



# DAISMUN XI

---

**FORUM:** Security Council

**ISSUE:** Resolving the Conflict in the Tigray Region

**STUDENT OFFICER:** Eileen Wu

**POSITION:** Deputy President

## **Introduction:**

High Commissioner Grandi, who recently concluded a mission to Ethiopia, described the situation in Tigray as “extremely grave”. “People need all possible forms of support: food items, non-food items, medicine, clean water, shelter [and] the closure of the banking system, of the telecommunication system has added to the hardship of thousands of people”, he said at a press conference in Addis Ababa. Mr. Grandi said that though “some progress” in the security situation was reported by the Government, “isolated or scattered incidents continue to happen ... and in some areas we continue to observe, violence carried out by various armed elements and militias, but also as often is the case in these military situations, by criminal elements and this has resulted in looting, in violence, sexual violence, in rape.”

Back on November 4th, 2020, a fresh war erupted between the federal government and the powerful regional government of Tigray. Ethnic strife is once again threatening to tear apart Ethiopia, an African nation with a vast and multi-ethnic population. The violence in the Tigray Region has displaced more than 3 million people over the past two years, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. Since the fighting began on November 4th, Ethiopia is facing a tremendous crisis like never before: tens of thousands of refugees are fleeing into neighboring Sudan, the country is struggling under the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, and the worst locust outbreak has destroyed agricultural products and threatened food insecurity.

Ethiopia has multiple regional federations. Minority Tigray, governed by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), had a disproportionate say in the workings of the federal government based in the Addis Ababa capital. The Tigray government, which also has multiple militia forces and a powerful army, was often condemned as “repressive and regressive”. Ethiopia’s federal government and the Tigray regional forces regard each other as illegal after a falling-out when Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in 2018, sidelining the once-dominant Tigray leaders amid sweeping political reforms. Abiy broke apart the powerful ruling coalition led by the TPLF and brought in a new Prosperity Party, which the Tigray region saw as a power grab and a ploy to weaken the federation. He introduced a wave of political reforms in the long-repressive country and announced a shocking peace deal with the neighbor and fierce rival Eritrea.

However, due to COVID-19, the situation was worsened dramatically as Abiy postponed the elections, which was supposed to be the country’s first truly democratic elections in the 2020 summer. The TPLF leadership has carried out a strategy of provocation meant to undermine and weaken Abiy. Their disdain for him and their corresponding resentment of their diminished political stature is well known. The TPLF’s armed attack against the Ethiopian army’s northern command headquarters in early November forced Abiy’s hand. If Abiy had not responded forcefully to the TPLF’s latest incursion, not only would he have risked emboldening a key rival, but it would have signaled weakness to other groups desiring further autonomy.

In conclusion, the committee should have a clear resolution in sight to prevent further severe destruction in the Tigray Region. If the conflict escalates further, it could destabilize the region and lead to mass displacement and the refugee crisis. The international community should make efforts to restore peace to the region, stop a growing humanitarian crisis and call for a comprehensive resolution.



# DAISMUN XI

---

## **Historical Background:**

Following the end of the Ethiopian Civil War in 1991, Ethiopia became a dominant-party state under the rule of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of ethnically-based parties. The founding and the most influential member was the TPLF. The TPLF used to be part of the Ethiopian governing coalition until its 2019 refusal to merge into the Prosperity Party. In 2020, tensions between the government and the TPLF escalated in the months before the November Tigray military intervention. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who is of Oromo descent, accused the TPLF Party Members in the Tigray Regional Government of undermining his authority. By contrast, the Tigray authorities saw the refusal to recognize the September 2020 election for the Tigray parliament (which, along with all elections in Ethiopia, had been delayed by the federal elections board because of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia) as the reason for the outbreak of the conflict.

## **Key Terms:**

### *Abiy Ahmed*

An Ethiopian politician serving as 4th Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia since 2 April 2018.

### *Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF)*

Civil direction of the military is carried out through the Ministry of Defense, which oversees the ground forces, air force, as well as the Defense Industry Sector.

### *Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)*

An ethnic federalist political coalition in Ethiopia. After leading the overthrow of the Communist People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, it dominated Ethiopian politics from 1991 to 2019.

### *Ethnicity*

A grouping of people who identify with each other on the basis of shared attributes that distinguish them from other groups such as a common set of traditions, ancestry, language, history, society, culture, nation, religion, or social treatment within their residing area.

### *Ethnic Federalism*

A federal system of national government in which the federated units are defined and segregated by ethnicity using redlining policies, and in certain cases partitioning multi-ethnic regions causing internal displacement of people due to large-scale internal population transfers.

