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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Ethiopia

Latest developments on the Tigrayan conflict (1 March 2021-25 March 2022)

1. Chronology of events on the developments of the conflict and the political situation

On 9 March 2021, Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed admitted to the ‘alleged’ reports of ‘human rights abuses’ perpetrated by the federal government forces ‘within the context of the law enforcement operation triggered by the TPLF’¹ (Tigray’s People Liberation Front), and vowed to take unspecified, ‘concrete steps’ to address the violations. Prime Minister Abiy further mentioned his willingness of allowing external participants to investigations into abuses.²

On 10 March 2021, the United States (US) Secretary of State Antony Blinken, condemned ‘human rights abuses’ and ‘acts of ethnic cleansing’ that were reportedly taking place in Tigray region.³ On 13 March 2021, Prime Minister Abiy denied that ethnic cleansing had occurred, and referred to Blinken’s statements as ‘unfounded’.⁴

On 23 March 2021, Prime Minister Abiy admitted that Eritrean troops had taken part in the conflict in Tigray⁵, and went on to acknowledge that ‘atrocities [...] had been committed during the fighting, and promised perpetrators would be punished’.⁶ On 26 March 2021, it was announced that Eritrea would withdraw troops from Tigray in the near future.⁷

In April 2021, Eritrea’s government itself recognised the presence of its troops in Tigray, and also stated that it would be ‘pulling out its soldiers’ from the region.⁸ On 2 April 2021, the foreign ministers of the G7 states, together with the High Representative of the European Union, expressed concern about ‘recent reports on human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law in Tigray’, and condemned ‘the killing of civilians,

¹ Ethiopia, Statement delivered to the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on the Current Situation in Northern Ethiopia, 9 March 2021, [url](#)

² Ethiopia, Statement delivered to the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on the Current Situation in Northern Ethiopia, 9 March 2021, [url](#); Ethiopian Monitor, PM: African Commission Can Probe Rights Abuse Allegations in Tigray, 9 March 2021, [url](#)

³ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); CNN, Blinken: Acts of ‘ethnic cleansing’ committed in Western Tigray, 10 March 2021, [url](#)

⁴ AP, Ethiopia denies ‘ethnic cleansing,’ is open to outside probe, 13 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Ethiopian PM confirms Eritrean troops entered Tigray during conflict, 23 March 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Ethiopia PM admits Eritrean soldiers entered Tigray region, 23 March 2021, [url](#)

⁶ Reuters, Ethiopian PM confirms Eritrean troops entered Tigray during conflict, 23 March 2021, [url](#)

⁷ Guardian (The), Ethiopia’s PM says Eritrea will withdraw troops from Tigray, 26 March 2021, [url](#); NYT, Eritrea Agrees to Withdraw Troops From Tigray, Ethiopia Says, 26 March 2021, [url](#)

⁸ RFI, Eritrea announces withdrawal of troops from Ethiopia’s Tigray region, 17 April 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Eritrea admits presence in Ethiopia’s Tigray, tells U.N. withdrawing, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

sexual and gender-based violence, indiscriminate shelling and the forced displacement of residents of Tigray and Eritrean refugees’.⁹

On 6 May 2021, the Ethiopian parliament designated the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA, also referred to as Shene) armed group¹⁰ as terrorist organisations¹¹, ‘accusing them of carrying out acts of politically motivated violence against government and civilian targets’.¹² This resulted, as reported by Freedom House, in ‘hundreds of Tigrayans accused of being affiliated with the TPLF’ facing arrest and ‘pressure’.¹³

On 12 May 2021, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights decided to establish a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the situation in the Tigray Region. The Commission of Inquiry, which ‘has a mandate to, *inter alia*, investigate allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to gather all relevant information so as to determine whether the allegations constitute serious and massive violations of human rights’, was subsequently launched on 17 June 2021.¹⁴

On 23 May 2021, the US State Department announced it was imposing various sanctions affecting Ethiopia.¹⁵ More specifically, it announced restrictions ‘on the issuance of visas for any current or former Ethiopian or Eritrean government officials, members of the security forces, or other individuals’ deemed to be ‘responsible for, or complicit in, undermining resolution of the crisis in Tigray’. Moreover, it also imposed ‘wide-ranging restrictions on economic and security assistance to Ethiopia’.¹⁶ Ethiopia subsequently condemned the sanctions, describing the ‘attempt by the US administration to meddle’ in Ethiopia’s internal affairs as ‘not only inappropriate, but also completely unacceptable’.¹⁷

On 3 June 2021, a spokesperson for Prime Minister Abiy announced that Eritrea had started withdrawing its forces from Tigray.¹⁸ Later that month, Eritrean troops left the ‘key towns’ of ‘Shire Axum and Adwa but it was not immediately clear whether they had left other communities, where they were going, or whether the retreat was temporary’.¹⁹

On 21 June 2021, general elections were held for ‘436 of the 547 constituencies of the House of People’s Representatives and regional councils’, while voting in various areas was postponed²⁰, ‘due to insecurity and logistical challenges’.²¹ Later, on 30 September 2021,

⁹ G7 and EU, G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement on the Situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, 2 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

¹¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#); RFI, AA, Ethiopian parliament backs labeling of Tigray rebels as terrorists, 6 May 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Ethiopia to designate TPLF, OLF-Shene as ‘terror’ groups, 1 May 2021, [url](#)

¹² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

¹³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴ ACHPR, AU, Press Statement on the official launch of the Commission of Inquiry on the Tigray Region in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 18 June 2021, [url](#); ACHPR, Background, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); NPR, U.S. Imposes Restrictions On Ethiopia And Eritrea Over Tigray Conflict, 24 May 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶ US Department of State, United States’ Actions To Press for the Resolution of the Crisis in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia, 23 May 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); US News, Ethiopia Accuses United States of Meddling Over Tigray, 23 May 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸ Bloomberg, Ethiopian Government Says Eritrea Withdrawing Forces From Tigray, 3 June 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹ Independent (The), Eritrean forces withdraw from key towns in Ethiopia’s Tigray, 29 June 2021, [url](#)

²⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#); IRI-NDI, Ethiopia June 21, 2021 National Elections Report, 5 August 2021, [url](#), p. 10

²¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

elections were held in the Somali, Harari, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's (SNNPR) regions.²² Voting did not take place in parts of Oromia, Amhara, Afar, and Benishangul-Gumuz regions due to insecurity'.²³ In Tigray, voting was postponed indefinitely.²⁴ The elections gave the party of Prime Minister Abiy, the Prosperity Party, a majority in the federal parliament²⁵, and handed Abiy his second five-year term.²⁶

The elections were described as having been affected by 'restrictions on free expression and association, and insecurity', including two murders of opposition candidates several months before the elections²⁷, and by 'registration problems, and other challenges that limited widespread acceptance of the outcomes as free and fair'.²⁸ Meanwhile, observers of the African Union stated that 'despite some operational, logistical, security, political and COVID-19 related challenges, overall, the pre-election and [the 21 June 2021] Election Day processes were conducted in an orderly, peaceful and credible manner'.²⁹

