

Vol. 1 #1 March, 2024

Ts'INTA

Tigray Genocide

Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide

Remnants of massacred Tigrayans in Abala town, Afar Region, serve as a somber reminder of the ongoing tragedy.



(Photo: CITG, April 2022)

WARNING

Some of the content may contain descriptions of extreme sexual violence or graphic imagery!

'Ts'inta / Ts'intet' or ፀገታ/ፀገታት in Tigrinya

'Ts'inta', a term entrenched in the Tigrinya language, carries a weight of horror and devastation. It signifies genocide—a deliberate and systematic extermination of a people. In the heart of Tigray, this tragedy unfolded as innocent civilians faced ruthless brutality at the hands of Ethiopian defense forces, Eritrean troops, Amhara Special Forces, Fano, and Amhara local militias. Women and girls bore the unspeakable trauma of rape amidst the chaos.

The intent was clear: wipe out the Tigrayan people. This calculated violence leaves scars not just on the flesh but on the very fabric of humanity. Tigray, a land rich in history and culture, now bears the scars of destruction—its historical and religious sites desecrated, infrastructure shattered, and agricultural lands laid to waste. The blockade and siege imposed on Tigray only exacerbated the suffering, causing critical shortages of essential medicines and plunging the population into despair.

But the atrocities didn't end there. The allied forces extended their campaign of terror, perpetrating mass exterminations, torture, and killings, even within detention centers. The machinery of hate speech and propaganda churned relentlessly, with the complicity of Ethiopian government media organizations.

This is not just a chapter in history; it's a grim testament to the darkest depths of human cruelty in the 21st century. We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of Tigray. It's incumbent upon us all to ensure that these tragic events are meticulously documented and heard and that justice prevails. We must hold the perpetrators accountable, not just to seek retribution but to prevent such horrors from ever repeating.



Atrocities committed by Ethiopian troops against Tigrayan civilians.



Message from the Commissioner	6
About Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG)	8
The Enine Massacre	12
A Child's Journey Through the Horrors of Conflict in Tigray	15
Failing to Implement the Pretoria Agreement Impedes Peace and Justice	18
Beyond the Battlefield: The Hidden Mental Health Crisis in Tigray	24
Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide	30
Tigray in a State of Darkness and Anxiety	38
The Voices of Tigrayan Diaspora: A Collective Cry for Justice	44
Facts: Media, Reports and Leaders Testimony on Tigray Genocidal War	48

Cover Image

A skull discovered in the mass grave of Tigrayans in Abala town, Afar Region, serves as a haunting testament to the atrocities endured.

(Photo: CITG, April 2022)

The Magazine of the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG)

Published by:

Public Relations and International Affairs Directorate

Address: Around Sheba University College, former Save the Children Building



Message from the Commissioner

The catastrophic conflict that erupted in Tigray in November 2020 has inflicted immeasurable material, human, psychological, environmental, and social devastation upon the region. The repercussions of this war have been uniquely harrowing, leaving profound wounds on both the physical landscape and the hearts of its inhabitants.

Recognizing the urgent need to address the profound losses suffered, the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide (CITG) was formally established in May 2022 amid the turmoil of the Tigray War. Its primary objective is to comprehensively assess the extent of human and material loss, meticulously documenting the full spectrum of atrocities and

human rights violations perpetrated against the people of Tigray. Furthermore, the Commission was mandated to identify those responsible and compile evidence crucial for the pursuit of justice. Drawing upon the findings of these assessments, the Commission aims to propose initiatives aimed at rebuilding the war-torn Tigray region. Meanwhile, it remains steadfast in its commitment to meticulously document data on the damages and losses, preserving them for posterity.

In the face of these grave injustices, it is abundantly clear that the atrocities committed against the people of Tigray epitomize the most egregious forms of international crimes, tantamount to genocide. Shockingly, even after the Pretoria peace accord, the cycle of violence and injustice persists unabated.

The systematic nature of these international crimes, meticulously planned and executed with the intent to annihilate an entire populace, represents a dark chapter in human history. Such atrocities, perpetrated against all Tigrayans, have reverberated not only throughout Tigray but also across Ethiopian

territories and beyond. Despite efforts to stem the tide of war, the international community's response has been frustratingly slow and inadequate, with flagrant violations of established conventions and laws exacerbating the crisis.

Thus, the establishment of the Commission represents a pivotal step towards ensuring accountability, seeking justice for the victims, and preventing future atrocities. By meticulously documenting these crimes and pursuing those responsible, the Commission seeks not only retribution but also the invaluable lesson of history to prevent such atrocities from recurring.

Nevertheless, the scope and complexity of our undertaking necessitate coordinated efforts and collaboration from all quarters. Guided by international standards and principles, the Commission is actively engaging with a diverse array of stakeholders, both locally and internationally, to fulfill its mandate.

Despite the formidable challenges encountered, the Commission has made significant strides, rallying the support of dedicated volunteers and overcoming numerous obstacles to gather a wealth of crucial data.

Looking ahead, the path to justice and reconciliation

for the people of Tigray demands concerted action on multiple fronts. It requires the restoration of constitutional order, the repatriation of millions of displaced persons, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and comprehensive efforts towards healing and rehabilitation. Further international investigations are also imperative to shed light on the ground realities and hold perpetrators accountable.

On behalf of the Commission, I implore all sectors of society, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the Tigrayan Diaspora, the international community, and fellow organizations to join hands in our pursuit of justice, accountability, and peacebuilding. Together, let us strive towards realizing the noble mission and objectives of the Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide.



Yemane Zeray Mesfin (Associate Professor)
Commissioner, Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide

About Commission of Inquiry on Tigray Genocide

■ Introduction

Tigray, akin to other regions of Ethiopia, had been experiencing notable socio-economic growth over nearly three decades preceding the genocidal War on Tigray. During the second phase of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) registered an impressive annual growth rate of 8.1% (MOFED, 2012; BOFED, 2018). Consequently, the region witnessed a substantial reduction in absolute poverty, with rates plummeting from 58% in 1996 to 29.6% in 2018.

However, the trajectory of progress was abruptly disrupted by the large-scale genocidal conflict instigated by the Ethiopian Federal Government and its allies against Tigray. This barbaric assault not only halted Tigray's growth but also inflicted irreparable damage to its socio-economic fabric.

In the aftermath of the war, Tigray bore witness to unspeakable atrocities, including widespread persecution, famine, and loss of life. Instances of sexual assault soared to alarming levels, leaving scars that may never fully heal. Moreover, the conflict ravaged Tigray's infrastructure despoiled its environment, and depleted its natural resources. The cultural, religious, and historical heritage of Tigray suffered unparalleled devastation, leaving indelible scars on its identity.

The repercussions of the Tigray war were felt acutely by its population, with over 2 million people displaced and relegated to precarious conditions in Internally

Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Meanwhile, those who remained faced a harrowing existence characterized by lockdowns and a draconian ban on humanitarian aid. Tragically, many succumbed to hunger, lack of medical supplies, and inadequate healthcare, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

In light of these egregious violations of human rights and the monumental scale of suffering endured by the people of Tigray, the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry for Tigray Genocide assumes paramount importance. It is imperative that we uncover the truth, hold perpetrators accountable, and strive towards justice and restitution for the victims.

■ Nature of the Commission

The Commission was established with a steadfast mission: to rigorously study, investigate, and meticulously document all forms of Human rights violations, destruction and losses wrought by the genocidal war inflicted upon the people of Tigray. Moreover, it carries the solemn responsibility of examining the damages and losses endured by Tigrayans residing beyond the borders of Tigray.

In pursuit of its noble mission, the Commission has established six specialized research centers, each tasked with probing distinct facets of the devastation. These centers delve into the human toll, meticulously documenting instances of rape and gender-based violence. They scrutinize the economic fallout, assessing the damage inflicted upon infrastructure, the environment, and natural resources. Additionally,

centers under the Commission’s purview are dedicated to investigating the toll exacted upon governmental institutions, social services, and values.

■ Objective

The primary goal of this commission is to scientifically collect, document, and present data essential for ensuring justice and prosecution. It also aims to develop strategies for the recovery and reconstruction of Tigray’s post-war economy while identifying memorial sites to preserve the history for future generations.

■ Mission

The Commission is dedicated to conducting credible and comprehensive studies and investigations to illustrate the extent, nature, and depth of the human casualties, destruction, and losses suffered by Tigray and its people due to the war. The resulting documentation will serve as a crucial reference for legal proceedings, as well as for the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Tigray. Furthermore, it will be instrumental in recording historical events and serving as a cautionary reminder for future generations to prevent the recurrence of genocide.

■ Principles

1. **Impartiality:** We conduct all activities under the authority and responsibility vested in us by law, free from external influence or interference.
2. **Equality:** We adhere to principles of reasonableness, fairness, and professional ethics in our work.
3. **Integrity:** We maintain high standards of ethics, accountability, and transparency.
4. **Dignity:** We protect the dignity, rights, and diversity

of victims, witnesses, and the local community.

5. **Compassion:** We stand in solidarity with institutions and individuals advocating for peace and justice, condemning the Tigray Genocidal war.

■ Main Accomplishments

- Conducted initial data collection through a comprehensive census and survey of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in all liberated woredas of Tigray (excluding the West Zone). Approximately more than 37,000 volunteers participated in various roles such as trainers, coordinators, and data collectors. Additionally, demand-driven investigations and secondary data, including video and audio recordings from Tigray media outlets and reports from international organizations, were collected.
- Utilized qualitative and quantitative data to compile factual reports and cases, collaborating closely with relevant authorities for further action.
- Engaged in advocacy efforts by establishing connections with major international organizations interested in understanding the genocidal war in Tigray.
- Currently finalizing the first draft of research findings for imminent publication.

