



MEMORIJALNI CENTAR  
**SREBRENICA**  
MEMORIAL CENTER



British Embassy  
Sarajevo

# CASE STUDY: ETHIOPIA

**Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity  
Alert and Prevention Mechanism**



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The research which this publication is based on is a result of the project Truth, Dialogue, Future which is supported by the Government of the United Kingdom.

The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of the Government of the United Kingdom.

The document is an official report compiled for the needs and on behalf of the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide (hereinafter the Srebrenica Memorial).

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## **Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity Alert and Prevention Mechanism: Ethiopia**

### **The Srebrenica Memorial Center**

Established by decision of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2000, the Srebrenica Memorial (full name: Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide) is a place of remembrance for the victims of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. The Memorial Center is dedicated to the preservation of history and to confronting the forces of ignorance and hatred which make genocide possible.

### **About the Project**

The Srebrenica Memorial Center began implementing the project “Truth, Dialogue, Future” in late 2020 with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of the Memorial Center in areas such as memorialization, archiving, education, public outreach, institutional networking, and internationalization. Truth-telling, dialogue, and confronting violent extremism are central aspects of the project's design. Through research, publications, and development in key areas of its mission, the Memorial Center strives to assume a leading role in education about, and prevention of, radical hatred in the region—especially as it relates to genocide, war crimes, and confronting the past. To this end, the project focuses on the development of crucial capacities, including the collection, archiving, and presentation of research, as well as the building of fruitful and long-lasting partnerships with other institutions around the globe.

The Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity Alert and Prevention Mechanism (GAPM) is an important activity within the project, which aims to identify narratives and patterns of action with the potential to lead to violence. The GAPM entails a series of reports, written by the Memorial Center's team of expert researchers, which focus on situations of mounting violence around the world which exhibit significant potential to escalate into genocide. These reports are strictly fact-based, relying on available evidence, independent journalism, and the findings of esteemed international entities working to expose and prevent the violation of human rights. The Memorial Center views the responsibility to use the experience of the Srebrenica genocide as well as its developing research capacities to raise awareness about situations of escalating violence as an important aspect of protecting the legacy of Srebrenica. With these reports, the Memorial Center endeavors to apply the expertise gained through our



collective experiences in Srebrenica to alert the international community to egregious violations of human rights and circumstances where there is an imminent risk of genocide. By ensuring that the horrors which transpired in Srebrenica are never experienced again anywhere in the world, we honor the victims of the Srebrenica genocide and help to fulfil the most fundamental collective responsibility of the human race.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report focuses on the ongoing Tigray War in Ethiopia, with particular emphasis placed on the conduct of the Ethiopian government. Under the leadership of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Ethiopia has witnessed decades of economic and political struggles as well as ethnic conflict. In 2018, TPLF lost power to newly elected Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, whose vision for Ethiopia included healing the country's ethnic and political divisions. In the course of two years, power struggles escalated into full-blown war in the region of Tigray. In an effort to consolidate power and regain control over the Tigray region, the Ethiopian government and its allies have committed numerous atrocities against the civilian population.

The prevention of genocide and mass atrocities is both an internationally binding legal obligation and a universal moral responsibility. In establishing the case for intervention to prevent future atrocities, this report (1) identifies the *violations of international law* which provide legal grounds for intervention; (2) assesses the *likelihood of the future escalation* of violence in order to demonstrate the exigency of prevention; and (3) recommends possible *measures* for intervention and prevention.

With regards to international criminal and international humanitarian law, the conclusions of this report can only be preliminary, pending investigations by accredited legal institutions. However, the findings of this report indicate a high probability that various **crimes against humanity** and **war crimes** have been and continue to be perpetrated by the Ethiopian government and its allies against civilians in Tigray. These crimes include but are not limited to indiscriminate targeting of civilians; mass murder; forced displacement; arbitrary detention; torture; enforced disappearance; and sexual violence. In regard to **genocide**, while legal justification must necessarily be established by the competent judicial authorities, this report finds substantial evidence to conclude that the violence committed against civilians in the Tigray region of Ethiopia may amount to genocide or may come to do so in the near future.



Moreover, recent developments in Ethiopia strongly suggest that the war in Tigray is already beginning to spill over into other regions. Without preventative intervention, the violence in Ethiopia is likely to continue to escalate, destabilizing not only the country but the entire region. In light of these assessments and the overall gravity of the crisis, this report concludes that there is sufficient legal basis for international intervention in Ethiopia, as well as an urgent humanitarian imperative to prevent further atrocities.

As such, the preliminary **recommendations** of the Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity Alert and Prevention Mechanism are as follows:

- The Ethiopian government and its allies **must stop any further violations** of international humanitarian and international criminal law.
- The Ethiopian government must **restore all communication** to Tigray and ensure **unfettered access** to all humanitarian organizations and human rights monitors.
- The African Union (AU) should take an active role in the mediation of an **immediate cease-fire** on all sides of the conflict. The AU should provide adequate support and oversight for the implementation of the cease-fire.
- All able actors should continue or increase **humanitarian assistance** to populations in Ethiopia as well as refugee communities in Sudan.
- The international community must ensure **legal accountability** in international and/or domestic courts for all crimes committed during the conflict.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND MASS ATROCITY PREVENTION**

The prevention of genocide and mass atrocities is not only a legal obligation binding on all states, but a collective moral responsibility shared by all of humanity. The obligation of states to intervene to prevent genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity is firmly established under the customary rules of international law as well as in numerous international treaties. Based on relevant jurisprudence, the Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity Alert and Prevention Mechanism relies on the following definitions in substantiating the legal grounds for intervention in the case of genocide and mass atrocities:



## **Legal framework**

The GAPM relies on the following definitions to determine legal justification for intervention in the case of genocide and mass atrocities:

### War Crimes

War Crimes are defined as Grave breaches of the Geneva Convention and include any of the following offences committed in armed conflict against persons or property protected under the Convention's provisions:

- a) Willful killing
- b) Torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments;
- c) Willfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health;
- d) Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly;
- e) Compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power;
- f) Willfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial;
- g) Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement;
- h) Taking of hostages;
- i) Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law.

