

Forum: United Nations Membership Council

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TOPIC 3: The Membership of Tigray

[Link to the specific LibGuide for the topic](#)

I. Introduction to the Topic

The UNMC is not an official UN council; rather, it is tasked with approving the membership of autonomous regions while maintaining international peace, security, and stability. The theme of our conference: "How do we ensure sustainability through multilateral cooperation?" is exemplified by member states working together to resolve international disputes.

On November 4, 2020, Ethiopia's prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, gave the order for a military assault on Mekelle, the regional capital of Tigray. This signaled the start of Ethiopia's civil war between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), as well as what is considered an ethnic cleansing of the Tigrayan people in Ethiopia. The TPLF and the Ethiopian government reached a cease-fire and returned to constitutional order on November 3, 2022.

The United Nations application of the Tigray Region presents a myriad of benefits for the region, as well as repercussions for the international and national community. Being an official UN state means that the Tigray Region would be officially recognized and endorsed by the UN as a member state, which raises possible concerns and causes tensions with those who may be currently against their membership.

Accepting the Tigray Region as an official UN member state could result in international repercussions such as causing conflict with Ethiopia's relations with nations. The independence could also result in military conflicts arising, such as Tigray becoming the target of pre-existing opposing nations such as Ethiopia and Eritrea. On the other hand, becoming a member would result in greater and more efficient foreign assistance in the forms of military aid and multilateral aid.

Within the region of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is considered a provider of security and has a stake in the stability of its neighboring countries, such as Sudan and Somalia. The acceptance of the Tigray Region may jeopardize Ethiopia's ability to support Sudan's fragile democratic transition diplomatically, worsen border tensions, disrupt the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and jeopardize Somalia's move toward peace.

Even after the truce between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, the Tigray Region still suffers from economic instability as well as food and water insecurity caused by the war. Becoming a UN member state could mean the safety of thousands of Tigrayan citizens, however it is still critical to consider the possible difficulties and disadvantages this would cause in order to ensure sustainability of the region through multilateral cooperation.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

Ethnic Cleansing: The systematic violence of racial, ethnic, and religious groups from a region with the goal of achieving a single ethnicity. Determining whether the violent acts in the Tigray Region are part of an ethnic cleansing that targets a certain group of people or whether the war has a different goal and the victims are different according to their position, religion, and ethnicity is crucial.

Sovereignty: According to international law, sovereignty refers to a government's total authority over matters inside an established region or borders. It is important to consider the independence of the Tigray Region in the debate.

Famine: Famine occurs when there is little to no food available to a large number of people, resulting in mass death and starvation. This was a result of the Tigray War, and a comprehensive resolution cannot be drafted until the connection between this and the application for UN membership is clear.

Humanitarian Aid: The provision of supplies and logistical support to those in need. Until long-term assistance from the government and other institutions takes its place, it is typically just temporary. As the Tigray Region is in a fragile state, the question of critical humanitarian aid will be discussed to consider the membership of the Tigray Region.

III. Key Stakeholders

Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF): The Tigrayan People's Liberation Front is a banned political party that was once Ethiopia's dominant party. It is a left-wing ethnic nationalist militia force that the Ethiopian government has recognized as a terrorist organization.

The Prosperity Party: The main force behind the Tigray invasion was the Prosperity Party, which was established in December 2019 and is led by Ethiopia's prime minister, Abiy Ahmed. The People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of Tigray was the dominant force in the country, and Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party aimed to overthrow it.

Abiy Ahmed: Since April 2, 2018, Abiy Ahmed Ali, a politician from Ethiopia, has served as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's fourth prime minister. For his efforts to break the

20-year post-war territorial impasse between Ethiopia and Eritrea, he was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. Visions of an ethnically harmonious, undivided Ethiopia supported Abiy's rise to power, which at first seemed to be a crucial shift from the policies of the ruling coalition dominated by the TPLF. The Nobel Peace Prize committee urged Abiy Ali to put a stop to the current violence in the area in June 2022 and he brought up the possibility of holding peace negotiations with the rebels in Tigray.