### *Federal government*

A framework of a federal parliamentary republic, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government. Executive power is exercised by the government. Federal legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament.

### *Humanitarian crisis*

A singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well-being of a community or large group of people.

### *Mai Kadra massacre*

A series of ethnic cleansing and mass murders carried out on 9–10 November 2020 in the town of Mai Kadra in the Tigray Region of northwestern Ethiopia, near the Sudanese border.



# DAISMUN XI

---

## ***Prosperity Party***

A political party in Ethiopia established on December 1, 2019 as a successor to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) by incumbent Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

## ***Refugee***

A person who has escaped from their own country for political, religious, or economic reasons or because of a war.

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

A political party in Ethiopia, established on 18 February 1975 in Dedebit, northwestern Tigray.

## **Major Parties Involved:**

### ***Ethiopia***

As the main focus in this consistent conflict, the internal tensions in Ethiopia was intensified. Fighting between the TPLF and the Federal Government began with the 4 November attacks on the Northern Command bases and headquarters of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) in Tigray Region by TPLF aligned security forces and with attacks by the ENDF in the Tigray Region on the same day, that federal authorities described as a police action.

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

In November 2019, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front Chairman unified the constituent parties of the coalition into a new Prosperity Party. The TPLF viewed this merger as illegal and did not participate in the merger. From the start of January 2020, the TPLF were involved in activities that were criticized by the federal government. In September 2020, the TPLF asked the National Election Board of Ethiopia to help Tigray set up regional elections after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed canceled elections due to COVID-19. After the board refused the request, the TPLF worked with opposition parties in Tigray to set up its own election board to oversee their regional elections. The 2020 Tigray regional election was held on 9 September 2020, which further intensified the tensions between governments.

### ***Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)***

It was an ethnic federalist political coalition that had governed Ethiopia for 30 years. It was merged into the new Prosperity Party by Abiy.

### ***Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)***

It condemned the "decision of President Mustafe to portray Somalis in Ethiopia as supporters of the war against Tigray".

### ***Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF)***

Fighting first occurred in the bases and headquarters of the ENDF in Tigray Region by TPLF aligned security forces and with attacks by the ENDF in the Tigray Region on the same day, which is described as a police action by federal authorities.

### ***United Kingdom***

Communicated with Abiy and urged "de-escalation of the Tigray conflict" and stated that "civilians and humanitarian access must be protected".



# DAISMUN XI

## ***United States***

Urged de-escalation of the conflict and immediate action to restore peace, and emphasized the importance of protecting civilians. U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's foreign policy adviser Antony Blinken expressed deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia, ethnic violence and threats to peace and security in the area. He called on the TPLF to protect civilians and take steps to end the conflict.

## ***The United Nations***

Warned of the emergence of a major humanitarian crisis, if a full-scale conflict arose.

## ***European Commission***

Mobilized an initial four million euros in emergency aid, in order to assist displaced Ethiopian refugees who had fled to Sudan. However, due to the conflict, EU planned to cut aid to and sanction other regions of Ethiopia.

## ***African Union***

States that the European Union and UNSC should not intervene until an African Union envoy is sent to Ethiopia.

## **Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue:**

In 2019, Abiy formed the Prosperity Party in an attempt to merge the factions in the EPRDF coalition into one party. The TPLF rejected the merger and split from the coalition, choosing to remain the governing party of the Tigray region. Abiy also created the new party to increase the federal government's power and minimize regional autonomy. Under the EPRDF coalition, Ethiopia experienced rapid economic growth and stability. But its human rights record was problematic and regional representation was not always truly democratic. While Ethiopia's experiment with ethnic federalism appeared to keep the country from sliding into civil war, the low-level repression that minority groups experienced suggests that political power remains concentrated in the central government.

## **Timeline:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
February 1975	The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is founded to fight back and destabilize the junta.
June 1991	TPLF and coalition partners overthrows the military government. For another two decades, TPLF dominates Ethiopia's ruling alliance, the Ethiopian People's revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).
April 2018	Abiy Ahmed is elected by the EPRDF, becoming the country's first Oromo (the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia) leader.
2018	Abiy implements wave of reforms: releasing thousands of political prisoners, unblocking hundreds of media channels, and privatizing state-own enterprises.