### Crimes Against Humanity

Article 7 of the Rome Statute defines crimes against humanity as any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

- a) Murder;
- b) Extermination;
- c) Enslavement;
- d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;
- e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;
- f) Torture;

- 
- g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;
  - h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;
  - i) Enforced disappearance of persons;
  - j) The crime of apartheid;
  - k) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.

### Genocide

Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide defines genocide as:

... any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

### **Intervention and Prevention in Cases of Genocide and Mass Atrocities**

The duty to prevent genocide is unequivocally expressed in Article I of the Genocide Convention. Moreover, the obligations enshrined by the Convention are obligations *erga omnes*, meaning that each state is bound by them. Hence, each state is legally obligated to prevent and punish



genocide, regardless of where the crime occurs and without reservations.<sup>1</sup> The duty to prevent crimes against humanity is ensured by the duty to prevent certain acts, torture for instance, which would amount to crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack. Additionally, given that all states are obligated to abide by international humanitarian law, preventing and punishing war crimes is likewise a duty.<sup>2</sup>

These duties and responsibilities are explicitly outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. R2P obligates all states to prevent atrocities as well as their incitement, through proper and necessary means. The primary responsibility rests with states themselves to prevent atrocity crimes on their own territories, however, the international community also has a responsibility to uphold these obligations when individual states prove unable or unwilling. The first recourse of intervening parties should be pacific means, but should such means prove inadequate, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) may authorise other forms of collective action, including armed intervention, to protect populations from atrocities.

While international law provides explicit criteria for the classification and prosecution of known violations, it cannot speculate as to the potential of conflicts to escalate, including into genocide. For this reason, in identifying grounds for international intervention and prevention, it is necessary to consult the collective knowledge gained from the historical study of violence. The exigent scholarship leaves no doubt that genocide and mass atrocities are by no means spontaneous phenomena but are rather the culmination of historical processes. By studying the patterns in which political violence unfolds, scholars and researchers have been able to identify early warning signs, including the political, social, and economic conditions which are conducive to violence.<sup>3</sup>

Genocide scholar, Gregory S. Stanton, theorizes ten distinct stages of genocide, as well as preventative measure which can be taken by domestic and international actors at each stage. Based on this framework, the following means of prevention are identified in this report, corresponding to the scope of the intervention required.

### Early Stages: Preventing Division

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<sup>1</sup> ICJ, *Case Concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Yugoslavia)*. Preliminary Objections. 11 July 1996. Para 31.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, UN Human Rights Council. "Report on prevention of Genocide." A/HRC/41/24. 24 June 2019.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Maureen S. Heibert, *Constructing Genocide and Mass Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2017).



The earliest warning signs of genocide involve the galvanization of identity grievances and the sowing of hatred and intolerance among groups. At this stage, preventative measures include **Institutional Development, Combatting Language and Symbols of Hatred, Empowering Marginalized Groups**.

*Intermediate Stages: Preventing Mobilization*

With divisions and hostility firmly embedded in the social fabric, perpetrators of genocide proceed to lay the structural groundwork for genocide. At this stage, preventative measures include **Supporting Moderate and Opposition Actors, Hindering Militarization of Aggressors** and **Prosecuting Incitement and Conspiracy**.

*Late Stages: Preventing Violence*

Once the violation of the victim groups' basic human rights has become systematized, violence against them can only be expected to intensify. In the late stages of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are being perpetrated. The extermination of the victim group is an imminent threat or may already be underway, and preventive measures should be enacted immediately and swiftly by the international community. All of the following measures, however, must be enacted in accordance with international law: **Mobilizing International Structures, Providing Humanitarian and Military Assistance, Establishing and Defending International Safe Areas** and, ultimately, **Armed Intervention**.



## THE CRISIS IN ETHIOPIA

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was founded in 1975 as an ethno-nationalist guerrilla movement which sought to secure self-determination for Ethiopia's Tigray region, in response to ethnic and national inequalities.<sup>4</sup> Over the years, the TPLF moved away from its original objective and become a political party. It gained broad support and mobilized people to such an extent that it became a dominant player in a coalition of ethnic parties known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).<sup>5</sup> In 1991, after spearheading a long revolt against the Dergue regime,<sup>6</sup> the TPLF took control of Ethiopia in the name of the EPRDF,<sup>7</sup> which has led the Ethiopian government for nearly three decades.

Since the TPLF and EPRDF came to power, Ethiopia has faced economic and political struggles, including recurring human rights abuses and two wars with neighboring Eritrea. Moreover, ethnic tensions and conflicts have been a consistent element of life in Ethiopia. The country is divided into 10 regions and every regional government is divided along ethnic lines.<sup>8</sup> The current conflict between the TPLF and the central government is rooted in contesting claims to political power.