■ Trainings

Before embarking on practical data collection activities, it was essential to provide training. Accordingly, training was organized in three stages. Training of Trainers (TOT) was conducted at the regional level, followed by similar sessions at the zonal level to train professionals and coordinators at the woreda level. Finally, woredas provided training to data collectors stationed within their areas.



Training manuals were meticulously prepared for each research sector to facilitate the damage and loss assessment process. The training primarily focused on familiarizing participants with questionnaire design, utilizing ODK (Open Data Kit) applications, and utilizing audio-visual, GPS, and GIS technologies.

In total, approximately more than 37,000 data collectors and trainers participated in these training sessions, equipping them with the necessary skills to undertake the data collection process effectively.

■ **Assessment of Damage and Loss in Public Institutions**

The government institutions in Tigray have endured significant losses and damages as a result of the large-scale war instigated by internal and external coalition forces against Tigray. To address this, our commission has provided technical and professional assistance to these institutions to assess the damage and loss they have suffered.

Government agencies were instructed to compile reports detailing the extent of damage and loss within their respective institutions. These reports were then consolidated into a comprehensive document and submitted to our commission. Numerous governmental, public, religious, and financial institutions complied with this directive and submitted their reports.

Subsequently, the reports received underwent thorough review and revision by professionals within our commission. This process was guided by standardized scientific data collection forms issued by the commission, ensuring accuracy and consistency in the assessment process.

■ **Assessment of Damage and Loss in Private and Public Service Organizations**

Due to the genocidal war waged against Tigray, both private and public service institutions have faced severe repercussions. Therefore, small, medium, and large enterprises from both sectors were thoroughly studied in accordance with the standards set forth by the commission.

During the initial phase of the data collection campaign, over 34,000 instances of damage were documented across private and public institutions engaged in various sectors including business, manufacturing, services, agriculture, health, education, public services, and religious and cultural heritage preservation.

It's worth highlighting the pivotal role played by the Tigray Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Commission throughout the assessment process.

■ **General Damage Assessment Process**

Data were collected from every household in Tigray using the General Damage and Loss Assessment methodology, facilitated by the ODK (Open Data Kit) application. Intensive efforts have been made. More than 650,000 household/family were covered in the areas of Economy, Social and Humanity questionnaire, and more than 580,000 girls aged 15 years and above were assessed. The first draft report is currently being finalized.

■ **Investigation Process**

The research involved investigations, interviews, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Collaborating with other partners, numerous significant

cases were developed and forwarded to the relevant authorities along with their respective transcriptions of images and recorded data.

■ Follow-up Tasks

- Conduct a survey to complete data collection from areas under the control of other forces, focusing on damage, destruction, and losses suffered by Tigrayans residing outside Tigray, along with addressing any uncovered issues.
- Collect forensic and laboratory evidence pertaining to damage and loss.
- Extract, clean, organize, and analyze the data collected during the second round of assessments.
- Prepare preliminary and final reports of research findings, incorporating stakeholder comments gathered through review conferences and workshops.
- Disseminate research findings and recommendations to the public and stakeholders utilizing various communication techniques.

■ What steps should the commission take to effectively demonstrate the full extent of damage and loss in Tigray?

To effectively showcase the comprehensive damage and loss in Tigray, our commission must undertake

rigorous investigation and analysis of the data collected thus far in a scientific manner. It's imperative to understand that a complete report cannot be compiled without addressing the damage and human loss in areas inaccessible due to occupation by invading forces. Drawing from refined data, research findings, and recommendations, our commission is diligently finalizing an aggregated preliminary report, poised to shed light on the true extent of the devastation.

We are unwavering in our commitment to fulfill our duties with professionalism, diligence, and integrity. As a trusted inquiry commission entrusted with multifaceted responsibilities, we call upon the support and cooperation of all stakeholders who share our mission. We firmly believe that the data we have gathered and will continue to collect are indispensable for addressing crucial matters such as justice, accountability, and the recovery and reconstruction of Tigray.

Therefore, we extend an earnest invitation to individuals and organizations holding information or evidence related to the profound impact of the devastating war in Tigray to submit their contributions to our commission. Additionally, we welcome constructive comments and suggestions from the public, recognizing their invaluable role in enriching and strengthening our endeavors. Together, let us strive towards truth, justice, and the restoration of hope for the people of Tigray.

ጀናላይድ ትግራይ ዘበት ከይድገም! ዘበት ከይርሳዕ!!
Never Again and Never Forget the Tigray Genocide!!

The Enine (ዕንነ) Massacre

Enine a small village nestled in the Central Zone of Tigray, within Woreda Egelea, Tabiya Erdi-jeganu, Emba-deqina district, bore witness to an unimaginable tragedy. Approximately 35 kilometers northwest of Sero town, this tranquil community was once home to about 350 residents before it became the site of a brutal massacre.

Accounts from residents and survivors paint a grim picture: on a single day, 65 individuals lost their lives in a devastating massacre, with the majority being women and children. Among the victims, 62 were residents, while three were individuals seeking refuge in the village. This loss accounts for a devastating 17.7 percent of the village's entire population, underscoring the profound impact of the tragedy on this community.

The tragic narrative of Enine unfolds with haunting details from eyewitnesses, survivors of the massacre, and grieving families. Enine fell under the control of the Eritrean army on the morning of October 21, 2022, around 8:00 A.M. Fearing active conflict and potential attacks, residents, including the 65 victims of the massacre, fled Enine in search of safety far from their homes, seeking refuge in caves east of the village. In a cruel twist of fate, Eritrean soldiers discovered the hiding victims in the caves and confined them to two houses within the village



Among the mass graves found in Enine (Photo: CITG, June 2023)

altitude: 14,427,222
longitude: 39,192,393
elevation: 2092,34m
accuracy: 1.0m

belonging to local farmers. For two agonizing days, from October 21 to October 23, 2022, the victims, primarily women, children, and a few elderly individuals, were held captive without access to food or water.

On October 23, 2022, at 8:00 A.M., the soldiers herded the victims to a farmland, where a chilling command was given by the Eritrean commander: “Start your job!” He provided them with additional bullets in front of the victims, and the soldiers mercilessly shot the helpless victims from all directions. The once peaceful Enine transformed into a horrific bloodbath, claiming the lives of 65 residents, primarily women who were unable to escape the caves, many of whom were from the same families.

In a final act of indignity, the bodies of the victims were left unburied and exposed to scavenging animals

such as hyenas, dogs, foxes, and eagles. The devastating aftermath of these brutal events painted a harrowing picture of loss, suffering, and desecration in the formerly serene community of Enine.

According to a 56-year-old female witness, the tragic events in Enine on October 21, 2022, unfolded cruelly. While the Eritrean forces ordered her to stay home, all the other victims were detained in two houses. Prior to the devastating incident, the commander and soldiers had taken up residence in her home compound. In the early hours of October 21, 2022, at around 3:00 A.M., the Eritrean forces forcibly entered her home. The witness recounted how the soldiers brought a goat inside and slaughtered it, intensifying the atmosphere of fear and dread.

By the morning of October 23, 2022, the commander interrogated her, falsely accusing her of leaving the house. Despite her protests of innocence, she faced intimidation and threats from the commander. As events unfolded, the witness and her family members were taken to one of the houses where the other victims were being held. Later, on October 23, 2022, at approximately 8:00 A.M., all the victims from the houses were assembled on farmland. The witness described how the commander supplied additional ammunition to the soldiers tasked with carrying out the killings. In a harrowing moment, the witness managed to escape with another survivor, seeking refuge in nearby caves to evade the impending tragedy.

The witness attested that the massacre took place in the absence of active warfare on that particular day, underscoring the senseless and brutal nature of the atrocities committed in Enine. The firsthand account of the witness provides a heart-wrenching insight into the horrors experienced by the victims and the profound impact of the tragic events on the community.

The agonizing account from a 12-year-old female witness sheds light on the brutal massacre that occurred in Enine. The witness, along with her family members, was hiding in a cave before being apprehended by Eritrean forces and confined in a house along with the other victims.

Following this cruel imprisonment, the soldiers forcibly moved the victims to farmland where a bitter sequence of events unfolded. The soldiers ordered the victims to line up, and in a cruel and senseless act, opened fire on each individual. The witness, recalling the names of the victims, mostly civilian farmers, described the horrific scene of the massacre where many lost their lives in this brutal attack.

Despite being shot multiple times, including her left jaw, leg, tooth, and back, the young witness miraculously survived by playing dead among the fallen victims. It was only the following day that an unidentified individual rescued her from the carnage. The witness, in a state of shock and unable to access immediate medical assistance, vividly recalls the soldiers' acts of cruelty, denying water to those wounded and mocking the pleas for mercy from the victims.



A 59-year-old male witness recounted the tragic events that unfolded in Enine on October 21, 2022. He said, “As residents escape to nearby caves, Eritrean soldiers forcibly removed them from their hiding places and confined them in two houses by 8:00 A.M. on the same day.” According to the witness, this confinement lasted until October 23, 2022, when the victims were then taken to a farmland early in the morning, deprived of water and food, leading to severe hunger and suffering among the captives.