On 5 August 2021, Ethiopian authorities refused Sudan's proposal to mediate the conflict in Tigray, to which Sudan responded by recalling its ambassador from Ethiopia.³⁰

On 10 August 2021, due to the push of Tigrayan forces into Amhara and Afar regions, PM Abiy called for 'all eligible civilians to join the armed forces', in order to defeat the TPLF.³¹ On 11 August 2021, it was reported that the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Army had formed an alliance against the federal government.³²

On 23 August 2021, the US sanctioned 'the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) Chief of Staff General Filipos Woldeyohannes (Filipos), for his connection with serious human rights abuse committed during the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia'.³³

On 17 September 2021, US President Joe Biden signed a new executive order, which authorised 'broad sanctions against those involved in perpetrating the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia', expressing concern at 'widespread violence, atrocities, and serious human rights abuse, including those involving ethnic-based violence, rape and other forms of gender-based

²² HRW, World Report 2022 – Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#); The East African, Ethiopia holds delayed elections in three regions, 30 September 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Ethiopians in three regions go to polls in delayed election, 30 September 2021, [url](#)

²³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁴ HRW, World Report 2022 – Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#); IRI-NDI, Ethiopia June 21, 2021 National Elections Report, 5 August 2021, [url](#), p. 10

²⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Ethiopia: Abiy's Prosperity Party wins landslide election victory, 10 July 2021, [url](#)

²⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2022 – Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁷ HRW, World Report 2022 – Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#); 2022 Borkena, Debre Zeit Police says killer of opposition figure Girma Moges unidentified, 15 February 2021, [url](#); Brana Press, National Movement of Amhara says its member was killed in Wenbra District in politically motivated attack in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, 10 April 2021, [url](#)

²⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁹ AU, African Union Election Observation Mission to the 21 June 2021 General Elections in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 23 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

³⁰ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); Al Arabiya News, Sudan recalls ambassador to Ethiopia after mediation offer gets rejected, 8 August 2021, [url](#)

³¹ Al Jazeera, Ethiopia calls on civilians to join army to fight Tigray forces, 10 August 2021, [url](#); UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 August 2021, [url](#), p.3

³² Al Jazeera, Ethiopia armed group says it has alliance with Tigray forces, 11 August 2021, [url](#)

³³ USDOS, Sanctioning Eritrean Military Leader in Connection with Human Rights Abuse in Ethiopia, 23 August 2021, [url](#)

violence, and obstruction of humanitarian operations³⁴, although sanctions were not imposed at that time.³⁵

On 30 September 2021, Ethiopia expelled seven senior UN officials from the country, including the head of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), for alleged “meddling” in internal affairs’.³⁶

On 2 November 2021, the federal government decided to impose a ‘nationwide state of emergency effective immediately’, as advancing Tigrayan forces ‘threatened to march’ towards Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital city.³⁷ On the same day, the authorities of Addis Ababa asked citizens to prepare for an eventual attack on the city³⁸, which ‘reportedly prompted thousands of residents to join self-defence groups’.³⁹

On 5 November 2021, the TPLF announced it had, together with eight other groups, formed a new anti-government coalition called the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces⁴⁰, aiming ‘to dismantle Abiy’s government by force or by negotiations, and then form a transitional authority’.⁴¹

On 7 January 2022, the Ethiopian government announced it would be pardoning several ‘high-profile political prisoners’⁴² from detention, including one of the founders of the TPLF.⁴³ In a phone call with PM Abiy on 10 January 2022, US President Joe Biden ‘commended’ Abiy for the amnesty, but raised ‘concerns about ongoing hostilities, including recent air strikes’ in Tigray region during that month.⁴⁴

On 24 March 2022, the federal government unexpectedly declared an ‘indefinite and immediate’ humanitarian truce, to which the TPLF agreed the following day, in a development that was hope to allow much needed humanitarian aid into Tigray region.⁴⁵

³⁴ United States of America, Executive Order on Imposing Sanctions on Certain Persons With Respect to the Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in Ethiopia, 17 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁵ CNN, Biden signs executive order authorizing new Ethiopia sanctions amid reports of atrocities, 17 September 2021, [url](#); United States of America, Executive Order on Imposing Sanctions on Certain Persons With Respect to the Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in Ethiopia, 17 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁶ UN News, Ethiopia: 7 UN officials told to leave country within 72 hours, 30 September 2021, [url](#); CNBC, Ethiopia expels seven senior U.N. officials, 30 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁷ Al Jazeera, Ethiopia declares nationwide state of emergency, 2 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁸ Al Jazeera, Addis Ababa asks residents to prepare to defend Ethiopian capital, 2 November 2021, [url](#)

³⁹ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Guardian (The), Alliance of Ethiopian factions puts government at risk of overthrow, 5 November 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Nine anti-gov’t groups team up as Ethiopia recalls ex-soldiers, 5 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴¹ Al Jazeera, Nine anti-gov’t groups team up as Ethiopia recalls ex-soldiers, 5 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴² France 24, Ethiopia announces amnesty for prominent opposition figures, 7 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴³ France 24, Ethiopia announces amnesty for prominent opposition figures, 7 January 2022, [url](#); DW, Ethiopia announces amnesty for jailed opposition politicians, 7 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴ USA, Readout of President Biden’s Call with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia, 10 January 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵ BBC, Ethiopia’s Tigray war: TPLF agrees to humanitarian truce, 25 March 2022, [url](#); France 24, Ethiopia declares ‘indefinite humanitarian truce’ to allow aid into Tigray, 24 March 2022, [url](#)

2. Security situation in conflict-affected regions

2.1 Actors in the conflict

The main actors involved in the Tigray conflict during the reference period are: the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF)⁴⁶, the Eritrean Army⁴⁷, the Amhara Regional Forces⁴⁸, the Fano (Fanno) Militia⁴⁹, and the TPLF security forces.⁵⁰

More detailed information on each of the above mentioned actors can be found in: [EASO Query Response Ethiopia - Security situation in Tigray region between 1 March 2020 – 28 February 2021](#) (30 March 2021), at pp. 8-11.

Additional information regarding the armed groups involved in the conflict during the reference period include:

Afar Regional Special Forces (Afar Special Forces): as described by ACLED, ‘the Afar Regional Special Forces are a police unit trained and equipped for counter-insurgency operations within the Afar region. It reports to the Afar regional government. The size of the group is not known’.⁵¹

Fano Militia: According to ACLED, the Amhara region-based ‘Fano youth can be loosely defined as an ethno-nationalist youth movement with roots in the 2010-2018 anti-Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) protest era’. Moreover, ‘the territorial integrity of the Amhara ethnic ‘homeland’ has been a key issue for the Fano youth. Protests led by Fano in 2017-2018 were often centered around the issue of Western Tigray and the ethnic Amhara who lived there’.⁵² ACLED also highlighted that ‘Fano has become aligned with – and, in many instances, absorbed by – the Amhara Regional Special Forces. Fano is deeply involved in the conflict against TPLF-associated forces in Western Tigray’, among other operations.⁵³

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) described Fano as ‘an Amhara group primarily comprised of young men, some of whom are armed and affiliated with the Amhara security forces. Some Fano members are organized under the formal militia structure, but not all’.⁵⁴