In 2018, Abiy Ahmed became the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Among other objectives,<sup>9</sup> he sought to dismantle the ethnic and political divisions in the country. To this end, he established a new national party which significantly diminished the influence and power of the TPLF. For this reason, the TPLF refused to take part in the national government and withdrew to regional functions, where they continue to enjoy both political power and the unwavering support of local populations.<sup>10</sup> The TPLF has accused Abiy of ethnically-based exclusion in his consolidation of power, including limiting the influence of certain regions in the national government.<sup>11</sup> In turn, Abiy has accused the TPLF of destabilizing Ethiopia by orchestrating ethnic violence across the country.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Berhe, Aregawi. "The Origins of the Tigray People's Liberation Front". *African Affairs*. 2004. pp. 569-592.

<sup>5</sup> Neuman, Scott. "9 Things To Know About The Unfolding Crisis In Ethiopia's Tigray Region." NPR. 5 March 2021. Available at <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/05/973624991/9-things-to-know-about-the-unfolding-crisis-in-ethiopia-tigray-region?t=1627893516554>.

<sup>6</sup>The Dergue regime, also known as the Provisional Military Administrative Council, was a military junta which ruled the present-day countries of Ethiopia and Eritrea between 1974 and 1987, before transforming into a 'civilian' administration which retained power until 1991.

<sup>7</sup>Berhe, Aregawi. "The Origins of the Tigray People's Liberation Front". *African Affairs*. 2004. pp. 569-592.

<sup>8</sup> Mackintosh, Eliza. "Ethiopia is at war with itself. Here's what you need to know about the conflict." *CNN*. 1 July 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/30/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained-intl/index.html>.

<sup>9</sup>Another significant change that the new Prime Minister forged is to repair the damaged relationship with Ethiopia's neighbour Eritrea, for which Abiy Ahmed won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. With this new relationship between the governments of former warring countries, Ethiopia can rely on Eritrea in the Tigray region.

<sup>10</sup>Mackintosh, Eliza. "Ethiopia is at war with itself. Here's what you need to know about the conflict." *CNN*. 1 July 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/30/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained-intl/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup>Neuman, Scott. "9 Things To Know About The Unfolding Crisis In Ethiopia's Tigray Region." NPR. 5 March 2021. Available at <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/05/973624991/9-things-to-know-about-the-unfolding-crisis-in-ethiopia-tigray-region?t=1627893516554>.



The situation escalated in September 2020, when, following the Prime Minister's postponement of elections, the TPLF organized its own elections in Tigray. Although the TPLF won a decisive victory, the federal government declared the election illegal and its results invalid. In response, the TPLF together with regional security forces attacked several national military bases on November 4th.<sup>13</sup> Abiy retaliated by ordering a military campaign against the group, sending in national troops as well as Eritrean soldiers and fighters from the neighboring region of Amhara.<sup>14</sup> The ensuing conflict has resulted in steadily escalating violence in Tigray, with serious ramifications for the rest of Ethiopia and the wider region.

### **The War in Tigray**

Since it began in November 2020, the war in Tigray has cost thousands of lives, displaced more than 2.2 million people,<sup>15</sup> and given rise to a wave of atrocities.<sup>16</sup> The conflict has precipitated a severe humanitarian crisis which has left over 5 million people in urgent need of food assistance.<sup>17</sup> Although the Ethiopian government has restricted access to journalists and enacted a communications blackout during the fighting which has severely limited access to information on the ground, documentation of the atrocities in Tigray are surfacing.<sup>18</sup>

While all parties to the conflict have perpetrated acts which are prohibited under international law, the existing evidence indicates that the violations committed by the government forces and their allies are disproportionately severe. Eritrea in particular has proven to be a faithful ally of the Abiy government, with its troops carrying out numerous atrocities under the mantle of the struggle against a common enemy: the TPLF.<sup>19</sup> Thus, without suggesting that they are the sole perpetrators of crimes in the conflict, this report focuses on the violence carried out by the Abiy government and its allies in the Tigray

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<sup>13</sup> Horton, Michael. "Tigray Defense Forces Resist Ethiopian Army Offensive as Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethnic Militias Enter the Fray." *Terrorism Monitor*, *Jamestown Foundation*. 24 May 2021. Available at <https://jamestown.org/program/tigray-defense-forces-resist-ethiopian-army-offensive-as-sudan-eritrea-and-ethnic-militias-enter-the-fray/>.

<sup>14</sup> Mackintosh, Eliza. "Ethiopia is at war with itself. Here's what you need to know about the conflict." *CNN*. 1 July 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/30/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained-intl/index.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Cone, Devon. "Women in Tigray Face Increased Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." 26 August 2021. Available at <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2021/8/23/women-in-tigray-face-increased-risk-of-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>.

<sup>16</sup> Walsh, Declan and Dahir, Abdi Latif. "Why Is Ethiopia at War With Itself?" *The New York Times*. 5 November 2020. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/05/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained.html>.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Arvanitidis, Barbara et al. "Massacre in the mountains." *CNN*. 22 March 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/26/africa/ethiopia-tigray-dengelat-massacre-intl/index.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Arvanitidis, Barbara et al. "Massacre in the mountains." *CNN*. 22 March 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/26/africa/ethiopia-tigray-dengelat-massacre-intl/index.html>.



region. What follows are some of the most heinous crimes documented in the war thus far.

### Mass Murder

Although government authorities maintain that no civilians have been targeted or harmed during the military operations in Tigray, there is substantial documentary evidence to the contrary. This evidence suggests that civilians were deliberately targeted by government forces or their allies on multiple occasions.