The witness mentioned that the victims, numbering 65 in total, spanned an age range from 6-month-old infants to 80-year-old elders. Predominantly, the victims were women and girls who were unable to flee far from the village, tragically falling victim to the brutality unleashed upon them. Additionally, he described the inhumane fate suffered by the deceased, whose bodies were left unburied, and exposed to scavenging animals.

Moreover, the witness detailed his own involvement in the grim task of collecting the bones of the victims two weeks after the massacre, underscoring the trauma and devastation wrought upon the community of Enine by this horrifying act of violence.

The heart-breaking account from a 52-year-old male witness shines a stark light on the brutal tragedy that befell Enine. Witnessing the loss of his wife, two daughters (one of whom was only two years old), and granddaughter during the incident, he testifies to the horrific massacre that occurred on October 23, 2022, at the hands of Eritrean soldiers. In his testimony, the witness recalls how civilians ranging from children to

80-year-old elders, primarily women, were ruthlessly killed in Enine. He vividly remembers the victims by their names and the heart-breaking familial connections many shared, with mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons falling victim to the violence unleashed upon them. The witness also recounts his participation in collecting the remains weeks after the massacre took place, underlining the profound trauma and loss experienced in the community.

The witness further reveals the painful treatment endured by the victims, emphasizing that they were primarily civilian farmers who were unjustly targeted. The Eritrean forces baseless accusations and claims that all Tigrayans were armed and fed “Weyane” showcasing the prejudice and unfounded accusations that led to the tragic loss of innocent lives.

Furthermore, the witness details the inhumane conditions the victims endured before their deaths, forced to consume animal fodder due to being deprived of food and water for three days. The deliberate starvation, denial of necessities, and cruel treatment inflicted upon the victims show the inhumane atrocities committed by the Eritrean forces in Enine.

The investigation team, from the Commission of Inquiry on the Tigray Genocide, encountered and documented mass graves scattered across the agricultural fields of the local farmers in Enine. Additionally, within a small cave near these mass graves, the team observed blood-stained rocks, bearing witness to the tragic and horrific events that unfolded in the community.



Samrawit's Resilience: A Child's Journey Through the Horrors of Conflict in Tigray



Samrawit's right leg bearing the scars where Eritrean troops cruelly mutilated her flesh with a knife and while being treated at Ayder Hospital (photo: Ayder Hospital)

Samrawit Gebrehiwot, a resident of Abune Yim'ata village nestled at the foot of Abune Yim'ata Monastery in the Hawzen Wereda, Eastern zone of Tigray, bore witness to unspeakable horrors when Eritrean troops invaded on May 8, 2021. Among the countless victims of their atrocities, Samrawit's ordeal stands as a chilling testament to the depths of their depravity. At the tender age of five, she endured torture at the hands of these aggressors, her innocence brutally violated as they callously mutilated her right leg with a knife, leaving her to suffer in excruciating agony.

Tragically, the horrors inflicted upon Samrawit did not end there. The Eritrean troops unleashed further brutality upon the village, claiming the lives of 19 civilians, including her mother and two brothers. Left bereft of her loved ones and grievously wounded, Samrawit's plight epitomizes the senseless devastation wrought upon innocent lives by these merciless perpetrators.

In the aftermath of the carnage, Samrawit's father and neighbors rallied to her aid, transporting her to Ayder Comprehensive Referral Hospital in Mekelle. Through the tireless efforts of the medical staff, Samrawit defied the odds and miraculously survived. Now eight years old, she carries the physical scars and psychological trauma of her harrowing ordeal, a constant reminder of the horrors she endured at such a tender age.

Samrawit's story serves as a poignant reminder of the human cost of conflict and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity. As she grapples with the enduring wounds, both physical and emotional, may her courage and resilience inspire us to redouble our efforts in the pursuit of justice and peace for the people of Tigray.



Brzaf Gebremedhn, 75, lies on a sheet on the floor at the camp in Abiy Addi. She had not eaten for several days and was painfully weak.

(Photo: *Edgar Gutierrez* /The Guardian)

Tigray on the Brink: A Looming Catastrophe of Famine

Tigray teeters on the precipice of catastrophic famine—a crisis compounded by the genocidal war, drought, desert locust infestation, and the suspension of humanitarian aid. The specter of famine evokes haunting memories of past tragedies, reminiscent of the harrowing events of 1984–85. Urgent international intervention is imperative to avert further loss of life.

Millions of lives hang in the balance, dependent on immediate food assistance for survival. Without swift action, we are on the brink of witnessing another human catastrophe unfold in Tigray. Let us not fail in our duty to humanity. Let us act decisively to save lives and to ensure that the ravages of history do not abandon the people of Tigray.



A child suffering from malnutrition (photo: Tigray TV)



A starved child admitted to hospital in eastern Tigray (BBC)



Hunger haunts Ethiopia's Tigray region after years of war (Reuters)



**Ethiopia's Tigray
Warns of
Looming Famine**

Failing to Implement the Pretoria Agreement Impedes Peace and Justice

The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) signed in Pretoria envisages justice and lasting peace through Transitional Justice. To achieve this, violence should have ceased, and the constitutional order should have been maintained. However, 16 months after the COHA, the non-ENDF and foreign forces have not only withdrawn from Tigray but also continue to commit unabated serious crimes, including enforced disappearances, rape, looting, forced displacement, and coercion of people in occupied territories to change their identities. Despite the expectation of refugees and IDPs returning to their homes, they are instead enduring hardship under makeshift tents without access to food, shelter, and medication. The transition to an elected government has not occurred, and Tigray lacks representation in all federal institutions, including those essential for transitional justice. Without fulfilling these conditions, a genuine transitional process cannot be realized, and such an endeavor remains unripe.

Even where the need for Transitional Justice might seem ripe, the ongoing Transitional Justice (TJ) efforts and processes fail to consider the



Tigray Government representative Getachew Reda (right) and Ethiopian Government representative Redwan Hussein (left) signing the Pretoria Agreement in South Africa on November 2, 2022. (Photo: Phill Magakoe/AFP)



victims and the unique features of the atrocities. It appears that the Ethiopian government is using transitional justice as a tool of ‘quasi-compliance,’ aimed at merely appeasing international pressure for accountability and peace.

The atrocities in Tigray were state-sponsored, systematic, and carried out with the intent to destroy Tigrayans using various instruments, including widespread killing, industrial-scale rape, torture, structured looting, and annihilation of essentials for survival, accompanied by siege and blockade, all of which amount to international

crimes. The entire Ethiopian State machinery and non-state actors overwhelmingly promoted, supported, and executed the war and the crimes against civilian Tigrayans. The direct and indirect involvement of external actors, particularly from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East regions, has exacerbated the situation, significantly increasing the number and severity of the atrocities. The involvement of Eritrea and the crimes committed by its forces are a prime example.

Due to these and other compelling reasons, there exists a strong conviction in Tigray that the war exhibits unique characteristics that must be accommodated in the ongoing transitional justice process. Victims of crimes in Tigray harbor deep mistrust toward existing state institutions, viewing them as incompetent to deliver genuine transitional justice that can offer accountability and redress to victims. This lack of trust is further exacerbated by Tigray’s non-representation in the federation’s legal and political bodies, including those crucial to transitional justice.

These practical challenges, compounded by Ethiopia’s culture of impunity and the absence of



a transition from violence to peace or from a repressive past to democratic governance, present formidable obstacles to fostering justice and peace through current transitional justice efforts.

The Ethiopian government has consistently opposed independent investigations into international crimes. The “TJ policy” crafted by a group of experts under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice reflects this stance, advocating solely for domestic accountability while rejecting international or hybrid alternatives. Consequently, there is no viable pathway to ensuring accountability for crimes committed by external forces.

Moreover, serious legal deficiencies in Ethiopian criminal law, such as the absence of criminalization for crimes against humanity, coupled with the lack of institutional independence, impartiality, and capacity within domestic justice institutions, render the federal government’s exclusive control over the transitional justice process unjust. Entrusting transitional justice to existing repressive institutions undermines its credibility and legitimacy, paving the way for biased outcomes akin to victor’s justice or selective justice, ultimately risking a resurgence of violence.



Members of the Tigrayan Diaspora in Europe held a demonstration in Brussels.

(Yabele Media, January 22, 2024)

War crime and crime against humanity committed in Tigray by Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Amhara forces and the ethnic cleansing committed by Amhara forces in Western Tigray are not random or mere by-products of war but calculated, deliberate and systematic ones.

(US State Department, March 2023)



Does Transitional Justice Work?

Despite the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement, which incorporated Transitional Justice (TJ) as a mechanism to address civilian massacres, siege, blockade, mass starvation, death, forced displacements, and extensive property destruction, atrocities against Tigrayans persist. Eritrean and Amhara forces continue their reign of terror with killings, rapes, abductions, and forceful displacements within occupied Tigrayan territories, rendering the TJ process ineffective. Ethnic cleansing, notably in Western Tigray, remains unchecked, leaving millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) unable to return home. Similarly, for the fact that TJ process at hand is not victim-centered and the institutions tasked with transitional justice, such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and all the judicial bodies, are perceived as ineffective, hampering the collection of credible evidence and documentation and fostering distrust. Moreover, the lack of a realistic pathway for external accountability undermines efforts to hold foreign perpetrators, including Eritrean forces, accountable, despite claims of limited investigations by Ethiopia.