OLF-Shene/Oromo Liberation Army (OLA): According to the EHRC, the group Shene/OLA

‘is not officially registered but is believed to be the armed wing of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which was established in April 2018, following a disagreement

⁴⁶ Arab News, Ethiopia claims retaking towns from Tigray rebels, 19 December 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁷ Reuters, Dual Agenda, In Ethiopia’s civil war, Eritrea’s army exacted deadly vengeance on old foes, 1 November 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸ AI, Ethiopia: New wave of atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁹ AI, Ethiopia: New wave of atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#); NYT, Fleeing Ethiopians Tell of Ethnic Massacres in Tigray War, 9 December 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁰ France 24, Ethiopia’s Abiy vows to head to war front amid rebel advance, 22 November 2021, [url](#)

⁵¹ ACLED, Actor profiles - Afar Regional Special Forces, n.d., [url](#)

⁵² ACLED, Actor profiles – Fano Youth Militia, n.d., [url](#)

⁵³ ACLED, Actor profiles – Fano Youth Militia, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁴ UNOHCHR and EHRC, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p.97

with the OLF, after the OLF entered a peace agreement with the Federal Government of Ethiopia. It operates in West Oromia and other parts of the country.⁵⁵

According to Freedom House, OLF-Shene/OLA is ‘an armed splinter group of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)’.⁵⁶ Similarly, ACLED describes OLF-Shene/OLA as having been originally the ‘military wing’ of the political group OLF, before the two split up. The group is estimated to have at least several thousand fighters, and is mainly active in the Oromia region⁵⁷. However, they are also reported to be present in Amhara region.⁵⁸ OLF-Shene/OLA were one of the eight groups that founded, in November 2021, an alliance together with the TPLF against the federal government.⁵⁹

Samri Youth Militia: according to the EHRC, the Samri ‘are a Tigrayan youth group in Maikadra who are referred by other residents of the town as Samri because most of them are originally from Samre town in Tigray’.⁶⁰ In a November 2020 report, the EHRC stated that the Samri, with the help of ‘local security forces’, were responsible for the killing of some 600 civilians ‘from the Amhara and Wolkait ethnic groups’ in Maikadra, Hafta Humera woreda (district) of Tigray region, on 9 November 2020.⁶¹

Regional Militias: according to the EHRC, a regional militia is:

‘comprised of armed civilians, mostly farmers, with an obligation to do police work at peace time and be mobilized for war when necessary. They are not paid but receive some training and uniforms. The militias are part of the administration and security structure of the regional state and there are militia offices at each administrative level to coordinate militias. Members of the militia are sometimes provided arms by the regional government or they use their own personal weapons.’⁶²

⁵⁵ UNOHCHR and EHRC, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p.97

⁵⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁷ ACLED, Actor profiles - OLF: Oromo Liberation Front (Shane Splinter Faction), n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁸ ACLED, Actor profiles - OLF: Oromo Liberation Front (Shane Splinter Faction), n.d., [url](#); Addis Standard, News Alert: Amhara region President warns fed. gov’t to seek solution to stop Amhara killings, wants emergency meeting, 1 April 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹ VOA, Tigray, Other Groups Form Alliance Against Ethiopian Leader, 5 November 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰ UNOHCHR and EHRC, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p.102

⁶¹ Addis Standard, Analysis: Amhara State President says region foils attack by “radical Kimant rebels” and “T.P.L.F.-trained Samri group” through border with Sudan; claim adds new dynamic to the conflict , 3 September 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Ethiopia commission says Tigray youth group killed 600 civilians in Nov 9 attack, 24 November 2020, [url](#); Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Rapid Investigation into Grave Human Rights Violation in Maikadra Preliminary Findings, 24 November 2020, [url](#)

⁶² UNOHCHR and EHRC, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p.102

2.2 Chronology of the events on the security situation in Tigray region

In March 2021, ongoing fighting was reported in ‘most parts’⁶³ of Tigray region⁶⁴. Conflict-related displacement of people was reported ‘in Western Tigray toward the town of Shire’⁶⁵, with ‘reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and disappearances of people, particularly young men’, as well as ‘attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure [...], including house-to-house searches accompanied by indiscriminate, extrajudicial killings’, and gender-based violence.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Western Tigray zone remained under *de facto* control of Amhara regional authorities.⁶⁷

In April and May 2021, ongoing ‘heavy fighting’ was reported, between the TPLF and the federal government forces, mainly in the North-Western, Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern zones of Tigray⁶⁸, although by the last week of May 2021, hostilities in border areas between Tigray and Eritrea had ‘largely ceased’.⁶⁹ Humanitarian access was hampered and several roads were blocked due to insecurity⁷⁰, and then UN Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, described the humanitarian crisis in Tigray as ‘deteriorating’.⁷¹

On 3 April 2021 PM Abiy stated that the TPLF had ‘turned itself into a guerrilla force, mingled with farmers and started moving from place to place’, and pointed out that the conflict was likely to take longer to finish.⁷²

Between 24-25 May 2021, Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers were reported to have detained and kidnapped hundreds of people from four IDP camps in Tigray’s Shire town. While, according to reports, some of the IDPs were released several days later, no further information was available with regards to those who remained captives.⁷³

In June 2021, the security situation in Tigray region was described as ‘challenging and unpredictable’⁷⁴, although it was possible for humanitarian aid provision to be scaled up. Episodes of fighting were reported in North-Western, Central, Eastern, South-Eastern, and

⁶³ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 30 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2

⁶⁴ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 March 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁵ IMC, Ethiopia – Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report #6 – 18 March 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁶ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 30 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 March 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁷ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 March 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁸ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 May 2021, [url](#), p.2; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 20 May 2021, [url](#), p.2; Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); UNICEF, Crisis in Tigray enters sixth month with no clear end in sight amid ‘severe and ongoing child rights violations’, 20 April 2021, [url](#); UN News, Ethiopia: Amidst hostilities in Tigray, humanitarian situation remains ‘dire’, 7 April 2021, [url](#); WFP, Ethiopia Tigray Emergency Response Situation Report #1, 11 May 2021, [url](#), p.1; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 April 2021, [url](#), pp.1-2

⁶⁹ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 3 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁰ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 3 May 2021, [url](#), p.2; WFP, Ethiopia Tigray Emergency Response Situation Report #1, 11 May 2021, [url](#), p.1; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 April 2021, [url](#), pp.1-2

⁷¹ Reuters, Sexual violence being used as weapon of war in Ethiopia's Tigray, U.N. says, 15 April 2021, [url](#); Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

⁷² Al Arabiya News, Ethiopia’s PM Abiy Ahmed says army fighting ‘on eight fronts,’ including Tigray, 4 April 2021, [url](#)

⁷³ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); Daily Sabah, Ethiopian soldiers kidnap hundreds of IDPs from Tigray camps: UN, 28 May 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Eritrean and Ethiopian soldiers detain hundreds in Tigray, 25 May 2021, [url](#); UN Humanitarian Coordinator, UN condemns the arbitrary and brutal arrest of at least 200 IDPs in military-led raids in Shire town (Tigray Region), 27 May 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁴ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 10 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

Southern zones⁷⁵, among ‘incidents of arbitrary denial of access, intimidation of humanitarian workers as well as looting and confiscation of humanitarian supplies, trucks and equipment by armed forces’.⁷⁶