One such instance occurred in Maryam Dengelat, when Eritrean troops opened fire in a church where hundreds of civilian congregants were attending mass. In an attack that continued for three days, soldiers proceeded to drag civilians from their homes to brutalize and kill them, shooting all those who attempted to flee. Hundreds of civilians were killed.

Another notable and premeditated attack was carried out in Mahibere Dego, where Ethiopian troops killed 39 young men, all of whom were unarmed civilians. The young men were taken from their homes to a remote mountainous area and summarily executed.<sup>20</sup>

In November of 2020, one of the most brutal attacks of the war was committed by Eritrean and Ethiopian troops in the city of Axum. Upon forcibly entering the city, soldiers indiscriminately shelled residential areas, looting homes and businesses and killing those who attempted to flee.<sup>21</sup> Once in control of the city, soldiers proceeded to kill anyone suspected of being a TPLF sympathizer or fighter, regardless of whether these suspicious were warranted. The massacre in Axum, primarily perpetrated by Eritrean forces, included tactics such as raiding, detention, and deliberate starvation. As well as resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, the brutality of this attack severely traumatized the general population.<sup>22</sup>

Eyewitness testimonies illustrate the gravity of the attacks committed against ethnic Tigrayans:

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<sup>20</sup>Feleke, Bethlehem et al. "'Two bullets is enough' Analysis of Tigray massacre video raises questions for Ethiopian Army." CNN. 2 April 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/01/africa/tigray-mahibere-dego-massacre-video-cmd-intl/index.html>.

<sup>21</sup>Amnesty International. "The Massacre in Axum." February 26, 2021. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr25/3730/2021/en/>. See also Human Rights Watch. "Ethiopia: Eritrean Forces Massacre Tigray Civilians." March 5, 2021. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/05/ethiopia-eritrean-forces-massacre-tigray-civilians>.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*



“Mothers were forced to tie up their sons. A pregnant woman was shot, her husband killed. Some of the survivors hid under the bodies of the dead.”<sup>23</sup>

“Their hands were tied ... young children ... we saw them everywhere. There was an elderly man who had been killed on the road, an 80-something-year-old man. And the young kids they killed on the street in the open. I've never seen a massacre like this and I don't want to [again].”<sup>24</sup>

“I saw a lot of my friends killed. One of them asked me to help but I didn't do anything. The Eritrean soldiers were lying on the ground and shooting from a distance. Five of my friends were already dead. The sixth was injured on his abdomen and the blood was percolating like a fountain so he asked me to help. So I brought him a blanket and tried to tie it. They kept shooting at us and the bullets hit around me. And he kept asking 'Can you please take me to the hospital?' And I didn't take him because the hospital had already been looted and they were killing the patients at the hospital. And then I saw him when he's dead. His final sentences were 'I'm tired, I want to sleep. Just save your life and run away.'”<sup>25</sup>

### Intentional Starvation

The eruption of the conflict in Ethiopia coincided with harvesting season,<sup>26</sup> laying the foundations for the severe and widespread famine which has gripped the country. However, the devastating effects of the famine for the civilian population have been deliberately and exponentially magnified by the Abiy regime, which has instrumentalized starvation and humanitarian deprivation as a strategy of war in the Tigray region.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to destroying vital social infrastructure, the military operations in Tigray have included the theft or destruction livestock, farming equipment, and food supplies. Estimates indicate that around 90% of the region's entire grain crop has been destroyed or stolen by Ethiopian and Eritrean military forces.<sup>28</sup> In conjunction with these tactics, the Ethiopian government severely restricted and even denied<sup>29</sup> humanitarian access to the country, preventing vital food and supplies from reaching those who are desperately in need.

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<sup>23</sup>Rahwa, survivor from Maryam Dengelat. Testimony in Arvanitidis, Barbara et al. “Massacre in the mountains.” *CNN*. 22 March 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/26/africa/ethiopia-tigray-dengelat-massacre-intl/index.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Abraham, survivor and eyewitness from Maryam Dengelat. Testimony from Arvanitidis, Barbara et al. “Massacre in the mountains.” *CNN*. 22 March 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/26/africa/ethiopia-tigray-dengelat-massacre-intl/index.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Survivor and eyewitness from Axum. Testimony in Amnesty International. “The Massacre in Axum.” February 26 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Human Rights Watch. “The Latest on the Crisis in Ethiopia's Tigray Region” 30 July 2021. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/30/latest-crisis-ethiopia-tigray-region>.

<sup>27</sup> Schaap, Fritz. “The Horrors Faced by the Women of Tigray.” *Der Spiegel*. 30 June 2021. Available at <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/violence-in-ethiopia-using-famine-and-rape-as-a-weapon-of-war-a-359c9566-8660-465c-b3fb-c18f594b416a> See also Besheer, Margaret. “UN: Hunger, Rape Rising in Ethiopia's Tigray.” *VOA News*. 15 April 2021.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Quach, Georgina. “Ethiopia expels ‘meddling’ UN staff as famine deepens in Tigray without aid.” *The Guardian*. 1 October 2021. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/oct/01/ethiopia-expels-meddling-un-staff-as-famine-deepens-in-tigray-without-aid>.



Further measures restricting the movement of people and resources into Tigray have likewise exacerbated shortages of already limited supplies, including not only food, but water, fuel, and electricity.

These strategies have compounded the already dire humanitarian conditions which are the natural consequence of war, resulting in widespread starvation, malnutrition, and suffering among the civilian population of Tigray.