Report: Eritrean Troops Abducting Tigrayans Months After Cease-Fire

By ADF — On Mar 12, 2024

DAILY NEWS



A screenshot of an AP News article. The top navigation bar includes 'AP', 'WORLD', 'U.S.', 'ELECTION 2024', 'POLITICS', 'SPORTS', 'ENTERTAINMENT', 'BUSINESS', 'SCIENCE', and 'FACTS'. Below the navigation bar, there are several news items: 'Israel-Hamas war', 'Adam Sandler in 'Spaceman'', 'Trump wins Missouri, Idaho caucuses', and 'Houthi-'. The main headline reads 'Eritrean troops are accused of abducting farmers and stealing livestock in Ethiopia's Tigray'. The text 'WORLD NEWS' is visible above the headline.

Acts of villainy by perpetrators



Atrocities committed by Ethiopian forces against Tigrayan civilians.



Graphic image of the Debre Abay massacre in Tigray.

(Tghat, February 8, 2021)



Horrifying image depicts men being shot in the back of the head during the Tigray massacre carried out by Ethiopian troops in Mahibere Deگو.

(Mail Online, April 2, 2021)



US President Joe Biden calls for a ceasefire and an end to "large-scale human rights abuses" in Tigray.



When I met the Ethiopian leaders on February, they really use this kind of language that they are going to destroy the Tigrayans and they are going to wipe out the Tigrayans for 100 years.

(Pekka Havviesto, Former Special Envoy to European Union)



"Now we are hearing countless horrific accounts of rape is being used as weapons of war, a violence against civilians, of hunger been used as tool of war, a famine looming, UN staffs been expelled..... Ethiopians are killing Ethiopians thousands by the day"

(Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Ambassador to UN)



"We will erase you from this land" Crime against Humanity and ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone.

(April 2022, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International Report)

March 10

Washington, DC



CNN INVESTIGATION

U.S. SECY. OF STATE CALLS TIGRAY VIOLENCE "ETHNIC CLEANSING"

Antony Blinken | U.S. Secretary of State



6:18 AM GMT

What's unfolding in Ethiopia has all the makings of a genocide and we cannot wait for this to become another Rwanda before we take action. See my questioning of [@AsstSecStateAF](#)



ZAIN'S EXCHANGE

U.S. CONGRESSMAN: WAR IN ETHIOPIA HAS MAKINGS OF GENOCIDE

LIVE





Beyond the Battlefield: The Hidden Mental Health Crisis in Tigray

While ceasefire agreements offer hope for halting the direct devastation of war on lives and properties, the psychological wounds continue to fester without timely attention. Despite expectations for improvement, the reality is starkly different. Without the attention it deserves, the consequences of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can inflict significant harm, lasting for years and even generations.

The traumas inflicted upon Tigray during various conflicts have birthed crises of monumental proportions, destined to echo for generations. The war that erupted on November 3, 2020, exposed our community to unparalleled suffering. Among the myriad of problems spawned by this conflict, the psychological crisis stands as one of the most pervasive. Chronic fear, anxiety, diminished self-confidence, depression, and PTSD plague our community long after the cessation of hostilities following the Pretoria agreement.

Tigrayans have borne witness to unspeakable horrors: brutal massacres of innocent civilians, pervasive gender-based violence, relentless air/drone strikes, and indiscriminate shelling of homes and public spaces. While quantifying the psychological toll requires extensive study, it's evident that the long-term ramifications can be catastrophic for future generations.

Preceding the war, hate-fueled media campaigns targeted Tigrayans, perpetuating dehumanizing stereotypes by high-ranking

adversity, deprivation, and trauma. Many children face disabilities, health issues, and endure the relentless terror of shelling and bombardments, leaving indelible scars on their psychological well-being.

According to a study conducted by The Luminos Fund, a staggering 72 percent of surveyed children in Tigray reported witnessing nearby shootings, while 44 percent recounted seeing fresh corpses. Shockingly, one in three children witnessed a person being killed in front of them, underscoring the pervasive trauma endured by Tigrayan children in the wake of the conflict. These findings shed light on the profound psychological distress gripping the youngest victims of the crisis.

Reports from the Associated Press and The World further highlight the dire situation faced by Tigrayan children, with some still unable to move or speak independently due to mental shock-blast trauma induced by the thunderous explosions of heavy weapons near their homes. The destruction of health centers has compounded their suffering, hindering their access to urgent medical assistance.

The alarming state of psychological well-being among Tigrayan children demands urgent and comprehensive intervention. The Luminos Fund study reveals that these children are highly susceptible to significant psychological

trauma, with 81 percent forcibly displaced, approximately 50 percent separated from their parents, and 45 percent witnessing militants torturing civilians. Tragically, 15 percent of children reported losing at least one family member, while a staggering 62 percent feared succumbing to the psychological stress of their situation.

According to testimonies from the children involved in the study, a staggering 70 percent live in constant fear of perishing from famine, with nearly half (47 percent) developing post-traumatic stress disorder. Notably, children from Western Tigray face the highest risk of psychological trauma, amplifying the urgent need for targeted support and intervention.

Dr. Belay Hagos, the lead researcher of the study, emphasizes the gravity of the situation, stating, "The results of this study unequivocally demonstrate the profound damage inflicted upon children by the war. This extends beyond physical injuries or fatalities to encompass deep psychological trauma."

Women, too, bear a heavy burden of psychological trauma resulting from the catastrophic war. In addition to enduring severe social and economic hardships, many Tigrayan women have suffered horrific sexual violence and physical assaults, leading to profound misery. The widespread gender-based violence



PTSD
Post
Traumatic
Stress
Disorder



perpetrated during the Tigray war has inflicted enduring physical, psychological, and emotional scars, leaving survivors struggling to reintegrate into society. Victims of sexual violence, particularly those forcibly infected with STDs such as HIV/AIDS, grapple with recurrent suicidal ideation, while the constant torment of their assailants' words and actions exacerbates their psychological anguish.

The harrowing accounts of Tigrayan children and women underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the profound psychological trauma inflicted by the conflict. Swift action is imperative to provide essential mental health support and empower survivors on their journey toward healing and recovery.

The psychological toll of bearing witness to patients dying from treatable illnesses and enduring their suffering is deeply distressing. A study conducted among doctors at Ayder Hospital revealed that feelings of hopelessness, insomnia, physical illness, self-blame, fear, uncertainty, and victimization have become pervasive challenges they grapple with daily. These psychological struggles and emotional disturbances often manifest in low self-esteem, heightened emotionality, reluctance to engage in their work, and a diminished sense of initiative among health professionals.

Dr. Ataklti, a healthcare provider who cares for sexually assaulted women at Adigrat Hospital,

shared with BBC Tigrinya the profound psychological and social pressures he faces due to the stress and anxiety encountered in his line of work. "I experience daily headaches due to the distressing sights and sounds I encounter; it leaves me mentally drained and anxious. My eating habits have become irregular, and I find myself disheartened and dissatisfied with my work and surroundings," he lamented. "I feel utterly hopeless."

Similarly, Nurse Mulu, who works tirelessly to care for victims of gender-based violence, revealed, "When I return home, the burden stays with me. I cannot shake off the memory of every woman I have treated; their names and faces haunt me day and night." She endures psychological anguish while fulfilling her professional obligations.

Throughout the world, the lingering social, psychological, and emotional scars of genocide and war persist long after the cessation of hostilities, often without prompt and adequate intervention.

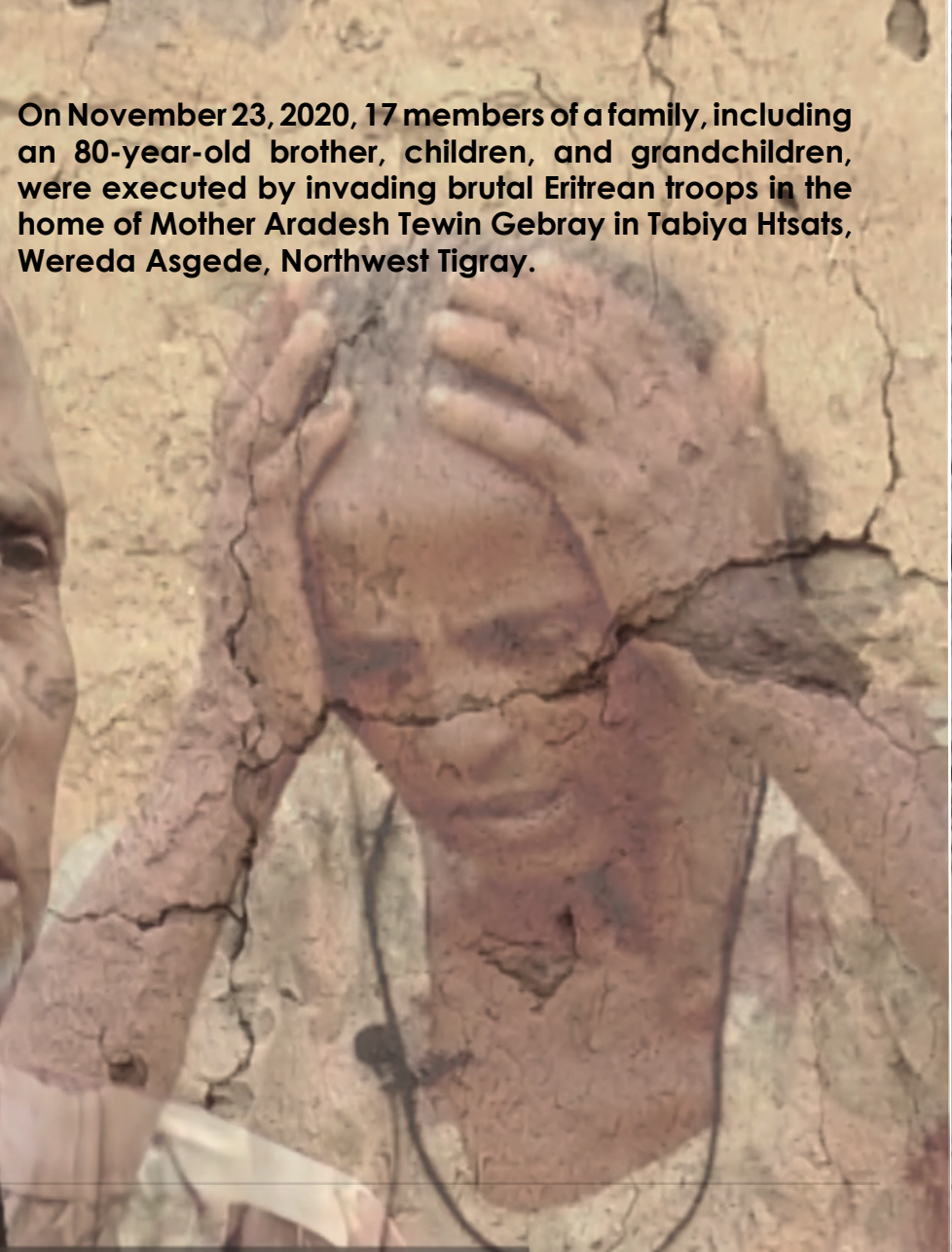
The devastating psychological wounds inflicted by the genocidal war in Tigray have plunged all segments of our society into a profound crisis, transcending gender, religion, environment, occupation, and other differences. Urgent action is imperative to address the mental health needs of our healthcare professionals and all those affected by the enduring trauma of conflict.