On 22 June 2021, an airstrike by the Ethiopian army struck a market in Togoga village in Tigray⁷⁷, resulting in tens of fatalities.⁷⁸ While sources confirmed that civilians were among the fatalities, on 24 June 2021, the army stated that the strike had ‘targeted rebels, not civilians, rejecting accounts that dozens of innocent people were killed’.⁷⁹ On 25 June 2021, three MSF humanitarian staff were killed in Tigray.⁸⁰

On 28 June 2021, after a ‘large-scale counteroffensive against federal forces’⁸¹, the TPLF entered and retook control of Mekelle, the capital city of Tigray. The same day, the federal government announced a unilateral ceasefire⁸², withdrawing from ‘Mekelle and other main towns in the region, including Shire, Axum, Adwa, and Adigrat’.⁸³ Also on 28 June 2021, retreating federal government soldiers reportedly raided UNICEF and WFP offices in Mekelle.⁸⁴

On 29 June 2021, Eritrean forces ‘retreated from Tigray, reportedly to boundary areas close to Eritrea’.⁸⁵ By the end of June 2021, the TPLF controlled ‘most’ of Tigray⁸⁶, including ‘the main cities and roads’.⁸⁷ At the same time, the Amhara Security Forces (ASF) remained ‘in control of areas south of Korem toward Alamata and beyond, in the Southern zone, as well as of the Western zone’.⁸⁸

On 29 June 2021, the ‘Amhara branch of the ruling Prosperity Party’ reportedly announced that ‘Amhara regional forces would oppose any attempts by the TPLF to take territory in Western Tigray, which was seized during the conflict’⁸⁹, which, according to the GCR2P, included the districts of Welkait, Tegede, Humera, Telemte and Raya.⁹⁰

During July 2021, in Tigray region, fighting took place around Mai Tsebri⁹¹, and ‘in boundary areas between Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions’⁹², and the TPLF reportedly recaptured Korem

⁷⁵ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 9 July 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 24 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 17 June 2021, [url](#), p.2; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 10 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁶ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 17 June 2021, [url](#), p.2

⁷⁷ UN News, Strongly Condemning Air Strike on Village in Ethiopia’s Tigray Region, Secretary-General Reiterates Need to Protect Civilians, 25 June 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁸ AP, Witnesses: Airstrike in Ethiopia’s Tigray kills more than 50, 24 June 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁹ France 24, Ethiopia strike on Tigray market targeted rebels: army, 24 June 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁰ MSF, Ethiopia: Three MSF staff killed in attack, 25 June 2021, [url](#)

⁸¹ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

⁸² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#); Al, Ethiopia: As Mekelle changes hands, civilians remain in urgent need of protection, 29 June 2021, [url](#)

⁸³ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update - Flash Update, 1 July 2021, [url](#), p.1

⁸⁴ UNICEF, Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on obstruction of UNICEF humanitarian action in Mekele, Ethiopia, 28 June 2021, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2022 – Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#)

⁸⁵ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update - Flash Update, 1 July 2021, [url](#), p.1

⁸⁶ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

⁸⁷ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 9 July 2021, [url](#), p.3

⁸⁸ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update - Flash Update, 1 July 2021, [url](#), p.1; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 9 July 2021, [url](#), p.3

⁸⁹ UNDPPA, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Briefing to the Security Council on Ethiopia, 2 July 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰ GCR2P, Atrocity Alert No. 262: Ethiopia, Myanmar (Burma) and Afghanistan, 21 July 2021, [url](#)

⁹¹ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 July 2021, [url](#), p.3

⁹² UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 05 August 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 26 July 2021, [url](#), p.3

and Alamata towns from federal forces.⁹³ Within Tigray, reports surfaced of attacks on people suspected of supporting the federal government.⁹⁴

On 4 July 2021, the TPLF demanded from the federal government ‘the removal of Amhara and Eritrean forces from occupied parts of Tigray, the restoration of the TPLF regional government, and unfettered humanitarian access’⁹⁵, as well as an ‘independent UN probe into alleged war crimes, and “procedures” for holding PM Abiy and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki accountable for their actions in Tigray’.⁹⁶ According to Freedom House, the conditions were not met, and ‘the TPLF launched attacks in neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions, leading to the mobilization of regular forces and militias in those regions and further expanding the conflict’.⁹⁷

During August 2021, hardly any episodes of conflict were reported in Tigray region⁹⁸, and an increase in humanitarian access was noted⁹⁹, although fighting did take place, between 17-23 August 2021, in Mai Tsebri.¹⁰⁰ Eritrean forces were reportedly ‘present in boundary areas close to the Eritrea border, including in Western, North-Western and Central zones of Tigray, and had ‘*de facto* occupied various woredas in Eastern zone’.¹⁰¹

During September 2021, in Tigray, ‘the situation in the border with Eritrea remained unchanged, with Eritrean National Defense Forces stationed along the border and present in some woredas of Eastern Tigray, with reports of denials to the population’s freedom of movement and access to aid’.¹⁰²

On 10 September 2021, a report by CNN revealed mass detention and killings of Tigrayan civilians in Humera town in Western Tigray, allegedly by ‘government forces and militia groups’¹⁰³, while another source claimed that Humera town was under the control of the Amhara regional forces.¹⁰⁴

Between 18-28 October 2021, federal troops launched several airstrikes on Mekelle city and nearby Agbe town, resulting in civilian fatalities¹⁰⁵, including children¹⁰⁶. The airstrikes were the first since the retreat of federal forces from ‘most of Tigray’ in June 2021.¹⁰⁷

In December 2021, displacement of tens of thousands of people, presumably due to conflict, from Tigray’s Western zone was reported¹⁰⁸, with ‘ongoing fighting’ in ‘Alamata and Korem

⁹³ UNHCR, Tigray Situation Update 30 July 2021, [url](#), p.1; Reuters, Forces from Ethiopia’s Tigray region say they are pushing south, 12 July 2021, [url](#); Borkena, Alamata: TPLF fighters massacred at least 18 civilians after capturing the town on Tuesday, 13 July 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁴ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 July 2021, [url](#), p.3

⁹⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

⁹⁶ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

⁹⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

⁹⁸ UNOCHA, Tigray: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (August 2021), 31 August 2021, [url](#), p.1

⁹⁹ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 August 2021, [url](#), p.4

¹⁰⁰ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 26 August 2021, [url](#), p.3

¹⁰¹ UNOCHA, Tigray: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (August 2021), 31 August 2021, [url](#), p.1

¹⁰² UNOCHA, Ethiopia: Northern Ethiopia Access Snapshot (September 2021), 15 October 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰³ CNN, Men are marched out of prison camps. Then corpses float down the river, 10 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ GCR2P, Atrocity Alert No. 269: Ethiopia, Guinea and Education Under Attack, 8 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ UNOHCHR, Ethiopia: Bachelet urges end to ‘reckless’ war as Tigray conflict escalates, 3 November 2021, [url](#); France 24, Ethiopia air strike on Tigray kills 6: hospital, rebel sources, 28 October 2021, [url](#); VOA, Ethiopian Government Airstrike Hits Tigray Regional Capital, 22 October 2021, [url](#); AP, New airstrikes hit capital of Ethiopia’s Tigray region, 20 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ France 24, Ethiopia air strike on Tigray kills 6: hospital, rebel sources, 28 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 9 December 2021, [url](#), p.3

areas in southern Tigray', while high 'tension' was reported along the borders with Zalanbesa, Gulomekeda and Erob areas in northern Tigray'.¹⁰⁹