“I am used to spending two days eating nothing. But my children cannot spend more than one day. They cry; I beg so that they stop crying.”<sup>30</sup>

“There was nothing to eat for three weeks. I could not afford to buy milk for my son when the mother failed to breastfeed him. He cries non-stop...Listening to his cries, there are days when I contemplate killing myself.”<sup>31</sup>

### Sexual Violence

In the course of the war in Tigray, an estimated 22,500 women and girls have suffered sexual violence.<sup>32</sup> Reports indicate that 30% of all attacks against civilians have involved some sort of sexual violence and that almost 25% involved gang rape. These assaults often lasted for days, with multiple men violating the same victim, and in some cases, girls as young as eight years old were targeted.<sup>33</sup> In addition to rape and gang rape, gender-based violence includes starvation, the taking of female hostages,<sup>34</sup> mutilation, and sexual slavery.<sup>35</sup> The consequences of this campaign of systematic sexual violence are long-lasting, including not only disease, unwanted pregnancy, severe injury, and reproductive damage, but also enduring psychological trauma which has devastated families and communities.<sup>36</sup> The following testimonies from victims of sexual violence depict the brutality of the attacks:

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<sup>30</sup>Worknesh Welday, 25-year-old mother of two. Testimony in “Tigray mothers share shocking accounts of dire famine conditions.” *Al Jazeera*. 23 September, 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/23/tigray-mothers-share-shocking-accounts-of-dire-famine-conditions>.

<sup>31</sup>Tesfaye Hiluf, father. Testimony in “Tigray mothers share shocking accounts of dire famine conditions.” *Al Jazeera*. 23 September, 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/23/tigray-mothers-share-shocking-accounts-of-dire-famine-conditions>.

<sup>32</sup>Schaap, Fritz. “The Horrors Faced by the Women of Tigray.” *Der Spiegel*. 30 June 2021.

<sup>33</sup>Lederer, Edith M. “UN: Tigray’s humanitarian crisis worsens, no Eritrean exit.” *AP News*. 15 April 2021. Available at <https://apnews.com/article/ethiopia-violence-united-nations-66549db53c5617ea52464a2c3934b095>.

<sup>34</sup>Feleke, Bethlehem et al. “Ethiopian leader says troops who raped civilians in Tigray will be held to account after CNN investigation.” *CNN*. 23 March 2021.

<sup>35</sup>Amnesty International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>36</sup>Murdock, Heather. “Hundreds of Women, Girls Brutalized by Soldiers in Tigray War.” *VOA News*. 7 July 2021. Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-tigray-hundreds-women-girls-brutalized-soldiers-tigray-war/6207953.html>.



“It’s not enough to rape you Tigrayans. You should never again have children.”<sup>37</sup>

“Three men came into the room where I was. It was evening and already dark. I woke up due to the noise they were making. I did not scream; they gestured to me not to make any noise or [they] would kill me. They raped me one after the other. They were not young; [they were] at least 40. They had rifles. I was four months pregnant; I don’t know if they realized I was pregnant. I don’t know if they realized I was a person. I did not tell my family. I don’t know if they knew or suspected what happened to me.”<sup>38</sup>

“They kept me at their temporary base; it was fenced in with piled up stones. Five of them raped me in front of my children. I have three children. One was three months old, and the other two are nine and six years old. They used an iron rod, which is used to clean the gun, to burn me. They used the fire they put on to roast the goat [to heat the rod]. They inserted pieces of metal in my womb; that was what hurt me.”<sup>39</sup>

“Some kept my daughters in a room and others took me to another room; not sure how many were in the room with me; they were going in and out. They abused me. Most of them raped me. I lost count how many raped me. It was around midday. They raped me all day and throughout the night and kept me for three days and continued to rape me all the time. They said if you were male we would kill you, but girls can make Amhara babies.”<sup>40</sup>

The documented cases illustrate that Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers use sexual violence as a weapon of war in Tigray “as a means to humiliate, terrorize and traumatize an entire population today and into the next generation.”<sup>41</sup>The stigma and trauma endured by victims in the wake of sexual assault often alienate Tigrayan women and girls from their communities, in many cases preventing them from returning to their families.<sup>42</sup>Similarly, reports of soldiers in Tigray forcing male civilians to rape

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<sup>37</sup>Maeza, victim and survivor of sexual violence. Testimony in Schaap, Fritz. “The Horrors Faced by the Women of Tigray.” *Der Spiegel*. 30 June 2021.

<sup>38</sup>Letay, 20-year-old survivor from Baaker. Testimony in Amnesty International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>39</sup>Eyerusalem, a 39-year-old survivor. Testimony in Amnesty International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>40</sup>Fasika, a 28-year-old survivor from Humera. Testimony in Amnesty International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>41</sup>Mark Lowcock, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Cited in Lederer, Edith M. “UN: Tigray’s humanitarian crisis worsens, no Eritrean exit.” *AP News*. 15 April 2021. See also Amnesty International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>42</sup>Feleke, Bethlehem et al. “Ethiopian leader says troops who raped civilians in Tigray will be held to account after CNN investigation.” *CNN*. 23 March 2021. Available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/03/23/africa/ethiopia-rape-abuse-abiy-response-intl/index.html>. See also Murdock, Heather. “Hundreds of Women, Girls Brutalized by Soldiers in Tigray War.” *VOA News*. 7 July 2021. Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-tigray-hundreds-women-girls-brutalized-soldiers-tigray-war/6207953.html>. See also Amnesty



their family members<sup>43</sup> demonstrate the strategic use of sexual violence as a means of targeting of the family unit and the social fabric of Tigrayan society. In their deliberate efforts to “shatter families and destroy the reproductive and mental health of their victims,”<sup>44</sup> the ethnically targeted and systematic campaign of sexual violence against Tigrayans appears to be an effort to “cleanse them, to cleanse the blood line.”<sup>45</sup>

### Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearance

The use of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces has also been widely reported in the Tigray region, as a means of instilling fear in the population. During the massacre in Axum, Eritrean soldiers rounded up large numbers of male civilians in detention centers, where they were subjected to beatings, psychological terror, and other forms of ill-treatment in an “effort to terrorize the population into submission and deter further attacks.”<sup>46</sup>

“Eritrean soldiers gathered us ... We were maybe 500 people, only men. They put us in a big hole in the ground.”<sup>47</sup>

“They beat us and inflicted military punishment: forcing you to walk with your knees, or to crawl on the floor with your abdomen ... They didn’t beat me. They would make me sit and stand constantly, like a physical exercise, and rolling while lying down, but I hated this.”<sup>48</sup>

Arbitrary mass arrests of Tigrayan civilians in Addis Ababa confirm that the authorities are deliberately targeting this ethnic group. Detainees are illegally denied due process in court and are secretly transferred between different police jurisdictions in an effort to prolong periods of detention and evade legal requirements. While a small number of those arrested have been released, the majority either remain in detention or have been otherwise forcibly disappeared. These individuals are thus at considerable risk of torture, extrajudicial killing, and other forms of abuse.<sup>49</sup>

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International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>43</sup>Cone, Devon. “Women in Tigray Face increased Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.” *Refugees International*. 26 August 2021.

<sup>44</sup>Samantha Power, USAID Administrator. Cited in Cone, Devon. “Women in Tigray Face increased Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.” *Refugees International*. 26 August 2021. See also Amnesty International. “‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person.’ Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.” 11 August 2021.

<sup>45</sup>Dr. Tedros Tefera, refugee camp. Testimony in Hamdayet, Sudan in Feleke, Bethlehem et al. “Ethiopian leader says troops who raped civilians in Tigray will be held to account after CNN investigation.” *CNN*. 23 March 2021.

<sup>46</sup>Amnesty International. “The Massacre in Axum.” February 26, 2021. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr25/3730/2021/en/>.

<sup>47</sup>26-year old male survivor from Axum. Testimony in Amnesty International. “The Massacre in Axum.” February 26, 2021.

<sup>48</sup>Male survivor from Axum. Testimony in Amnesty International. “The Massacre in Axum.” February 26, 2021.

<sup>49</sup>Human Rights Watch. “Ethiopia: Ethnic Tigrayans Forcibly Disappeared” August 18, 2021. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/18/ethiopia-ethnic-tigrayans-forcibly-disappeared>. See also Amnesty International. “End the arbitrary arrests of Tigrayans.” Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/end-the-arbitrary-arrests-of-tigrayans/>



Additionally, the detention of journalists, political activists, and aid workers has also proven to be a common tactic for Ethiopian authorities. Even short of arrest, ethnic Tigrayans are subjected to inordinate police scrutiny, including searches, discrimination, harassment, and threats. These practices have severely restricted Tigrayans' freedom of movement since the outbreak of the conflict,<sup>50</sup> and generated a pervasive atmosphere of fear in the country.

"To breathe right now is very difficult...We just don't know what's going on."<sup>51</sup>

### Displacement

Since November 2020, the war in Tigray has forced 2.2 million people from their homes under enormous duress and at great risk to themselves and their families. While many have sought refuge in neighboring countries like Sudan, approximately 1.7 million remain in Ethiopia as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). The majority of IDPs in Ethiopia, nearly one million, are women and girls,<sup>52</sup> who remain especially vulnerable to violence and mistreatment throughout their displacement.

"I was raped on the way to the border. It is only a couple hours' walk to the border from my hometown."<sup>53</sup>

"They gave us two days to leave, or we would be killed."<sup>54</sup>

"The Amhara militia are going door to door. If they know you are a Tigrayan they kill or arrest you. We feel bad because it is our country. Anyone who can escape is fleeing."<sup>55</sup>

For both refugees and IDPs, the perils encountered in fleeing their homes are far from the last of their hardships. Upon reaching their destinations, whether in Ethiopia or neighboring Sudan, those fleeing violence in Tigray are faced with dire humanitarian conditions. Without access to basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, and medical care,<sup>56</sup> these already persecuted and traumatized individuals remain desperate and vulnerable. Such circumstances only inflict further damage to both the physical and mental

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<sup>50</sup>Human Rights Watch. "Ethiopia: Ethnic Tigrayans Forcibly Disappeared" August 18, 2021. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/18/ethiopia-ethnic-tigrayans-forcibly-disappeared>.

<sup>51</sup>Male eyewitness who helped detainees. Testimony in Human Rights Watch. "Ethiopia: Ethnic Tigrayans Forcibly Disappeared" August 18, 2021.

<sup>52</sup>Cone, Devon. "Women in Tigray Face increased Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." *Refugees International*. 26 August 2021. Available at <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2021/8/23/women-in-tigray-face-increased-risk-of-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>.

<sup>53</sup>Sosina, an 18-year-old student from Rawayan. Testimony in Amnesty International. "'I don't know if they realized I was a person.' Rape and other Sexual Violence in the Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia." 11 August 2021.

<sup>54</sup>18-year-old Tigrayan male refugee. Testimony in Harding, Andrew. "Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: Fleeing for fear of new ethnic conflict." BBC News. 16 July 2021. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57818673>.