Acts of villainy by perpetrators



On November 23, 2020, 17 members of a family, including an 80-year-old brother, children, and grandchildren, were executed by invading brutal Eritrean troops in the home of Mother Aradesh Tewin Gebray in Tabiya Htsats, Wereda Asgede, Northwest Tigray.





Ethiopian troops torturing a Tigrayan civilian with his hands tied behind his back.



Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide

In the midst of the ongoing conflict in Tigray, a horrifying reality persists: sexual violence has become a weapon of genocide. The accounts are harrowing, the suffering unimaginable, and the need for immediate action undeniable. We cannot stand idly by as women and girls in Tigray endure unspeakable atrocities at the hands of soldiers bent on eradicating their very existence.

They have brazenly admitted to their crimes, shamelessly vocalizing their intent as they commit unspeakable acts of violence. Raping women in groups, barbarically inserting foreign objects into their bodies, they utter chilling words such as, ‘Your womb shall not bear Tigrayans; I violate you to purge your lineage...’ Even more alarming is the

acknowledgment of such atrocities by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, who shockingly justified these heinous acts by suggesting that the sexual violence inflicted upon Tigrayan women and girls was somehow warranted, as if firearms had wounded the soldiers’ pride.

Though heart-wrenching, the stories of Tekea and Yihdega are not isolated incidents. They represent a pattern of systematic abuse and violence targeting Tigrayan women and girls solely because of their ethnicity. Tekea, a woman in her thirties, endured unimaginable pain as she was brutally assaulted and set on fire by Eritrean troops. Yihdega, a young woman, faced a similar fate as she was repeatedly raped, tortured, and left to suffer both physically and psychologically.

These are not mere statistics or casualties of war; they are individuals with families, dreams, and futures that the horrors of sexual violence have shattered. The perpetrators have not only committed these heinous acts but have openly expressed their intent to cleanse the Tigrayan population, leaving no doubt as to the genocidal nature of their actions.

To safeguard their identities, we refer to them as Tekea and Yihdega. Additionally, out of respect for their privacy and safety, we have opted not to disclose the specific location where these horrific crimes occurred.

Their story continues ...

Story of Tekea

Tekea, aged 30 and married, resided with her husband and son outside of Tigray, Ethiopia. They owned a house and a tractor for farming, sustaining themselves by cultivating sesame seeds and Berber spice. However, since 2016, like other Tigrayans in the region, they have faced targeted attacks solely because of their identity. In July 2020, the family's tractor caught fire, prompting Tekea and her aunt, who also lived there, to flee to Sudan. However, she has yet to learn the whereabouts of her husband and son.

Eventually, Tekea returned to Tigray with her aunt, settling in her native village where her elderly blind father resided. However, their peaceful existence was shattered when conflict engulfed the region. Despite the danger, Tekea and her father remained at home during the arrival of Eritrean troops, fearing for their lives.

Though unable to recall the exact date, Tekea recalls the onset of the conflict in their village, lasting for several weeks in one of the months of 2021. When Eritrean troops arrived in the village, the Tigray Defense Force had already departed. Despite the danger, Tekea and her father remained home, given her father's elderly and blind condition, leaving them with no escape.

That morning, her father sat in the yard, seeking warmth in the sunlight. Suddenly, soldiers arrived and commanded the elderly man to enter the house. Reluctantly, he complied, stepping inside at a slow pace. Once inside, the soldiers interrogated him, demanding information about the whereabouts of the Tigray Defense Force and accusing Tekea of aiding them. Despite her father's insistence of ignorance and Tekea's repeated denials of involvement, the soldiers persisted in questioning, subjecting them to scrutiny and examination for over an hour.

Then, they violently knocked her to the ground and relentlessly kicked her back. Amidst her cries for mercy, she overheard one of the soldiers instructing another to fetch scissors. Trembling with fear, she pleaded with them to spare her, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. Ignoring her anguish, they forcibly spread her legs and pinned her down. With chilling cruelty, one soldier proceeded to mutilate her genitals. Recounting the ordeal in her own words, she described, "Despite my cries and the profuse bleeding, the soldiers showed no



remorse. They inflicted severe injuries by cutting the outer parts of my vagina until I was left seriously wounded.” She continued, “The pain was unbearable.”

The Eritrean troops, unsatisfied with the grotesque mutilation they inflicted, escalated their brutality. They doused her body with gasoline and callously set her ablaze. The flames ravaged her, leaving parts of her face scorched by the intense heat. Miraculously, she endured the excruciating ordeal, surviving the searing flames and subsequent days of agony. “It’s a miracle that I survived,” she reflected, recounting the harrowing experience of being left to suffer on the ground for three days without food or water.

After being left lying on the ground, no one came to Tekea’s rescue. Eventually, her family learned of the horrific ordeal and brought her home, attempting to treat her wounds with traditional medicine. Unfortunately, these efforts proved ineffective, and her condition worsened over time. With no nearby health center available, her wound became infected, leading to the development of maggots.

When the Tigray Defense Forces regained control of the area, Tekea finally had the opportunity to receive medical treatment. However, despite the efforts of medical professionals, the mutilation of her genitals remained unhealed. She continues to suffer severe physical and emotional pain, experiencing complications such as blood in her urine. Desperate for medical assistance, she longs for access to proper care. However, living in a village far from Mekelle, she faces significant barriers, including financial constraints and limited transportation options.

Adding to her anguish, Tekea remains unaware of the fate of her husband and son. Despite the restoration of telecommunications services in Tigray, she has received no communication from anyone in the region. With no news, she grapples with the grim possibility that her loved ones may never return.

Story of Yihdega

Meet Yihdega, a member of the Kunama ethnic group in Tigray. This 24-year-old woman endured a horrific

The image is a screenshot of a BBC News article. At the top, the BBC logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Sign in', 'Home', 'News', 'Sport', 'Reel', and 'World' are on the right. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner is a horizontal menu with categories: 'Home', 'War in Ukraine', 'Coronavirus', 'Climate', 'Video', 'World', 'UK', 'Business', 'Tech', and 'Science'. A sub-menu for 'World' is expanded, showing 'Africa', 'Asia', 'Australia', 'Europe', 'Latin America', 'Middle East', and 'US & Canada'. The main headline reads 'Ethiopia war in Tigray: Eritrean soldiers accused of rape despite peace deal'. Below the headline, it says '© 1 day ago'. There is a photograph showing a person in a red and black patterned headscarf looking down. Below the photo, it says 'GETTY IMAGES' and a caption: 'Women and aid groups say sexual assaults are continuing even after a peace deal in Ethiopia's civil war'. At the bottom left of the screenshot, it says 'By Catherine Byaruhanga' and 'Africa correspondent, BBC News'.

sexual assault at the hands of the Eritrean army and now resides in one of the IDP shelters in the region. Prior to seeking refuge, she lived in a small town within Tigray. However, with the outbreak of war, the Eritrean army seized control of her hometown, unleashing violence upon innocent Tigrayans. Tragically, they even went as far as banning religious and cultural funerals, exacerbating the anguish of those already suffering from their brutal actions.

Yihdega cannot recall the exact date and month of the assault that occurred in 2013, but the year remains etched in her memory. The harrowing events of that day haunt her consciousness relentlessly. Three Eritrean soldiers invaded their home, forcing her husband to kneel before subjecting him to torture by binding his hands and feet behind his back. Tragically, they then subjected Yihdega to a brutal rape in the presence of her restrained husband. Despite desperate pleas for mercy, the assailants callously continued their heinous acts. Two of the soldiers viciously assaulted her, violating both her vagina and anus simultaneously, while the third assailant took his turn. Following the relentless assault, they callously executed her husband before her eyes, denying him even a dignified burial despite his pleading for mercy.

