abuses for potential use in future criminal prosecutions.

## Who are the T.P.L.F. and the Tigrayans?



The T.P.L.F. was born in the mid-1970s as a small militia fighting Ethiopia's Marxist military dictatorship.

Once home to an ancient kingdom that ruled Ethiopia and the wider region, Tigray was marginalized by the central government through the 20th century.





Tigrayans make up about 7 percent of Ethiopia's population compared with the two largest ethnic groups, the Oromo and the Amhara, which make up over 60 percent. Yet the T.P.L.F. emerged as the dominant force in a rebel alliance that toppled the Marxist government in 1991.

Tigrayans dominated Ethiopia for the following 27 years, through a ruling coalition led by the T.P.L.F.

Under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia emerged as a stable country in a turbulent region. It enjoyed significant economic growth and allied with the United States, sending troops into Somalia to fight Islamist militants in 2006.

But at home, the T.P.L.F.-dominated government systematically repressed political opponents and curtailed free speech. Torture was commonplace in government detention centers.

After Mr. Zenawi died in 2012, the T.P.L.F.'s grip on power began to weaken, leading to an eruption of anti-government protests in 2016 that eventually paved the way for Mr. Abiy to become prime minister in 2018.

Mr. Abiy, a onetime T.P.L.F. ally, moved quickly to purge the old guard. He removed Tigrayan officials from the security services, charged some with corruption or human rights abuses and in 2019 created a new political party. The Tigrayans refused to join.

At the same time, he strengthened his ties to President Isaias Afwerki, the authoritarian leader of Eritrea, who nursed a bitter, longstanding grudge against the Tigrayans.

The outside world lavished praised on Mr. Abiy and Mr. Isaias for the landmark peace deal they signed in 2018, ending two decades of hostilities between their countries and paving the way for Mr. Abiy's Nobel Peace Prize win a year later.

But by mid-2020 that peace pact had become an alliance for war on Tigray.

## How is this conflict affecting Ethiopia and its neighbours?



International efforts to broker peace in Ethiopia, led by the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, have come to little. Yet the humanitarian crisis is deepening.

At least 9.4 million people across northern Ethiopia need urgent help, according to the United Nations. But the government-imposed blockade of Tigray means that less than 10 percent of required relief aid has reached the region, aid groups said.

More flights have been allowed to land in Tigray since December. But road access is still blocked, putting tens of thousands of vulnerable children at immediate risk of death.

The suffering in northern Ethiopia is part of a broader storm of conflict, climate change and soaring food prices, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, that has fuelled in the broader Horn of Africa region.

And human rights abuses continue unabated. Tens of thousands of Tigrayans have been driven from their homes by ethnic Amhara militias, as part of what the United States has called an ethnic cleansing campaign.

In December, Human Rights Watch accused Tigrayan rebels of executing dozens of civilians in captured areas, adding to the war's dismal toll of atrocities. The conflict has placed Ethiopia's once-close ties to the United States under great strain. Mr. Biden has cut off trade privileges for Ethiopia and threatened its leaders with sanctions. Neighbouring African countries worry openly that Ethiopia, long the anchor of a volatile region, could become a source of instability.

Mr. Abiy is also contending with unrest in Oromia, the most populous region, where



a local insurgent group, the Oromo Liberation Army, has entered into an alliance with the T.P.L.F. aimed at toppling Mr. Abiy.

## How has the war changed Mr. Abiy's global standing?



At 45, Mr. Abiy is among the youngest leaders in Africa, and in the first years of his rule he excited great hopes for transformational change in Ethiopia.

He abolished controls on the news media, initiated sweeping economic reforms and struck a peace deal

with the authoritarian leader of Eritrea, Mr. Isaias, that led to his Nobel Peace Prize win in 2019.

But even before the war erupted in Tigray, Mr. Abiy had resorted to old tactics of repression — shutting down the internet in some areas, arresting journalists and detaining protesters and critics. Now his reputation as a peacemaker lies in tatters.

As the war with the T.P.L.F. expanded in 2021, Ethiopia's security forces detained thousands of ethnic Tigrayans, citing security needs. In speeches Mr. Abiy resorted to inflammatory language, denouncing his foes as “cancer” and “weeds” that he vowed to bury in “a deep pit.”

In January, the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which awards the Nobel Peace Prize, issued a rare admonition of an honouree, saying he had “a special responsibility to end the conflict and contribute to peace.”





## **Current Human rights violations in Ethiopia**

### **1. Deteriorating refugee rights**

Between November 2020 and January 2021, Eritrean forces and Tigrayan militia alternatively occupied Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps in Tigray and committed killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, forcible disappearances, and looting against scores of the 20,000 Eritrean refugees living in these camps. In January, Eritrean forces destroyed large parts of the camps, which were empty of refugees by March. Fighting in mid-July in Mai Aini and Adi Harush, the region's two other functioning camps, left Eritrean refugees in urgent need of protection and assistance

### **2. Abuse, violence and attacks by armed groups**

Extrajudicial killings, mass arrests, arbitrary detentions, and violence against civilians occurred in other regions facing unrest and insecurity.