# DAISMUN XI

October 2019	Abiy is awarded the Nobel Prize for resolving the long-running conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
Late 2019	The TPLF refuses to join Abiy in forming the nationwide Prosperity Party after Abiy dissolves the EPRDF, which was dominated for decades by the Tigray People's Liberation Front.
August 2020	Abiy postpones the August 21 general elections as COVID-19 hits. TPLF accuses Abiy of unconstitutionally extending his government's term. TPLF creates their own electoral commission and hold separate regional elections.
September 2020	Abiy's government accuses the TPLF of unlawfully holding their own polls.
November 4 2020	Security forces loyal to the TPLF unexpectedly attack the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) in Tigray region's capital, Mekele. Abiy responds by shutting down internet, telephone, and electricity services in Tigray, while the Tigray Regional Administration forbids all forms of transportation, including flights.
November 6 2020	Abiy government launches an airstrike against Tigray forces, destroying rockets and other weapons. Sudan closed its borders with Ethiopia. The United Nations (UN) urges a swift and peaceful resolution.
November 7 2020	Ethiopia's parliament declares Tigray government illegal.
November 9 2020	Mai Kadra massacre- against the backdrop of ongoing battles between the Ethiopian federal government and Tigray forces, up to 500 civilians are killed in a massacre in Mai Kadra near the Sudanese border.
November 10-13 2020	25,000 refugees cross the boarder to neighboring Sudan.
November 14 2020	Multiple rockets launched from Ethiopia hit Eritrea's capital, Asmara. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warns the fighting must not escalate further, saying, "Ethiopia's stability is important for the entire Horn of Africa region."
November 23 2020	Ethiopian federal forces have surrounded Mekelle at about 50 km (31 miles). The government also alleges that Tigrayan forces have fired rockets into Bahir Dar, the neighboring Amhara region's capital.
November 26 2020	Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed orders the National Defense Force to attack Mekele and "bring to justice" TPLF leaders.

**Possible solutions:**

---



# DAISMUN XI

---

Calls out the government's alleged targeting of ethnic Tigrayans, including those who are being violated outside of the Tigray Region. According to the UN's special advisor on the prevention of genocide in Ethiopia, that the government is rounding up individuals across the country and implementing "targeted attacks against civilians based on their ethnicity or religion." Member states and NGOs should take action to ensure the safety of the ethnic groups.

Strongly urges Ethiopia's government to end its communications and violence and restore humanitarian access to Tigray Region. With the full shutdown of internet and phone communications, people in the Tigray region had no humanitarian access or help from the government. A possible solution may include asking the International Committee of the Red Cross to ascertain where there is a humanitarian need and to prevent civilians from requesting urgent medical assistance.

Encourages member states and NGOs to form an organization and to raise voluntary donations, which can aid the region with emergency medicines and necessities. Governments must facilitate cross-border transportations to import or export the relief supplies timely and safely.

Calls for member states to support the inclusion of refugees in their communities. As there are tens of thousands of refugees fled to Sudan and neighboring countries from Ethiopia, possible actions should be taken to ensure their safety abroad. For example, open communities to the refugees, encourage citizens to accept their existence, and offer a temporary residence, job opportunities, etc.

Encourages another NGO to be formed, which should provide aid for refugees. Low-skilled refugees should receive the opportunities of low-skill required work. Highly skilled refugees can supply the labor market and should be employed. The goal of this NGO should not only be aiding the refugees temporarily but also enhancing the country's economy.

Requests the government of Ethiopia to communicate with the United Nations and the Africa Union to solve its internal tensions. Member states should assist to stop ethnic violence in Ethiopia. Possible solutions may include boundaries that allow for more local autonomy so that groups can regulate their public spaces, establishing a network of organizations for the prevention and adjustment of inner conflicts. Such an infrastructure should comprise institutions at the national, regional, and global levels, and have functions that will differ from level to level.

Reminder to all delegates that solutions should not be limited to those listed above. Delegates should further elaborate on all possible solutions.