On 6 December 2021, a number of states released a joint statement, condemning 'the Ethiopian government's detention of large numbers' of ethnic Tigrayans in the country, 'on the basis of their ethnicity and without charge'.¹¹⁰ On 16 December 2021, Human Rights Watch reported that 'Amhara security forces are responsible for a surge of mass detentions, killings, and forced expulsions of ethnic Tigrayans' in Western Tigray.¹¹¹ During the last week of December 2021, airstrikes on Tigray¹¹² reportedly lead to mass civilian casualties', mostly in Alamata, Korem, Maychew, Mekoni, and Milazat towns in southern Tigray.¹¹³

In January 2022, ongoing fighting was reported, including along Tigray's border area with Afar region¹¹⁴, and in the Southern, North-Western, and Western zone' of Tigray.¹¹⁵

At the same time, multiple airstrikes by the federal government were launched during the first two weeks of January 2022 on targets in Tigray, hitting several civilian facilities.¹¹⁶ On 5 January 2022, an airstrike hit the Mai Aini refugee camp.¹¹⁷ On 7 January 2022, an IDP camp in Dedebeit was struck by airstrikes.¹¹⁸ On 10 January 2022, an airstrike reportedly hit Mai Tsebri town, in North-Western zone, in Tigray.¹¹⁹ Drone strikes were reported on 15 January 2022 'against Maychew, Korem in Samre towns in Southern and South-Eastern zones in Tigray', and an airstrike was reported on 13 January 2022 in May Tsebri town, in North-Western zone of Tigray.¹²⁰

On 22 January 2022, a media report quoted Ethiopia's deputy army chief, General Abebaw Tadesse, who stated that the federal army would re-enter Tigray region in order to 'eliminate' the TPLF.¹²¹ On 25 January 2022, the Tigrayan forces warned they would re-enter Afar region, in order to fight against 'pro-government forces', who had 'intensified attacks on its positions in recent days'.¹²²

Starting with the last week of January 2022¹²³, and continuing into February 2022¹²⁴ and March 2022¹²⁵, the security situation in Tigray region was described as 'calm'.¹²⁶ The national

¹⁰⁹ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 6 January 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹¹⁰ Australia et al., Joint Statement on Detentions in Ethiopia, 6 December 2021, [url](#)

¹¹¹ HRW, Ethiopia: New Wave of Atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#)

¹¹² USAID, Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis Fact Sheet #3 Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 30 December 2021, [url](#), p.2

¹¹³ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 30 December 2021, [url](#), p.3

¹¹⁴ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 20 January 2022, [url](#), p. 3; Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 27 January 2022, [url](#), p.3;

UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 January 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹¹⁶ UNOHCHR, Press briefing notes on Ethiopia, 14 January 2022, [url](#); France 24, At least 108 civilians killed so far in January in Tigray airstrikes, UN says, 14 January 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ UNHCR, News Comment by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on attack that hit Mai Aini refugee camp in Tigray, 6 January 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 January 2022, [url](#), p.3; BBC, Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: Dozens killed in airstrike at camp, say aid staff, 8 January 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 January 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹²⁰ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 20 January 2022, [url](#), p. 3

¹²¹ News 24, Ethiopia army planning to 'eliminate' Tigrayan forces - military official, 22 January 2022, [url](#)

¹²² Al-Arabiya, Ethiopia's Tigray rebels announce push into neighbouring Afar region, 25 January 2022, [url](#)

¹²³ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 3 February 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹²⁴ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 10 February 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹²⁵ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 25 March 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹²⁶ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 31 March 2022, [url](#), p.3

state of emergency was ended on 15 February 2022, ‘in light of improving security conditions in the country’.¹²⁷

On 24 March 2022, PM Abiy declared an immediate humanitarian truce.¹²⁸ The following day, on 25 March 2022, the TPLF announced they had agreed to ‘a cessation of hostilities, effective immediately’.¹²⁹

2.3 Chronology of events on the security situation in Afar and Amhara regions

On 6 July 2021, a media report stated that Tigrayan forces were ‘mobilising for new conflict’, as preparations were made to move towards Amhara region.¹³⁰ Later, between 17-19 July 2021, it was reported that the TPLF had already entered Afar region and was fighting ‘Afar forces and allied militias’.¹³¹ According to International Crisis Group, by 19 July 2021, fighting in Afar had already killed at least 20 civilians.¹³² On 23 July 2021, Afar region authorities called on civilians to take arms against the TPLF, as did Amhara authorities on 25 July 2021.¹³³ On 25 July 2021, Tigrayan forces claimed they had taken over had seized Adi Arkay town in Amhara.¹³⁴

Fighting between the parties continued throughout 2021, with conflict consistently being reported in most areas of Amhara region, including North Gondar, Central Gondar, South Gondar, West Gondar, North Wello, South Wello, North Shewa, Wag Hemra, Awi, Bahir Dar, and Oromia zones and in Awsi/Zone 1, Kilbati/Zone 2, Fanti/Zone 4, and Hari/Zone 5 of Afar region.¹³⁵

¹²⁷ Al Jazeera, Ethiopia parliament votes to lift state of emergency early, 15 February 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Ethiopia's parliament lifts state of emergency early, 15 February 2022, [url](#); Euronews, Ethiopia's cabinet approves lifting of state of emergency, 27 January 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Guardian (The), Ethiopian government declares Tigray truce to let aid in, 24 March 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Ethiopia government declares unilateral truce to allow aid into Tigray, 24 March 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁹ France 24, Tigray rebels commit to ‘cessation of hostilities’ after Ethiopia’s truce announcement, 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹³⁰ Guardian (The), Tigray forces mobilise against militias from neighbouring province, 6 July 2021, [url](#)

¹³¹ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Ethiopia's Tigray forces enter neighbouring Afar region, Afar says, 19 July 2021, [url](#)

¹³² Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#)

¹³³ Reuters, Ethiopia's Amhara state rallies youth to fight Tigrayan forces as war widens, 25 July 2021, [url](#); VOA, Ethiopia's Afar Region Urges Civilians to Fight Tigray Rebels, 23 July 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁴ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Ethiopia's Amhara state rallies youth to fight Tigrayan forces as war widens, 25 July 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁵ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#); Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 30 December 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 16 December 2021, [url](#), p.3; Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); IMC, Ethiopia – Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report #24, 1 December 2021, [url](#), p.1; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 9 December 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 18 November 2021, [url](#), p. 4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 11 Nov 2021, [url](#), p.4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 4 Nov 2021, [url](#), p.4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 14 October 2021, [url](#), p. 4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 23 September 2021, [url](#), p. 4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 25 November 2021, [url](#), p. 4; UNHCR, Situation Update Ethiopia, Tigray, 6 September 2021, [url](#), p. 3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 16 September 2021, [url](#), p.4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 22 October 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA,