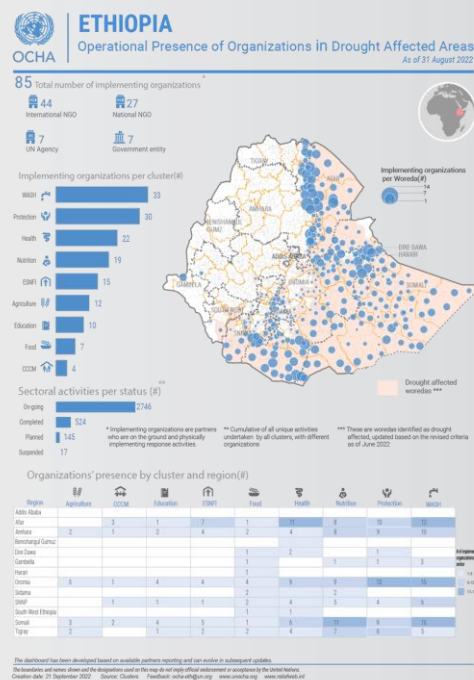
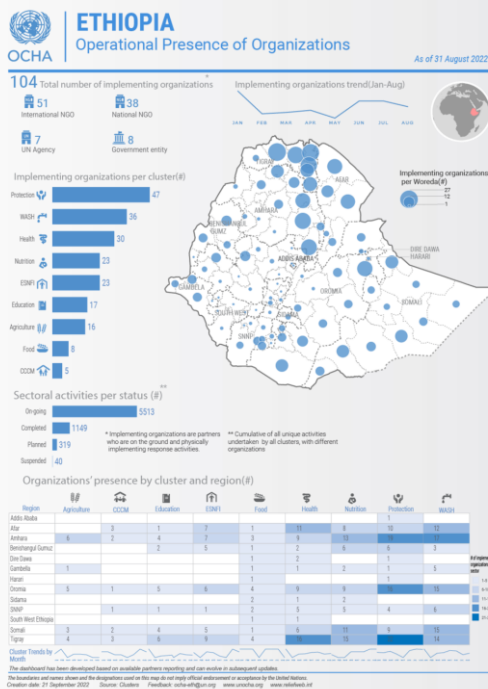
Tensions over political and land administration in Benishangul-Gumuz, fuelled violence, with summary executions of Amharas and other ethnic groups by armed militias, particularly in Metekel zone, escalating.

In the Amhara region, an imam's killing in March triggered inter-communal violence in the North Shewa and Oromia Special zones. Hundreds of Amhara and Oromo residents were reportedly killed, over 200,000 people displaced, and large-scale property damaged. Thousands of minority Qimant residents fled to Sudan mid-year after Ethiopian military forces and Amhara militias reportedly attacked villages.

### **3. Denial of fair trial**

On January 27, Ethiopian authorities arrested dozens of supporters of detained Oromo politicians in Addis Ababa outside a court hearing. Twenty senior Oromo political detainees began a hunger strike in protest. Oromo politician Bekele Gerba's health worsened. In February, authorities defied a court clearance to transfer him to a private hospital, forcibly took him to an army hospital, and briefly detained his doctor.

Authorities also blocked Lidetu Ayalew from the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) from leaving the country for medical purposes three times, citing several reasons, including Lidetu's objection to the Tigray war.



## Current Situation (as of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022)



In a statement issued by his Spokesperson, Secretary-General António Guterres said the *Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities* brokered by the African Union and mediated by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, was a promising start to finally stopping the fighting which erupted in November 2020 after months of tension, and which has destroyed so many lives and livelihoods.

### 'Bold step'

"The Secretary General urges all Ethiopians and the international community to support the bold step taken today by the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigrayan leadership", the statement said.

There are around 5.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance in Tigray, including 3.8 million who need healthcare, said the UN World Health Organization on Friday, and it has been two months since the last humanitarian aid reached the region. Thousands have been killed, with allegations of serious human rights violations, including possible war crimes, committed by both sides.

The AU reportedly hailed the agreement as a "new dawn" and hailed the disarmament plan which both sides have officially signed up to after weeks of extensive negotiations, including the restoration of aid supplies.

"The United Nations stands ready to assist the next steps of the African Union-led process and will continue to mobilize much-needed assistance to alleviate suffering in the affected areas", the statement concluded.





## **QARMA**

1. How can the due process of law, fair trial and freedom of expression in conflict-ridden areas be ensured?
2. How can the mandate of the International committee of human rights be addressed in Ethiopia?
3. How can the issue of accountability of war crimes be addressed in Ethiopia?
4. In what way can the international community facilitate the need for humanitarian aid in the region?
5. How can the implementation of customary international law under the ambit of human rights be strengthened in the region?
6. What measures can be taken to cater to vulnerable groups in the region like women and children?
7. How can the United Nations contribute towards preserving the infrastructure in the region and stabilize the economy?
8. What are the methods of mediation that can be taken up to reach a conclusion of the conflict?
9. How can the harm caused by external involvement be mitigated?
10. What can of mechanisms can specifically be implemented to curb the upsurge of sexual harassment and crime against vulnerable groups?
11. In what way have political indifferences influenced the current situation and how can such actions be prevented in the future?
12. Which legal frameworks under the ambit of International Human Rights Law have been violated the most and what are the measures that can be taken to make sure they are upheld?
13. How should the international community deal with non-compliance?
14. Should there be a repercussion mechanism for certain actions undertaken by state parties? If so, how should it be enforced?
15. How can a middle ground be found between domestic criminal norms and laws and international standards in conflict ridden regions?



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