# DAISMUN XI

---

## Works Cited:

---

- Addisstandard. "Exclusive: Third Day EPRDF EC Discussing 'Prosperity Party' Regulation. Find the Draft Copy Obtained by AS." *Addis Standard*, 18 Nov. 2019, [addisstandard.com/exclusive-third-day-eprdf-ec-discussing-prosperity-party-regulation-find-the-draft-copy-obtained-by-as/](https://addisstandard.com/exclusive-third-day-eprdf-ec-discussing-prosperity-party-regulation-find-the-draft-copy-obtained-by-as/).
- Al Arabiya English. "US Calls for End to Conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray: Pompeo." *Al Arabiya English*, Al Arabiya English, 5 Nov. 2020, [english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2020/11/05/US-calls-for-end-to-conflict-in-Ethiopia-s-Tigray-US](https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2020/11/05/US-calls-for-end-to-conflict-in-Ethiopia-s-Tigray-US).
- Bhandari, Aditi, and David Lewis. "The Conflict in Ethiopia." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 18 Dec. 2020, [graphics.reuters.com/ETHIOPIA-CONFLICT/xk1pyjmnvdvg/](https://graphics.reuters.com/ETHIOPIA-CONFLICT/xk1pyjmnvdvg/).
- Cambridge Dictionary: Find Definitions, Meanings & Translations*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/us/](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/).
- Desk, Web. "What Is Happening in Ethiopia? The Tigray Conflict, Explained." *The Week*, The Week, 20 Nov. 2020, [www.theweek.in/news/world/2020/11/20/what-is-happening-ethiopia-the-tigray-conflict-explained.html](https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2020/11/20/what-is-happening-ethiopia-the-tigray-conflict-explained.html).
- Deutsche Welle. "Ethiopia: A Timeline of the Tigray Crisis: DW: 17.11.2020." *DW.COM*, [www.dw.com/en/ethiopia-a-timeline-of-the-tigray-crisis/a-55632181](https://www.dw.com/en/ethiopia-a-timeline-of-the-tigray-crisis/a-55632181).
- "Ethiopia Reshuffles Top Officials as Tigray Conflict Grows." *ABC News*, ABC News Network, [abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ethiopian-leader-defends-military-conflict-defiant-tigray-74089441](https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ethiopian-leader-defends-military-conflict-defiant-tigray-74089441).
- "Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict Worsens, Refugees Flee to Sudan." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 10 Nov. 2020, [www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict/african-bloc-urges-ceasefire-as-ethiopia-claims-airport-in-tigray-idUSKBN27Q0JG?il=0](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict/african-bloc-urges-ceasefire-as-ethiopia-claims-airport-in-tigray-idUSKBN27Q0JG?il=0).
- "Ethiopia's Tigray Crisis: How a Soldier Survived an 11-Hour Gun Battle." *BBC News*, BBC, 10 Dec. 2020, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55215431](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55215431).
- Farole, Safia. "Analysis | Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict Reflects Unresolved Ethnic Tensions." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 24 Nov. 2020, [www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/11/24/ethiopias-tigray-conflict-reflects-unresolved-ethnic-tensions/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/11/24/ethiopias-tigray-conflict-reflects-unresolved-ethnic-tensions/).
- Feldstein, Steven. "Ethiopia's Conflict in Tigray Presents Hard Decisions." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 1 Dec. 2020, [carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/01/ethiopia-s-conflict-in-tigray-presents-hard-decisions-pub-83369](https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/01/ethiopia-s-conflict-in-tigray-presents-hard-decisions-pub-83369).
- "Note to Correspondents: UN High-Level Officials Express Deep Concern Over Escalating Ethnic Tensions in Ethiopia Secretary-General." *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-11-12/note-correspondents-un-high-level-officials-express-deep-concern-over-escalating-ethnic-tensions-ethiopia](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-11-12/note-correspondents-un-high-level-officials-express-deep-concern-over-escalating-ethnic-tensions-ethiopia).



# DAISMUN XI

---

O'Grady, Siobhán. "What Is behind the Conflict in Ethiopia?" *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 23 Nov. 2020, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/11/17/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-what-is-happening/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/11/17/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-what-is-happening/).

Paravicini, Giulia. "Ethiopia Moves on Tigray Capital, Castigates WHO Boss Tedros." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 19 Nov. 2020, [www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict/biden-team-anxious-over-escalating-war-in-u-s-ally-ethiopia-idUSKBN27Z0QN](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict/biden-team-anxious-over-escalating-war-in-u-s-ally-ethiopia-idUSKBN27Z0QN).

"Tigray Crisis: Ethiopia Orders Military Response after Army Base Seized." *BBC News*, BBC, 4 Nov. 2020, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54805088](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54805088).

"Tigray Crisis: 'Genocidal War' Waged in Ethiopia Region, Says Ex-Leader." *BBC News*, BBC, 31 Jan. 2021, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55877939](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55877939).

"War Against Tigray Divides Somalis In Ethiopia." *The Taiwan Times*, 7 Nov. 2020, [thetaiwantimes.com/war-against-tigray-divides-somalis-in-ethiopia/](http://thetaiwantimes.com/war-against-tigray-divides-somalis-in-ethiopia/).

---