On 20 December 2021, Tigrayan forces stated they would withdraw completely from Afar and Amhara regions back into Tigray, and called for a ceasefire.¹³⁶ In response, the federal government instructed its troops not to enter into Tigray region, after re-taking 'Eastern Amhara and parts of Afar' from the TPLF.¹³⁷ A subsequent USAID report stated that, following the retreat of Tigrayan forces from Afar and Amhara, federal government troops had 'advanced into areas formerly held by TPLF-aligned elements' in 'recent weeks', such as in 'South Wello zone's Dessie and Kombolcha towns in Amhara'.¹³⁸ An IMC report confirmed that as of 24 December 2021, federal government forces had stopped 'at the borders with Tigray, having regained all towns and cities taken by the TPLF in Afar and Amhara regions'.¹³⁹

However, during the first three months of 2022, fighting resumed in both Afar and Amhara regions¹⁴⁰. For several weeks during February 2022, 'armed clashes, with reported use of heavy weapons and airstrikes' took place, mainly affecting Kilbeti/Zone 2, in Afar. On 3 February 2022, Barahle refugee camp was attacked by armed men, and several fatalities were recorded.¹⁴¹

Between 22-28 March 2022, 'sporadic armed clashes were reported in Kilbeti /Zone 2 in Afar region, including in Gubi Kebele in Abala woreda, and Sokardora Kebele in Konnabe woreda'. At the same time, in Amhara the situation was 'generally calm', although OCHA described 'the situation along areas bordering Tigray, namely in Wag Hemra, North Wello and North Gondar zones' as remaining 'volatile'.¹⁴²

Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 26 August 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 26 August 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 August 2021, [url](#), p.4; Al Jazeera, Ethiopia calls on civilians to join army to fight Tigray forces, 10 August 2021, [url](#); UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 August 2021, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 05 August 2021, [url](#), p.3

¹³⁶ Reuters, Tigray forces withdraw from neighbouring Ethiopian regions –spokesman, 20 December 2021, [url](#);

Guardian (The), Tigrayan forces to pull out of nearby Ethiopian regions in ceasefire offer, 20 December 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁷ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); VOA, Analysts: Ethiopian Forces' Halt at Tigray Opens Window for Ceasefire, 24 December 2021, [url](#); UN News, Secretary-General Welcomes Pause by Ethiopia's National Defence Force, Announced Withdrawal of Tigrayan Forces from Afar, Amhara Regions, 24 December 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁸ USAID, Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis Fact Sheet #3 Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 30 December 2021, [url](#), p.2

¹³⁹ IMC, Ethiopia – Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report #26, 18 January 2022, [url](#), p.1

¹⁴⁰ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 25 March 2022, [url](#), p.3;

UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 10 March 2022, [url](#), p. 3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 3 March 2022, [url](#), p.3; USAID, Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis Fact Sheet #5 Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 25 February 2022, [url](#), p.2; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 10 February 2022, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 3 February 2022, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 27 January 2022, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 20 January 2022, [url](#), p. 3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 January 2022, [url](#), p.3; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 6 January 2022, [url](#), p.3

¹⁴¹ UNHCR, Thousands of Eritrean refugees displaced in clashes in Ethiopia's Afar region, 18 February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴² UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 31 March 2022, [url](#), p.3

3. Impact of the conflict on the civilian population

3.1 Civilian casualties

Data on violent incidents reported in this query response is based on EUAA analysis of data published by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and extracted on 25 March 2022.

ACLED is a project collecting, analysing and mapping information on ‘the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America & the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia & the Caucasus, Europe, and the United States of America’.¹⁴³ The information is collected in a database that is openly accessible, searchable and kept continuously up to date. The data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports, but also from reports by international institutions and non-governmental organisations and data provided by local partners of ACLED.¹⁴⁴

For the purpose of this query response, only the following types of events were included as violent incidents in the analysis of the security situation in Ethiopia’s Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regions: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians. The violent incidents are coded ACLED as follows:

- ‘Battles’: ‘a violent interaction between two politically organized armed groups at a particular time and location.’ ‘Battles can occur between armed and organised state, nonstate, and external groups, and in any combination therein.’ Sub-events of battles are ‘armed clash’, ‘government regains territory’ and ‘non-state actor overtakes territory’. The sub-event type ‘Armed clash’ occurs when ‘armed, organized groups engage in a battle, and no reports indicate a change in territorial control’.
- ‘Explosions/remote violence’: ‘one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to respond.’ They include: ‘Chemical weapon’, ‘Air/drone strike’, ‘Suicide bomb’, ‘Shelling/artillery/missile attack’, ‘Remote explosive/landmine/IED’, and ‘Grenade’.
- ‘Violence against civilians’: ‘violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants’. ‘Violence against civilians includes attempts at inflicting harm (e.g., beating, shooting, torture, rape, mutilation, etc.) or forcibly disappearing (e.g., kidnapping and disappearances) civilian actors.’ The following sub-event types are associated with the violence against civilians event type: ‘Sexual violence’, ‘Attack’, and ‘Abduction/forced disappearance’.¹⁴⁵

Afar region

According to the latest available data published by ACLED, between 1 March 2021-25 March 2022, there were 180 violent events recorded in Afar region, of which: 130 were coded as battles; 21 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 29 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ ACLED, About Acled, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ ACLED, Methodology, April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, FAQ ACLED Sourcing Methodology, February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ ACLED, Codebook, January 2021, [url](#), pp.8-13

¹⁴⁶ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

However, it is worth noting that conflicts unrelated to the Tigray conflict already existed in Afar region.¹⁴⁷ For the purpose of this COI query response, focusing specifically on the Tigray conflict, it would be relevant to highlight the number of violent events where the TPLF was involved as an actor, as per ACLED data. Out of the aforementioned 180 violent events recorded in Afar region during the reference period, 148 were the violent events where the TPLF had any involvement. Of these 148 violent events: 114 were coded as battles; 17 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 17 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁴⁸

By zone, the 148 violent events were distributed as follows:

- Kilbati-Zone 2: 67 violent events, of which 53 were coded as battles; 11 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 3 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Fanti-Zone 4: 38 violent events, of which 26 were coded as battles; 4 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 8 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Awsi-Zone 1: 34 violent events, of which 28 were coded as battles; 2 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 4 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Hari-Zone 5: 9 violent events, of which 7 were coded as battles; and 2 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁴⁹

With regards to civilian fatalities, according to the latest available data published by ACLED, between 1 March 2021-25 March 2022, at least 99 civilians were killed in 17 incidents of violence against civilians, where the TPLF had any involvement.¹⁵⁰ However, these figures are highly likely to underestimate the real number of civilian deaths, as civilians might have been killed during battles between the parties, or due to incidents of explosions/remote violence.¹⁵¹

Amhara region

According to the latest available data published by ACLED, between 1 March 2021-25 March 2022, there were 512 violent events recorded in Amhara region, of which: 340 were coded as battles; 52 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 120 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁵²

However, it is worth noting that conflicts unrelated to the Tigray conflict already existed in Amhara region.¹⁵³ For the purpose of this COI query response, focusing specifically on the Tigray conflict, it would be relevant to highlight the number of violent events where the TPLF was involved as an actor, as per ACLED data. Out of the aforementioned 512 violent events recorded in Amhara region during the reference period, 422 were the violent events where the TPLF had any involvement.