The soldiers' atrocities extended far beyond the initial assault; they subjected Yihdega to days of relentless rape, unaffected by the repulsive odor emanating from her husband's lifeless body. They



subjected her to sexual slavery, perpetually assaulting her as she lay unable to move or flee. Yihdega endured unimaginable torment as the Eritrean soldiers tortured her with grotesque methods, including inserting blood-stained cloths into her womb and placing someone else's bloody garments and socks into her mouth. They further degraded her by dousing her body with chemicals and burning her flesh with rusty iron. These horrific acts persisted as the soldiers moved from one location to another, leaving a trail of unspeakable suffering in their wake.

After the soldiers departed, Yihdega received assistance from her neighbors to bury her husband's body, which had remained inside their home for days. They laid him to rest in a nearby location without the customary religious or cultural rites, a somber reflection of the devastating circumstances.

Yihdega soon discovered that her neighbors had also suffered brutal assaults, with some enduring horrific mutilations at the hands of the Eritrean soldiers. The grim reality of the violence surrounding her became painfully clear as she learned of the numerous casualties



in her community. It dawned on her that the soldiers' actions aimed not only to inflict physical harm but also to degrade the very essence of her identity as a Tigrayan. Their vile language and ruthless deeds underscored their intent to annihilate the Tigrayan people, leaving Yihdega grappling with the profound loss and trauma inflicted upon her community.

After the perpetrators departed, Yihdega sought medical attention at the health center, only to receive devastating news—she was pregnant. However, plagued by suicidal thoughts in the aftermath of the abuse, Yihdega made the agonizing decision to terminate the pregnancy.

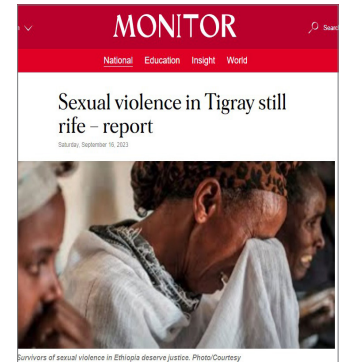
Presently, Yihdega grapples with excruciating pain throughout her body, compounded by abnormal and continuous discharge from her uterus. Moreover, the severe psychological trauma stemming from her ordeal has severed her ability to communicate effectively with her community, particularly her mother. In a distressing manifestation of her anguish, Yihdega's psychological crisis led to a violent incident where she attempted to harm her own mother, resulting in her departure from their shared space. Isolated from her family members, Yihdega experiences desperation and sleeplessness, further exacerbating her already profound suffering. Despite receiving psychological care, she struggles to find solace or agreement with anyone, encapsulating the profound and enduring impact of her trauma.

Call-to-Action:

It is imperative that we demand justice for Tekea, Yihdega, and countless women and girls of Tigray who have been subjected to such brutality. The international community must hold those responsible for these crimes to account and ensure that survivors receive the medical care, psychological support, and justice they deserve. Perpetrators of sexual violence in Tigray must be held accountable for their crimes.

The international community must ensure that justice is served, both domestically and through international mechanisms. Survivors of sexual violence require immediate access to medical care, psychosocial support, and legal assistance. Resources and funding must be allocated to establish and sustain comprehensive support services for survivors. Robust prevention measures are essential to mitigate the risk of sexual violence. This includes training for security forces, community awareness campaigns, and establishing safe reporting mechanisms.

Interventions must prioritize survivor-centered approaches, ensuring survivors have the support and



We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of the people of Tigray. We must demand accountability, justice, and assistance for survivors of sexual violence.

Tigrayan protesters outside 10 Downing Street, London, UK. (alamy. October 19, 2021)



resources needed to heal and rebuild their lives with dignity. Strengthening monitoring and reporting mechanisms is crucial to accurately document instances of sexual violence, track trends, and facilitate timely responses to protect survivors and hold perpetrators accountable. Efforts to dismantle systems of impunity must be prioritized. This includes legal reforms, capacity-building for judicial institutions, and support for transitional justice processes.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the urgent need for humanitarian aid to assist survivors in rebuilding their lives. Many have lost everything – their homes, their livelihoods, their dignity – and are in desperate need of assistance to start anew. The involvement of government agencies, health professionals, religious leaders, and community organizations is crucial in providing comprehensive support to survivors and addressing the long-term consequences of sexual violence.

The time for action is now. We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of the people of Tigray. We must demand accountability, justice, and assistance for survivors of sexual violence. Their voices must be heard, their pain acknowledged, and their rights protected. Anything less would be a grave injustice and a failure of humanity.



Acts of villainy by perpetrators

Atrocities committed by Ethiopian troops against Tigrayan civilians.

(Photo: Tghat)





Tigrayan civilians stoned to death by Ethiopian troops.

Tigray in a State of Darkness and Anxiety



Crowds of people in Romanat Square, Mekelle, listening to the news and purchasing/sharing videos and screenshots (Photo: Facebook/Mulugeta Atsbeha)

In conflict zones, people are often subjected to war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, the war on Tigray presents unique and horrifying features. Disturbing videos, even released by the perpetrators themselves, reveal deliberate acts of killing and raping Tigrayans with the aim of exterminating them from existence. Ethiopian government officials openly expressed this genocidal intent, as conveyed to the

European Union's special envoy and Finland's foreign minister, Pekka Haavisto: "they are going to wipe out the Tigrayans for 100 years."

The brutality extended beyond mere combat. Forces of the central government, allied militias, special forces from neighboring regions, and the Eritrean government collaborated not only to achieve victory but also to perpetrate heinous acts against civilians. Tigrayan

women and girls were subjected to rape, while cultural and religious artefacts were deliberately destroyed. These atrocities were accompanied by punitive measures that collectively punished the entire population, including withholding electricity, blocking food aid and medication, and severing all communication and transportation channels. The atrocities and crimes were committed amidst a complete communication blackout, with access to international media denied.

The temporal context adds to the horror. Such atrocities would be appalling if they occurred in the 19th century or earlier. Yet, they transpired in the 21st century, an era

supposedly committed to upholding human rights and vowing “never again” following past genocides like that in Rwanda.

Regrettably, the response of world leaders and humanitarian organizations has been lacking. This underscores George Orwell’s famous adage, “All animals are equal, but some animals

Farmers saw their tools and crops destroyed, their livestock slaughtered, and their daughters and mothers subjected to dehumanizing acts of rape. Essential supplies such as drugs and food were deliberately withheld, plunging the region into a primitive state akin to the “Stone Age.”

are more equal than others.” The war on Tigray exposes the hollowness of equality and human rights rhetoric, revealing a stark disparity in global concern and intervention. While the suffering of the Tigrayan people is largely ignored, the attention and assistance extended to other conflicts, such as that in Ukraine, highlight

this inequality. WHO’s Director General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, even hinted at a racial bias, attributing the world’s indifference to the color of Tigrayans’ skin.

However, it would be remiss to suggest that there were no individuals or groups who championed humanity during this crisis. Indeed, there were some who made valiant efforts to support the victims in Tigray. Yet, in most cases, governments fell short of meaningful action, limiting their response to mere expressions of concern while Tigrayans endured ethnic profiling, persecution, imprisonment, rape, murder, destruction of livelihoods, and ransacking of their homes.

The United States of America took a significant step by expelling Ethiopia from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). This act had allowed Ethiopia to export its products to US markets duty-free, providing a vital economic lifeline by creating job opportunities for 100 thousand Ethiopians and generating \$100 million in annual revenue for the country. Despite this blow to its economy, Ethiopia remained resolute in its campaign against Tigray, demonstrating a willingness to pay any price for its destruction.

Another notable aspect of the war on Tigray was its execution in darkness. Unlike conflicts such as that in Ukraine, where media coverage was extensive, Tigray was shrouded in a total media and communication blackout. Tigray Television and Dimtsi Weyane Tigray, the region’s media outlets, were incapacitated, electricity was cut off, and all forms of communication, including



air and road transportation and Internet services, were severed. This blackout echoed the words of Kovach and Rosenstiel: “When the flow of news is obstructed, darkness falls, and anxiety grows.”

Crimes of all kinds, including genocide, were perpetrated under this cloak of darkness. Farmers saw their tools and crops destroyed, their livestock slaughtered, and their daughters and mothers subjected to dehumanizing acts of rape. Essential supplies such as drugs and food were deliberately withheld, plunging the region into a primitive state akin to the “Stone Age.” Even university lecturers, businesspeople, and celebrities were compelled to abandon their pursuits and engage in menial tasks like collecting firewood and fetching water for survival.

Despite CNN’s rare access to the region, international media organizations were largely denied entry, leaving CNN’s report from Tigray as merely the tip of the iceberg. Local media outlets that could have countered government propaganda were silenced, further exacerbating the plight of the Tigrayan people.

Top government officials resorted to dehumanizing language, referring to groups like the TPLF as “daytime hyenas,” “weeds,” and “cancer,” thereby perpetuating a narrative that painted Tigrayans in a negative light. Such dehumanizing rhetoric only served to fuel the atrocities committed against Tigrayans by Ethiopian forces and their allies.