<sup>55</sup>Teenage male refugee. Testimony in Harding, Andrew. "Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: Fleeing for fear of new ethnic conflict." BBC News. 16 July 2021.

<sup>56</sup>Cone, Devon. "Women in Tigray Face increased Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." *Refugees International*. 26 August 2021.



health of refugees,<sup>57</sup> without offering any guarantee of their safety from future violence.

### **Tigray Today: Likelihood of Escalation**

Although the Ethiopian government had initially expected a swift defeat of the TPLF, the war in Tigray rages on, approaching the end of its first year. In June 2021, Tigrayan forces achieved a surprising victory, retaking the regional capital of Mekelle and forcing Ethiopian and Eritrean troops to withdraw. However, subsequent offensives carried about by both regular and rebel Tigrayan forces in the regions of Amhara and Afar are alleged to have included numerous atrocities,<sup>58</sup> undoubtedly exacerbating ethnic tensions in the country.<sup>59</sup> The TPLF and their allies continue to enjoy the support of local populations in much of the country and appear capable of sustaining their efforts for months or even years.<sup>60</sup>

The Ethiopian government seems even less likely to yield, given its steadily intensifying tactics increasingly militant rhetoric, and continuing Eritrean support. The country's recent elections, which saw Prime Minister Abiy sworn in for another five-year term, also have dubious implications for peace and security.<sup>61</sup> Under his leadership, a culture of impunity persists in Ethiopia wherein the perpetrators of crimes are rarely brought to justice and thus undeterred from committing future atrocities. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has also recently urged all capable Ethiopians to join the military, in order to stop Tigray rebels "once and for all," suggesting that the regime remains intent on achieving victory by whatever means necessary.<sup>62</sup>

Emerging reports indicate that the country's Qemant ethnic minority are also being targeted in government attacks,<sup>63</sup> suggesting that the regime's prerogative of violence is continuing to expand. This is confirmed by recent

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<sup>57</sup>Medecins Sans Frontieres. "Sudan: Refugees from Tigray face hunger and inadequate shelter in Hamdayet." 19 February 2021. Available at <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/story/sudan-refugees-tigray-face-hunger-and-inadequate-shelter-hamdayet>.

<sup>58</sup>Al Jazeera. "Over 120 killed in Ethiopia's Amhara region, officials say." *Al Jazeera*. 8 September 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/8/ethiopia-officials-accuse-tigray-forces-killing-120-civilians>.

<sup>59</sup>Harding, Andrew. "Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: Fleeing for fear of new ethnic conflict." BBC News. 16 July 2021. See also Al Jazeera. "Over 120 killed in Ethiopia's Amhara region, officials say." 8 September 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/8/ethiopia-officials-accuse-tigray-forces-killing-120-civilians>.

<sup>60</sup>Horton, Michael. "Tigray Defense Forces Resist Ethiopian Army Offensive as Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethnic Militias Enter the Fray." Terrorism Monitor, Jamestown Foundation. 24 May 2021.

<sup>61</sup>CNN. "Ethiopian parliament confirms Abiy Ahmed as prime minister." CNN News. 4 October 2021. Available at <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/04/africa/ethiopia-prime-minister-abiy-ahmed-sworn-in-intl/index.html>.

<sup>62</sup>Al Jazeera Inside Story. "How far will Ethiopia's PM go to fight rebels in Tigray?" *Al Jazeera*. 11 August 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/inside-story/2021/8/11/how-far-will-ethiopias-pm-go-to-fight-rebels-in-tigray>.

<sup>63</sup>Zelalem, Zecharias. "'Finish us off': Ethiopia's Qemant say targeted in armed campaign." *Al Jazeera*. 6 October 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/6/finish-us-off-ethiopia-qemant-say-under-fire-in-armed-campaign>.



developments in the Afar and Amhara regions, where deteriorating inter-ethnic relations have led to a mass mobilization of regime forces and recent bombardments in northern territories.<sup>64</sup> These factors indicate the alarming potential of the war in Ethiopia spread beyond the Tigray region, stoking “fears of a wider crisis with the potential to tear apart Ethiopia and spread to neighboring countries, destabilizing the entire Horn of Africa.”<sup>65</sup> Spill-over from the war in Tigray is well underway,<sup>66</sup> and is only likely to continue.

No matter the military trajectory of the conflict, the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia is sure to worsen in the absence of immediate intervention. Reports indicate that the food security emergency in Tigray is among the most severe in the world, with the situation in parts of the region classified as ‘Catastrophic’ by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) standards of the international food security monitoring.<sup>67</sup> Approximately 160,000 children under the age of five in Tigray suffer from moderate to severe malnutrition,<sup>68</sup> while 79% of pregnant and nursing women are also acutely malnourished.<sup>69</sup> Severe hunger, including death by starvation, are widely documented.<sup>70</sup> In recent months, the Ethiopian government has cut off communication and access to the Tigray region, and imposed a de facto humanitarian blockade<sup>71</sup> which has only intensified the plight of the civilian population, compounding the economic effects of protracted conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.

## INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

Despite maintaining that its operations in Tigray have only been carried out against military targets, the Ethiopian government has been culpable in numerous atrocities against the citizens of Tigray and surrounding regions. This pattern of violence promises to continue, as does the dire humanitarian crisis gripping Ethiopia. Thus far, the efforts of the international community have

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<sup>64</sup> Al Jazeera. “Ethiopian troops intensify strikes against Tigray forces: Reports.” 9 October 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/9/ethiopia-forces-launch-offensive-against-tigray-rebels>

<sup>65</sup> Horton, Michael. “Tigray Defense Forces Resist Ethiopian Army Offensive as Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethnic Militias Enter the Fray.” Terrorism Monitor, Jamestown Foundation. 24 May 2021.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network. “Conflict likely to drive extreme food insecurity in Tigray through at least January 2022.” 21 June 2021. Available at <https://fews.net/east-africa/ethiopia/food-security-outlook/june-2021>

<sup>68</sup> Del Conte, David. “7 Facts You Need to Know about the Famine in Tigray.” Refugees International. 13 August 2021. Available at <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/7-facts-you-need-to-know-about-the-famine-in-tigray>. See also Al Jazeera. “UN warns of ‘unprecedented’ malnutrition in Ethiopia’s Tigray.” 1 October 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/1/un-warns-of-unprecedented-malnutrition-in-tigray>.

<sup>69</sup> UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). “Situation Report: Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update.” 20 September 2021. Available at <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia/>.

<sup>70</sup> Besheer, Margaret. “UN: Hunger, Rape Rising in Ethiopia’s Tigray.” VOA News. 15 April 2021. Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-tigray-un-hunger-rape-rising-ethiopia-tigray/6204632.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Al Jazeera. “Ethiopia’s Tigray crisis ‘set to worsen dramatically’: UN.” *Al Jazeera*. 2 September 2021. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/2/ethiopia-tigray-crisis-set-to-worsen-dramatically-un>.



failed both to put an end to the conflict and to alleviate the suffering of the Tigrayan population.

### **Legal Grounds for Intervention**

The findings of this report can only ever offer provisional guidance, as the ultimate authority on matters pertaining to international criminal and humanitarian law lies with the qualified judiciary bodies. Nevertheless, based on current assessments and pending further investigation, this report indicates a high probability that atrocities and gross violations of international law have been committed against the civilian population of Tigray by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces. Based on current international law and exigent jurisprudence, this report identifies the following potential legal violations in Tigray, which could prove to be ample grounds for intervention as well as further investigation and prosecution:

- **War crimes:** The conduct of the Ethiopian regime and its allies reflects a complete disregard for international humanitarian law and customary laws of war. The findings of this report suggest that the following war crimes have been committed in Tigray by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces: murder, mutilation, cruel treatment, torture, outrages upon personal dignity, sentencing or execution without due process, attacking the civilian population, rape and sexual violence, intentional starvation and displacing civilians.
- **Crimes against humanity:** The present assessment also suggests that the following crimes against humanity were committed by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces, as part of a widespread and systematic attack against Tigrayan civilians: murder, extermination, imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, rape and sexual violence, persecution, enforced disappearance, as well as other inhumane acts causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.
- With regards to **genocide**, legal justification must necessarily be established by competent judicial authorities. However, this report finds substantial evidence to prove *dolus specialis* in the case of the Ethiopian government's military operations and to conclude that the violence committed against ethnic Tigrayans in Ethiopia may constitute genocide or may come to do so in the near future.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ethiopian government, aided by Eritrean forces, has been conducting a violent campaign in the region of Tigray since November 2020, under the auspices of subduing the TPLF rebel militant movement. Although the Ethiopian regime insists that no civilians have been targeted or harmed in its attacks, the evidence presented in this report suggests federal troops and their allies have perpetrated numerous atrocities against Tigrayan which, pending further investigation by the competent legal authorities, are likely to constitute serious violations of international law. As such, this report concludes that there are sufficient legal grounds to justify an international intervention to protect civilians in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the dire humanitarian situation in the country and the steadily intensifying nature of the conflict necessitates that such an intervention be enacted with the upmost urgency, in order to prevent the violence from continuing to spill over into other parts of Ethiopia, and potentially the wider region.

The responsibility to protect civilians from atrocities applies both to individual states and the international community collectively. Thus, given the inability of the parties to the conflict to reach a resolution, the future of the Tigray war, including the prospects of peace, is likely to be decided by the involvement of the international community.

With this in mind, the following **recommendations** are made on behalf of the Srebrenica Memorial Center Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity Alert and Prevention Mechanism:

- The Ethiopian government and its allies must **stop any further violations** of international humanitarian and criminal law, including deliberate attacks on civilians.
- The Ethiopian government must **restore all communication** to Tigray, immediately **end the humanitarian blockade**, and ensure **unfettered access** to all humanitarian organizations and human rights monitors.
- The UN must establish **an international fact-finding mission** to investigate allegations of atrocities, ensuring that all parties to the conflict are investigated and held accountable for their crimes. The Ethiopian government must grant full access to the investigative mission.
- The African Union should take an active role in the mediation of an **immediate cease-fire** on all sides of the conflict. The AU should provide adequate support and oversight for the implementation of the cease-fire.

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- With UN and AU support, Ethiopian authorities must establish a **national mechanism** to adequately and impartially address the root causes of ethnic violence, as well as to promote reconciliation, national unity, and tolerance.
  - All sides to the conflict must be included in the negotiation of **a lasting peace agreement**. Regional and international actors must ensure that the peace agreement is respected and implemented. This agreement must ensure protections for returning refugees, IDPs, and all ethnic minorities, and should not deny rights to entire groups including members of the army or opposition militias.
  - All able actors should continue or increase **humanitarian assistance** to populations in Ethiopia as well as refugee communities in Sudan.
  - The international community must ensure **legal accountability** in international and/or domestic courts for all crimes committed during the conflict.