Of these 422 violent event: 300 were coded as battles; 43 were coded as explosions/remote

¹⁴⁷ Reuters, Clashes between Ethiopian states kill 27 amid border dispute, 29 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ ACLED, Guide for Media Users, January 2016, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁵² EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵³ Reuters, Attacks kill 22 in Ethiopia's Amhara region - party official, 3 October 2019, [url](#); Guardian (The), Suspicion and fear linger as Ethiopia's campus wars go quiet, 15 April 2021, [url](#)

violence; and 79 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁵⁴

By zone, the 422 violent events were distributed as follows:

- North Wello: 161 violent events, of which 108 were coded as battles; 19 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 34 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- South Wello: 68 violent events, of which 43 were coded as battles; 10 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 15 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- South Gondar: 43 violent events, of which 33 were coded as battles; 6 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 4 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- North Gondar: 41 violent events, of which 31 were coded as battles; 3 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 7 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Wag Hemra: 36 violent events, of which 29 were coded as battles; and 7 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- North Shewa: 34 violent events, of which 22 were coded as battles; 1 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 11 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Oromia: 29 violent events, of which 24 were coded as battles; 4 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 1 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- West Gondar: 5 violent events, of which 5 were coded as battles.
- East Gojam: 3 violent events, of which 3 were coded as battles.
- Central Gondar: 1 violent event, of which 1 was coded as battles.
- West Gojam: 1 violent event, of which 1 was coded as battles.¹⁵⁵

With regards to civilian fatalities, according to the latest available data published by ACLED, between 1 March 2021-25 March 2022, at least 385 civilians were killed in 79 incidents of violence against civilians, where the TPLF had any involvement.¹⁵⁶ However, these figures are highly likely to underestimate the real number of civilian deaths, as civilians might have been killed during battles between the parties, or due to incidents of explosions/remote violence.¹⁵⁷

Tigray region

According to the latest available data published by ACLED, between 1 March 2021-25 March 2022, there were 266 violent events recorded in Tigray region, of which: 202 were coded as battles; 39 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 25 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁵⁸

By zone, the violent events were distributed as follows:

- Central Tigray: 53 violent events, of which 46 were coded as battles; 2 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 5 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.

¹⁵⁴ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ ACLED, Guide for Media Users, January 2016, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁵⁸ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

- Eastern Tigray: 26 violent events, of which 18 were coded as battles; 4 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 4 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Mekelle: 18 violent events, of which 1 were coded as battles; 14 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 3 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- North Western Tigray: 75 violent events, of which 63 were coded as battles; 9 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 3 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- South Eastern Tigray: 20 violent events, of which 15 were coded as battles; 2 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 3 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Southern Tigray: 66 violent events, of which 53 were coded as battles; 8 were coded as explosions/remote violence; and 5 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.
- Western Tigray: 8 violent events, of which 6 were coded as battles; and 2 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹⁵⁹

With regards to civilian fatalities, according to the latest available data published by ACLED, between 1 March 2021-25 March 2022, at least 272 civilians were killed in 25 incidents of violence against civilians.

However, these figures are highly likely to underestimate the real number of civilian deaths, as civilians might have been killed during battles between the parties, or due to incidents of explosions/remote violence.¹⁶⁰

Further information on civilian fatalities

According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), between 22 November 2021-28 February 2022, at least 304 civilians were killed in airstrikes on Tigray and Afar regions.¹⁶¹

A separate report by the EHRC, which investigated events that took place in several, but not all, areas of Afar and Amhara regions between July-December 2021, found that at least 749 civilians had been killed in the spillover of the conflict in Tigray.¹⁶²

Some of the indicative incidents include:

- In March 2021, Eritrean forces subjected civilian victims to ‘torture and other ill-treatment’ in Samre and Bereza towns, Tigray region.¹⁶³
- On 23 March 2021, according to events witnessed by MSF, four men travelling from Mekele to Adigrat were ‘dragged off public buses and executed’ by Ethiopian soldiers.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Dashboard, extracted 25 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ ACLED, Guide for Media Users, January 2016, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council and UNOHCHR, Oral Update on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and on progress made in the context of the Joint Investigation, 7 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶² EHRC, Report on Violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in Afar and Amhara Regions of Ethiopia (Executive Summary), 11 March 2022, [url](#), pp. 6,7

¹⁶³ UNOHCHR and EHRC, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p.1

¹⁶⁴ MSF, Ethiopia: MSF staff witness men dragged off buses and killed in Tigray, 25 March 2021, [url](#)

- On 12 April 2021, 'Eritrean troops killed three people and injured at least 19 in an unprovoked attack on civilians in the centre of Adwa town, Tigray region'.¹⁶⁵ According to MSF, 12 people suffered from 'critical injuries'.¹⁶⁶
- On 28 April 2021, 'a national aid worker was reported to have been killed by armed forces after distributing food aid to people in need in Guya Kebele, Kola Temben woreda, in Central zone', Tigray region.¹⁶⁷
- On 28 May 2021, 'a humanitarian worker working with an INGO was killed together with the Mayor of Adigrat town and another victim, during an attack outside the Government building in Adigrat town, Eastern zone'.¹⁶⁸
- On 22 June 2021, 'a government airstrike hit a market in Togogo central Tigray, reportedly killing at least 51 people'¹⁶⁹, although a later report claimed that at least 64 people had been killed, and some 180 were injured¹⁷⁰. Media reports further claimed that federal government soldiers were not allowing medical staff to intervene, a claim that was later denied by the army.¹⁷¹
- On 5 August 2021, 'over 200 people, including more than 100 children' were reportedly killed 'in attacks on displaced families sheltering at a health facility and a school in Afar region', according to UNICEF.¹⁷² According to OCHA, the alleged attack took place in Galikoma Kabele in Fenti Zone.¹⁷³
- Between 12-21 August 2021, 16 women were 'raped at gunpoint, robbed, and subjected to physical and verbal assaults by TPLF fighters' in Nifas Mewcha town, Amhara region, according to survivor accounts reported by Amnesty International. The same source stated that during the attack on the town, the TPLF 'destroyed and looted medical facilities'.¹⁷⁴
- Between 31 August-9 September 2021, the TPLF took control of Chenna and Kobo towns in Amhara region. According to HRW, during that period the Tigrayan forces summarily executed 26 civilians in Chenna, and 23 civilians in Kobo.¹⁷⁵ At the same time, according to a GCR2P report quoting local authorities, at least 120 civilians were killed during the first week of September 2021 in Chenna village near Dabat, allegedly by Tigrayan forces'.¹⁷⁶ Amnesty International further reported that 'dozens of women and girls' had been raped by TPLF fighters in the two towns.¹⁷⁷
- On 16 December 2021, Human Rights watch reported that, since 'early November 2021, Amhara regional police forces and militias, including militia groups known as Fanos, have systematically rounded up Tigrayans in the towns of Adebai, Humera, and Rawyan of