Even after Ethiopian and Eritrean forces withdrew from many parts of Tigray in June 2022, survivors continued to endure unimaginable suffering. Air raids, starvation, and disease plagued the region, with mothers and children bearing the brunt of malnutrition and lacking access to essential healthcare facilities for childbirth.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia downplayed the severity of the crisis, denying reports of hunger in Tigray during a national election in 2021. This denial contradicted the stark reality reported by UN agencies, which indicated that over 350,000 people were facing famine conditions in the region.

Efforts by Diaspora Media outlets such as Tigray Media House (TMH), Asena, Dedebit, and others, along with YouTube-based media like Ethio-Forum from Addis Ababa, attempted to shed light on the atrocities in Tigray. However, their coverage was limited due to restricted access to the region.



With no telephone or Internet services available in Tigray, communication with loved ones became virtually impossible. Families were separated during raids by allied forces, leaving many in the dark about the fate of their relatives. To reach family members in other parts of Ethiopia, people embarked on dangerous journeys lasting days and incurred significant expenses for transportation to areas with mobile network coverage, often located near the borders of neighboring regions.

For those fortunate enough to have access, news and information beyond their immediate surroundings were disseminated through organizations equipped with generators and V-SAT technology for satellite Internet access. These individuals served as vital sources for news and media content circulated on both mainstream and social media platforms.

Videos and screenshots from social media became commodities sold on the streets of Mekelle. To view these materials on a mobile phone, individuals had to search for generators to charge their devices and purchase the videos and texts for ten Birr. Those unable to charge their phones and afford the videos often resorted to sharing devices with their neighbors.

Street vendors equipped with generators, computers, and speakers promoted various media contents, attracting crowds of people eager to listen to the latest news. Among them were individuals without functional mobile phones or the means to purchase the materials.

Despite limited access to social media, people gathered in groups to discuss updates on the war in Tigray and the responses of world leaders. However, these discussions often ended in feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, highlighting the deep-rooted concerns within the community.

Even after the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, the media struggled to gain access to Tigray and expose the suffering endured by its residents. While some reporters managed to provide glimpses of life in the region, their efforts failed to capture the attention of world leaders and alleviate the crisis.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs), hopeful for repatriation following the Pretoria Agreement, remained stranded in shelters for years. Despite their plight, humanitarian aid was abruptly cut off, compounding their challenges.

IDPs scattered across cities and towns in Tigray await their return and the arrival of much-needed food aid. They yearn for their voices to be heard and seek practical solutions to their predicament. It falls upon the media to amplify their voices and hold authorities accountable.

To foster societal healing and restore normalcy, the media must prioritize the plight of the displaced, ensuring they are not forgotten or marginalized. Holding officials from both the Interim Administration of Tigray and the Federal government accountable for their promises should be a central focus, driving the media's agenda towards justice and transparency.





On 20 April 2021, 13-year-old girl Kisanet G/michael was one of the victims of a white phosphorus attack by Ethiopian and Eritrean armies in Adi' Ayqoro, Central zone of Tigray. (*The Telegraph*, May 24, 2021)



On June 22, 2021, at least 64 people were killed and 180 wounded in a warplane attack on the remote city of Togoga on a Tuesday Market Day. (*The Guardian*, June 24, 2021)



Airstrikes targeting an IDP (internally displaced persons) camp in the town of Dedebit, Northwest Tigray, kill 59 people and injure 30, including children. (*Tghat*: January 7, 2022)



20 December 2021, airstrikes kill 15 civilians and wounds several in the town of Korem, Southern Tigray. (Photo: Captured from video submitted to CITG)

The Grim Reality: Aerial Attacks and Drone Strikes Unleashed in Tigray's Genocidal War

Despite the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement, which incorporated Transitional Justice (TJ) as a mechanism to address civilian massacres, siege, blockade, mass starvation, death, forced displacements, and extensive property destruction, atrocities against Tigrayans persist. Eritrean and Amhara forces continue their reign of terror with killings, rapes, abductions, and forceful displacements within occupied Tigrayan territories, rendering the TJ process ineffective. Ethnic cleansing, notably in Western Tigray, remains unchecked, leaving millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) unable to return home. Similarly, for the fact that TJ process at hand is not victim-centered and the institutions tasked with transitional justice, such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and all the judicial bodies, are perceived as ineffective, hampering the collection of credible evidence and documentation and fostering distrust. Moreover, the lack of a realistic pathway for external accountability undermines efforts to hold foreign perpetrators, including Eritrean forces, accountable, despite claims of limited investigations by Ethiopia.



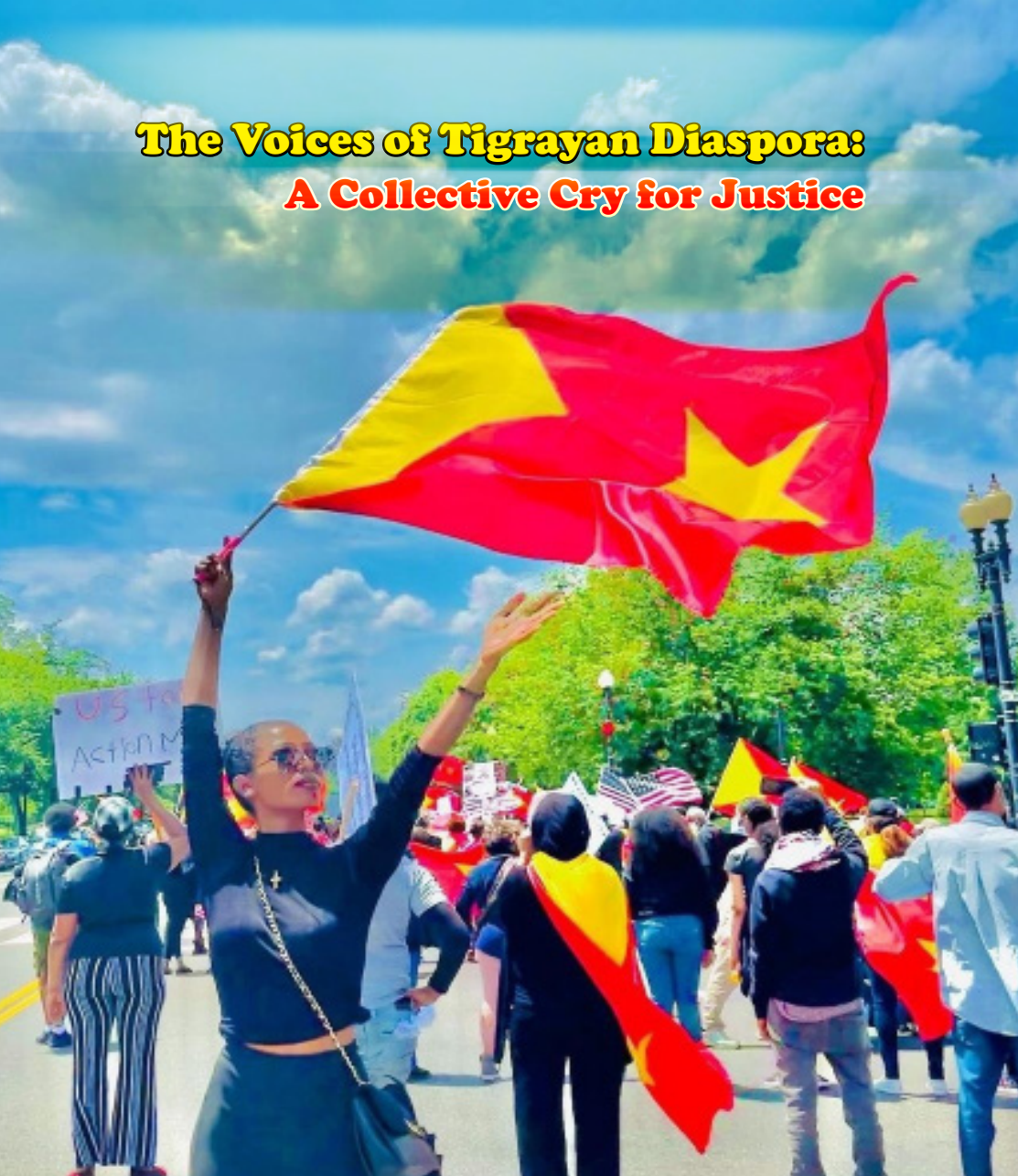
On 27 September 2022, a woman is being dug out of the rubble after the Eritrean warplane bombed a residential area in Adi Daero, Northwest Tigray.
(Photo: Tigray TV)

Tigrayan houses in Abala town, Afar region, were marked as 'Christian houses' before being attacked by Afar forces while their occupants were at home.

(Photo: CITG)



The Voices of Tigrayan Diaspora: A Collective Cry for Justice



Maebel Gebremedhin's Struggle for Justice

Maebel Gebremedhin, a Tigrayan-American and the co-founder and president of the Tigray Action Committee US, emerges as a beacon of resilience and advocacy amid the ongoing turmoil in Tigray. Her fervent dedication to championing the rights of women and children stems from a deeply personal connection to the conflict.

Born 35 years ago in a refugee camp in Sudan, Maebel's formative years were shaped by the enduring conflict between the Tigray region and the Ethiopian government. Fleeing the violence, her family sought refuge, leaving behind a homeland marred by strife. Today, as Tigray rebels persist in their struggle against the forces of Ethiopian Prime Minister

(Photo: Tghat, March 12, 2023)

Abey Ahmed, Maebel finds herself at the forefront of a battle for justice and dignity.

The plight of her father, unreachable since communication was severed in June 2021, weighs heavily on Maebel's heart. The uncertainty surrounding his well-being amplifies her anguish, compounded by the broader tragedy she perceives unfolding—a genocide targeting her people. In her resolute condemnation of Abey Ahmed's actions, she voices not only her personal sorrow but also a collective plea for recognition and intervention.

In a poignant interview with France 24, Maebel's words reverberate with pain and determination as she sheds light on the atrocities perpetrated against her community. Beyond her own loss, she underscores the larger injustice consuming Tigray, serving as a potent reminder of the human toll of conflict and the imperative of decisive action.

*Tigrayan protesters
outside 10 Downing Street,
London, UK.
(alamy, October 19, 2021)*

Eden Kassa: Bearing Witness to the Tigray Genocide

Eden Kassa, a Tigrayan-American and Founder and President of Legacy Tigray Advocacy Group, offers a firsthand account of the harrowing realities endured by the people of Tigray. Reflecting on her two-year stay in Mekelle, Tigray, Eden paints

a stark portrait of a community besieged by violence and despair.

Recalling the onset of the Tigray Genocide, Eden vividly describes the abrupt descent of Mekelle into darkness—both literal and metaphorical—following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's ominous radio announcement. What was once a vibrant town became a desolate landscape, gripped by fear and isolation. Against a backdrop





Tigrayan protesters outside the White House
(*Today News Africa, January 14, 2023*)

A Collective Cry for Justice

Amid the darkness engulfing Tigray, the Tigrayan Diaspora emerges as a steadfast voice for justice and accountability. United in their resolve, they refuse to remain silent in the face of unspeakable atrocities.

On 07 May 2021, Tigrayan Protesters chant "Stop the genocide in Tigray!" in Berlin, Germany.
(*Photo: Sean Gallup/Getty Images*)

of escalating violence, Eden bears witness to the erosion of freedom and the pervasive threat of harm.

As a survivor of this tumultuous period, Eden echoes the calls for justice and accountability reverberating throughout Tigray. From the insidious use of food and rape as weapons to mass arrests and executions, she highlights the systematic brutality inflicted upon her people. Standing in solidarity with fellow survivors, Eden implores the international community to confront the atrocities head-on and ensure that those responsible are held to account.



Since the declaration of war against Tigray, the diaspora has tirelessly campaigned to expose the genocide unfolding in their homeland. Despite facing formidable challenges, including communication blackouts and restrictions on aid, they persist in their quest for global recognition and intervention.

Their demands are clear: an end to the violence, justice for the victims, and accountability for the perpetrators. While international condemnation has been voiced, concrete action remains elusive. The diaspora calls upon the world to heed their plea and stand in solidarity with the people of Tigray.

As the struggle for justice continues, every Tigrayan—both at home and abroad—is urged to intensify their peaceful resistance. Only through collective action can the dream of lasting peace, justice, and accountability be realized.

While international condemnation has been voiced, concrete action remains elusive.

Tigrayan Protesters
in Grove City, OH

(wikipedia, December 9, 2021)



Paul Becker / Becker1999

On December 18, 2020, Al-Nejashi Mosque was bombed and looted by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops.



Invading forces joined hands to destroy everything belonging to Tigrayans, including their sacred books and churches.



A school that once served the Tigrayan community in Abala town of the Afar region was looted and destroyed by Afar ethnic groups residing in the area.

(CITG, April 2022)





Debre Medhanit Amanuel
Ma'go Church, located in
Eastern Tigray, Negash town,
was shelled by invading forces
on November 24, 2020.

(The Conversation, May 3, 2022)

• Facts - Tigray Genocidal War

By: International Media, International Organization's Report and Leaders Testimony



November, 2020

‘Eritrean forces killed hundreds of unarmed civilians in the city of Axum in November 2020 through indiscriminate shelling and shooting and extrajudicial killings, in what the human rights organization says could amount to a crime against humanity’

(Amnesty International)

January, 2021

The US calls on Eritrea to “immediately” withdraw its troops who have been fighting in Tigray.

February, 2021

A CNN investigation brings to light a massacre which took place during a religious festival in the town of Dengelat late last year. Eyewitnesses told CNN that a group of Eritrean soldiers opened fire at church during a service, claiming the lives of priests, women, entire families and a group of more than 20 school children on November 30, 2020.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken calls for the withdrawal of Eritrean and Ethiopian regional forces from the Tigray region and an end to killings and human rights violations.

March 2021

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michele Bachelet calls for an independent investigation into human rights violations that may amount to war crimes in Tigray, days after CNN’s exclusive report about the massacre in Dengelat.

During a Congressional committee hearing, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemns acts of “ethnic cleansing” to the human rights abuses he says are being carried out in Western Tigray, calling the situation “unacceptable.”

May, 2021

US President Joe Biden calls for a ceasefire and an end to “large-scale human rights abuses” in Tigray.

June, 2021

The UN and international aid groups say more than 350,000 people in Tigray are facing “catastrophic” levels of “acute food insecurity” or famine, with millions more at risk.

The Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has frequently cut off power, Mob-Phone Access to the region. We know that the forces allied to the Ethiopian government have damaged and looted health facilities. *(Samanta Power; USAID Director)*



When I met the Ethiopian leaders on February, they really use this kind of language that they are going to destroy the Tigrayans and they are going to wipe out the Tigrayans for 100 years.

(Pekka Havviesto, Former Special Envoy to European Union)

August, 2021

Widespread rape and sexual violence carried out by members of the ENDF, the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF), and other aligned Special Forces and militia groups.

(Amnesty International Report)

September, 2021

‘All the hallmarks of Genocide as defined by the international law are committed in Tigray.....’

(CNN Report)

October, 2021

A CNN investigation finds that the Ethiopia’s government used Ethiopian Airlines, the country’s primary commercial airline, to shuttle weapons to and from neighboring Eritrea during the war. *(CNN Report)*

November, 2021

“Now we are hearing countless horrific accounts of rape is being used as weapons of war, a violence against civilians, of hunger been used as tool of war, a famine looming, UN staffs been expelled..... Ethiopians are killing Ethiopians thousands by the day”

(Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Ambassador to UN)

Do you believe genocide is underway in the region?.....
Yes, and I have said so. As we see genocide is unfolding, we need to do everything we can to stop it and we need to call it as such” *(BOB Mendez, US Senator)*

Ethiopia’s conflict-torn Tigray region is under a “systematic blockade”, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the World Health Organization (WHO) director-general says, warning that people were starving to death and dying from a lack of access to medicine. *(Aljazeera)*

November, 2021

What’s unfolding in Ethiopia has all the makings of genocide and we cannot wait for this to become another Rwanda before we take action. *(Brad Sherman, US Senator)*



News

Ethiopia’s Tigray is under a ‘systematic’ blockade: WHO chief

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also said Tigrayans across the country were being profiled and arrested by the thousands.



Ethiopia’s conflict-torn Tigray region is under an ‘effective blockade’, the World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said (File: Fabrice Coffrini/Reuters)

January, 2022

An airstrike in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray has killed 56 people and wounded at least 30 in a camp for the internally displaced. The strike hit the camp in the town of Dedebit in the north-west of the region... *(The Guardian)*

April, 2022

"We will erase you from this land" Crime against Humanity and ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone, April, 2022. *(Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International Report)*

October 6, 2022 –

... an air strike in Adi Daero kills more than 65 people and injures more than 70. Many of those killed are displaced people sheltering inside a school building. *(BBC)*

December, 2022

We have seen 20,000 (Twenty Thousand) soldiers in Ethiopian arm is imprisoned months ago simply because of their Tigrayan heritage *(Brad Sharman, US Senator/Congressman)*

January, 2023

"Nowhere in the world are we witnessing hell like in Tigray," WHO's chief Tedros says, as a blockade prevented medicines and other life-saving supplies from reaching the northern region.

September, 16, 2023

Sexual violence in Tigray still rife – report
Eritrean and Ethiopian armed forces, as well as associated militias likely perpetrated sexual violence on a widespread and systematic basis in Tigray, Ethiopia, A new report has revealed. The report by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and the Organization for Justice and Accountability in the Horn of Africa (OJAH) zooms into the months that followed the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in November 2022 (Monitor)

March, 2023

October, 2023 'We found evidence of wide-ranging atrocities. In Tigray, Ethiopian National Defense Force, Eritrean Defense Forces, regional forces, and affiliated militias perpetrated violations and abuses on a staggering scale, including mass killings, widespread and systematic rape and sexual violence against women and girls, deliberate starvation, forced displacement, and large-scale arbitrary detentions. These acts amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

(Statement of the Chairperson of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, Mr. Mohamed Chande Othman, at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly, Third Committee)

October, 2023

Just days before a deal to end the war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, soldiers from neighboring Eritrea last fall massacred more than 300 villagers in Mariam Shewito over the course of a week, according to witnesses and victims' relatives.

(The Washington Post, Published February 28, 2023)



On November 20, 2020, a church dedicated to Cherkos located in the Eastern zone of Tigray, Zalambessa town (Tigray-Eritrea border), in an area called Lgat in Kebelle Adis Alem, was destroyed by Eritrean troops.


(Tghat: January 19, 2021)

(Photo: Facebook/Tigray Network)



Displaced persons living in a dire situation due to the genocidal war declared on Tigray

(Photo: BBC Africa)



Mass graves of massacred Tigrayans in Semera town, Afar region.



ጀናላይድ ትግራይ ዘበት ከይድገም! ዘበት ከይርሳዕ!!
Never Again and Never Forget the Tigray Genocide!!