Eritrea: The TPLF fought against Eritrea and the Ethiopian federal government in the Tigray War. Along with armed militias and regional paramilitary groups, Eritrean national troops (alongside Ethiopian troops) are responsible for war crimes, unlawful killings, and sexual assault and sexual violence against people in Tigray.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

War crimes: According to Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch, both Ethiopian and Eritrean military have both been charged with war crimes committed in the Tigray Region such as mass extrajudicial executions, forced displacement and rape. Rape had been widespread in the Tigray Region, with victims ranging in age from 8 to 72 having reportedly been raped by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops. Up to 500 thousand individuals died as a result of this.

Displacement: There were over 2 million people who had been internally displaced, causing a humanitarian crisis about the spread of diseases such as COVID-19 at the time in overcrowded camps for refugees as well as a severe shortage of supplies to accommodate such a huge number of people.

Regional Stability: Ethiopia is a major stakeholder in the security and the imports and exports of countries in the Horn of Africa, and both economic growth and regional security depend on Ethiopia's stability. There is the potential that the conflict in Tigray will destabilize the country and lead to unwanted conflicts and economic instability in the Horn of Africa.

Ethnic Cleansing: During the conflict, there have been incidents of ethnic cleansing where Tigrayans have been the targeted racial group. This includes creating a list of all present Tigrayans to classify them, then proceeding to discriminate against the Tigrayans by denying international and domestic travels. This existing social gap between the citizens of Tigray and Ethiopians left the Tigray community vulnerable to all opposing parties.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date

Description of event

December 1st, 2019	Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party was formed. This marked the beginning of his rise to power.
November 4th, 2020	The military attack on Tigray was ordered by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, starting the Tigray War.
November 17 2020	The Ethiopian military captured Mekele, the regional capital of Tigray.
December 17, 2020	Amnesty International reports that hundreds of civilians died in Axum at the start of the war, marking the Axum massacre.
July 2nd, 2021	Four hundred thousand people are either facing famine from Eritrean troops restricting foreign aid.
October 2021	Abiy Ahmed is admitted to office for a five-year tenure as prime minister.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

War crimes: Delegates should call for accountability for the war crimes that the Ethiopian and Eritrean military committed in Tigray. This can include campaigning for the prosecution of the perpetrators and supporting the creation of an independent investigation into the crimes committed within the region.

Displacement: While there is no absolute solution to the problem of displacement, delegates can cooperate in order to mitigate the aftermath. This includes drafting treaties to guarantee that neighboring nations, particularly Eritrea, will welcome and assist refugees from Tigray. (Given that Eritrea is a party to the conflict, these agreements may be difficult to implement because Eritrea is likely to reject them.)

Regional Stability: Delegates should take into account the potential impacts of Tigray becoming an independent state on regional stability. This can include advocating in favor of a peaceful resolution that considers the interests of the neighboring countries within the Horn of Africa and promotes regional cooperation.

Ethnic Cleansing: Similar to War Crimes, delegates should seek accountability of Ethiopia and Eritrea for the mass ethnic cleansing. Considering national impacts, delegates should look for reparations from respective countries for the atrocities committed.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

Delegates should take into account various aspects of this intricate topic when drafting, debating, and voting on resolutions. Delegates should, above all, carefully evaluate the positive and negative implications of these decisions for their own nations and for their relationships with the participating countries, primarily Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Tigray (While also considering countries within the Horn of Africa). Furthermore, it is likely that nations like Ethiopia, Eritrea, or their allies will oppose Tigray's admission as a member state. Many nations, particularly democratic western governments, are probably adamantly opposed to the humanitarian crises and ethnic cleansing that the conflict and Ethiopia caused. They might be more inclined to support Tigray's membership because it would resolve the problem and allow for more efficient humanitarian aid. For essential resources regarding the topic, please refer to the [UNISMUN Libguides](#).

VIII. Bibliography

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IX: Additional Resources

Map of Tigray Region in Ethiopia:

