

## **TOPIC 2: The Application of UN Membership from the Tigray Region**

### **[LibGuide - resources for research on Topic 2](#)**

#### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

The UN membership application from the Tigray Region has several arguments and considerations both for and against its acceptance. Being an official member of the UN means official recognition of the state, and this would heavily affect the current situation in Ethiopia. In November 2020 Ethiopian government began - what could be referred to as - an ethnic cleansing against Tigrayan people.

In an international context, accepting the application could have repercussions due to countries' individual relations with Ethiopia, and could possibly result in other nations' conflict with the Ethiopian government. However being a UN member would bring the benefit of a larger amount and more effective international help in the region which would further help those who live in the region, however with the current economic state of the world, nations would be facing a hard situation as the extent to which countries can donate humanitarian aid has been drastically decreasing.

In the region Ethiopia has been viewed as a provider of security and has a stake in the stability of its neighbours, including Somalia and Sudan. Eritrea's involvement in the conflict, led by President Isaias Afwerki, may signal an intention to expand influence in the Horn in an authoritarian fashion. The conflict in Tigray could compromise Ethiopia's role in providing diplomatic support for Sudan's fragile transition to democracy, further exacerbate tensions at the Ethiopia-Sudan border, derail talks around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and threaten progress to stability in Somalia.

Nationally this situation is leading to severe famine and is putting the lives of over 2 million people on the edge. Becoming a UN member could possibly contribute to the end of the war and safety of hundreds of thousands of civilians, however it is crucial to think about the potential setbacks and disadvantages that it could lead to.

## II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

### Definition of Key Terms

**Ethnic cleansing:** Ethnic cleansing is the systematic forced removal of ethnic, racial, and religious groups from a given area, with the intent of making a region ethnically homogeneous. In the case of the Tigray Region it is important to decide whether the violent actions are part of ethnic cleansing and one specific group of people is targeted or is there a different purpose for the war and victims vary based on ethnicity, religion and status.

**Famine:** Famine is a situation in which large numbers of people have little or no food, and many of them die. This is a consequence of the ongoing war in the Tigray Region and without understanding how this relates to the application for UN membership a detailed resolution cannot be written.

**Dehumanization:** A group of people is being referred to and compared to animals or diseases, which leads to people believing that their murder is not a crime and the killers do something good for their nation by getting rid of the “disease”. The head of the U.S. Agency for International Development expressed concern Wednesday about the “dehumanizing rhetoric” used by Ethiopia’s leaders amid the nine-month conflict in the Tigray region, whose forces last month were described as “weeds” and “cancer” by the country’s Nobel Peace Prize-winning prime minister, Abiy Ahmed.

**Humanitarian aid:** Humanitarian aid is material and logistic assistance to people who need help. It is usually short-term help until the long-term help by the government and other institutions replaces it.

### **III. Key Stakeholders**

You should include an overview of 3-5 significant stakeholders & explain why these are important. This should guide your delegates in terms of the specific intergovernmental organisations & agencies, non-governmental organisations, state & non-state actors (stateless nations, independence movements, trade unions, political parties...), significant individuals that should be explicitly mentioned in their draft Resolutions. In addition, you should make it clear in this section why these stakeholders are significant AND the relationships and/or tensions between them.

**Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF):** The Tigray People's Liberation Front, also called the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, is a left-wing ethnic nationalist paramilitary group, banned political party, former ruling party of Ethiopia, and designated as a terrorist organization by the Ethiopian government. While in power, the TPLF had implemented a series of political reforms that marginalised other ethnic groups and consolidated the central government.

**Abiy Ahmed:** Abiy Ahmed Ali is an Ethiopian politician who has been the 4th prime minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia since 2 April 2018. He won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in ending the 20-year post-war territorial stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Abiy's ascent to power was buttressed by his visions of an ethnically harmonious, unified Ethiopia and initially appeared to be a critical change of course from the divisive policies of the TPLF-dominated ruling coalition.

**Eritrea:** The war is primarily being fought by the Ethiopian federal government and Eritrea on one side, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on the other. Eritrean national troops, as well as regional paramilitary forces and armed militias, carrying out extrajudicial killings, mass atrocities, and rape and sexual violence against Tigray civilians.

**African Union:**

### **IV. Key Issues including Background Information**

You should provide your delegates with 3-5 possible key or at stake issues regarding the topic from different perspectives so that your delegates can use these key issues to guide their draft Resolutions. Include any background including recent or more historical information that will explain why the issue is significant & relevant which will help your delegates figure out what is at stake. Each Key Issue should include relevant Background.

**War crimes:** During the Tigray - Ethiopia conflict, many warcrimes have been committed from all sides involved, including mass extra-judicial murders of civilians. Up to 500 thousand people have died, and rape has been rampant, with victims ranging from just 8 years to 72 years old having reportedly been raped in front of their families. A number of attempts at peace talks to mediate this issue have been made, but as of yet, the fighting and war crimes have continued.

**Displacement:** Displacement is another major key issue during the conflict. Over 2 million people have been internally displaced over the course of the conflict, causing both worry over covid 19 and other disease outbreaks in crowded refugee camps, and critically low supply to account for such a large number of people. There have also been 60 thousand refugees, 20 thousand of whom are unaccounted for.

**Ethnic Cleansing:** There have been instances of ethnic cleansing during the conflict, with the targeted racial groups consisting of Tigrayans. This includes people of Tigrayan ethnicity having restricted access to travel, including being prohibited from boarding overseas travel. Furthermore some Tigrayans lost access to their bank accounts, and a list of ethnic Tigrayans was issued.

## V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

### Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
September 2020	Despite possible covid concerns, and in open defiance of prime minister Abiy Ahmed, the TPLF hold a regional election in tigray, provoking action. Abiy moves troops closer to Tigray as a response.

November 3 2020	Military action begins. The TPLF attacks northern command, naming it a preemptive strike out of self defence.
November 17 2020	Government forces capture Mekele, the regional capital of Tigray
February 2021	Amnesty International claims that 100s of civilians were killed in Axum after the outbreak of the war.
June 2021	The rebel forces mount a counter-offensive and re-capture Mekele.
July 2 2021	400 thousand people are on the brink of, or already experiencing, famine.
October 2021	Prime minister Abiy Ahmed is sworn into a 5-year term
2022	The conflict continues. Air strikes increase, killing hundreds.

## VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

**War Crimes:** Work towards peace talks and cease-fire talks in regions hit the hardest by war crimes. Furthermore, push for the persecution of war criminals, and hold the responsible parties accountable, threaten with possible sanctions.

**Displacement:** While the issue of displacement cannot be solved entirely, members of the UN membership council can work together to alleviate the issue, and to mitigate some of the worst effects. This includes treaties to ensure the acceptance and support of refugees by neighbouring

countries, especially Eritrea (This might be challenging as Eritrea is a stakeholder in the conflict, and will likely be opposed to treaties meant to dissipate the conflict).

**Ethnic Cleansing:** Instances of possible ethnic cleansing should be made subject of thorough investigation. In cases of confirmed ethnic cleansing and racial profiling, harsh actions shall be taken against the parties responsible, and they shall be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

## **VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research**

When writing, discussing and voting resolutions, delegates should consider multiple aspects of this complex issue. Most importantly, delegates should carefully consider any effects these resolutions may have on their own countries, as well as their relationship with the countries involved, primarily Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray. Countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, or allies of either, will be more likely to be against making Tigray a membership state. Many countries, especially western democratic states, are likely to be vehemently against at least the ethnic cleansing and humanitarian crises perpetuated by the conflict and Ethiopia. This may make them more likely to support Tigray as a member state, as this would alleviate the issue, and enable more effective humanitarian aid.

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## **IX: Additional Research**





Map of control in Tigray and surrounding areas in early August 2021, by Daniel of [Passport Party](https://www.passportparty.ch)

Tigray People are an ethnolinguistic group who speak the Tigrinya language. They occupy most parts of the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Most are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. They make up roughly 6.1% of Ethiopia's population numbering a little over 6.3 million of which approximately 96.6% are native to the Tigray Region (Atlas).