¹⁶⁵ AI, Ethiopia: Three killed, 19 injured in Tigray as Eritrean troops open fire on civilians, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ MSF, Ethiopia: Survivors describe being shot by soldiers in Tigray, 21 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁶⁸ World Vision Ethiopia, Tigray crisis response: Situation Report #13 & 14, 23 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁹ HRW, World Report 2022 – Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ Guardian (The), Scores killed in Ethiopian airstrike on Tigray market, 24 June 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ AllAfrica, Dozens Killed in Blast in Market in Ethiopia's Tigray Region, 22 June 2021, [url](#); East African (The), Ethiopian army denies hitting Tigray market with bombs, 25 June 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷² UNICEF, Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on reported killing of hundreds of civilians, including children, in Afar, northern Ethiopia, 9 August 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷³ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 13 August 2021, [url](#), p.3

¹⁷⁴ AI, Ethiopia: Survivors of TPLF attack in Amhara describe gang rape, looting and physical assaults, 9 November 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ HRW, Ethiopia: Tigray Forces Summarily Execute Civilians, 10 December 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); GCR2P, Atrocity Alert No. 269: Ethiopia, Guinea and Education Under Attack, 8 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ AI, Ethiopia: Tigrayan forces murder, rape and pillage in attacks on civilians in Amhara towns, 16 February 2021, [url](#)

Western Tigray', and forcibly expelling them from the areas. According to the report, some were detained in prisons such as Humera prison, while those trying to flee the roundups were shot at, and fatalities were recorded.¹⁷⁸

- In January 2022, the federal government launched multiple airstrikes on targets in Tigray during the first two weeks of the month. Among other civilian facilities damaged¹⁷⁹, the IDP camp in Dedebeit was hit on 7 January 2021, and some 56 people were killed.¹⁸⁰ According to a subsequent statement by OHCHR, between 1-14 January 2021, 'at least 108 civilians have reportedly been killed and 75 others injured [...], as a result of air strikes allegedly carried out by the Ethiopian air force' in Tigray region.¹⁸¹

3.2 Other acts/forms of violence against civilians

During the reporting period there have been several reports on various 'human rights violations' by different parties to the conflict in Tigray¹⁸², including:

- unlawful killings and extra-judicial executions, torture or other cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment;¹⁸³
- arbitrary detentions, abductions and enforced disappearances;¹⁸⁴
- sexual and gender-based violence;¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁸ HRW, Ethiopia: New Wave of Atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ France 24, At least 108 civilians killed so far in January in Tigray airstrikes, UN says, 14 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ UNOHCHR, Press briefing notes on Ethiopia, 14 January 2021, [url](#); BBC, Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: Dozens killed in airstrike at camp, say aid staff, 8 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ UNOHCHR, Press briefing notes on Ethiopia, 14 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸² Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Public communication on allegations related to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Eritrean Army in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 19 April 2021, [url](#), p. 2; UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Statement by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the continued deterioration of the situation in Ethiopia, 30 July 2021, [url](#), p. 1; HRW, World Report 2022 - Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#); AI, Amnesty International Report 2021/22: The State of the World's Human Rights; Ethiopia 2021, 29 March 2022, [url](#), p. 164

¹⁸³ Amnesty International, Ethiopia: Tepid international response to Tigray conflict fuels horrific violations over past six months, 4 May 2021, [url](#); Guardian (The), Scores killed in Ethiopian airstrike on Tigray market, 24 June 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 30-35; OHCHR, Ethiopia: Persistent, credible reports of grave violations in Tigray underscore urgent need for human rights access – Bachelet, 4 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ UNHCOHC, Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 48th session of the Human Rights Council, Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, 13 September 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 37-39; AI, Ethiopia: End arbitrary detentions of Tigrayans, activists and journalists in Addis Ababa and reveal whereabouts of unaccounted detainees, 16 July 2021, [url](#); HRW, Ethiopia: Returned Tigrayans Detained, Abused, 5 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 13; WHO, Statement on Gender-Based Violence in Tigray region of Ethiopia, 22 March 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Health official alleges 'sexual slavery' in Tigray, 15 April 2021, [url](#); UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-

- violations against refugees and IDPs¹⁸⁶ and forced displacement of civilians¹⁸⁷;
- unjustified restrictions on freedom of movement;¹⁸⁸
- pillage, looting and destruction of property;¹⁸⁹

General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Remarks from SRSR Pramila Patten: Georgetown University virtual event, 'The Crisis in Tigray: Women and Girls Under Violent Assault, 21 April 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Ethiopia convicts soldiers of crimes against civilians in Tigray, 21 May 2021, [url](#); UNFPA, Response Update - Crisis in Tigray: Gender based violence AOR, June 2021, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 1, 4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 17 June 2021, 17 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1; AI, Amnesty International, Ethiopia: Troops and militia rape, abduct women and girls in Tigray conflict – new report, 10 August 2021, [url](#); AI, Ethiopia: "I don't know if they realized I was a person": Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, 11 August 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 42-46; HRW, 'I Always Remember That Day', 9 November 2021, [url](#); AI, Ethiopia: Survivors of TPLF attack in Amhara describe gang rape, looting and physical assaults, 9 November 2021, [url](#); Human Rights Watch, Ethiopia's Warring Parties Should End Attacks on Women, Girls, 8 March 2022, [url](#); AI, Amnesty International Report 2021/22; The State of the World's Human Rights; Ethiopia 2021, 29 March 2022, [url](#), p. 164

¹⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, May 2021, [url](#); Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Raids on IDP shelters in Shire, Tigray, 27 May 2021, [url](#); UNOCHA, Ethiopia – Tigray Region Humanitarian Update, 3 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2; EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 49-50

¹⁸⁷ Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Public communication on allegations related to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Eritrean Army in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 19 April 2021, [url](#), pp. 5-6; UNHCOHC, Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 48th session of the Human Rights Council, Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, 13 September 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 53-57

¹⁸⁸ Reuters, Ethiopia declares state of emergency as Tigrayan forces gain ground, 2 November 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 60-61; Reuters, ACAPS, Ethiopia - Understanding humanitarian concerns across the country, 24 January 2022, 24 January 2022; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ UNICEF, Continuing crisis for children in Tigray, Ethiopia, amid reports of atrocities: Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, 19 March 2021, [url](#); World Peace Foundation, Starving Tigray: How Armed Conflict and Mass Atrocities Have Destroyed an Ethiopian Region's Economy and Food System and Are Threatening Famine, 6 April 2021, [url](#), p. 27; EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 68-69; GCR2P, R2P Monitor, Issue 60 (1 March 2022), 1 March 2022, [url](#), p.10

- violations against children¹⁹⁰ and other persons.¹⁹¹

Various sources reported that the aforementioned violations may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.¹⁹²

Targeting of ethnic Tigrayans

Situation inside the Tigray region

Various sources reported that rape has been used as a weapon of war against ethnic Tigrayan population. Survivors of rape described being assaulted by Ethiopian military forces, as well as Eritrean forces, Amhara Special Forces, and Fano militias.¹⁹³ Survivors described being subjected to gang rape¹⁹⁴, in various settings¹⁹⁵, or during held in captivity for long time¹⁹⁶. Tigrayan rape survivors have further claimed that they were verbally abused and humiliated for their ethnicity during the attacks¹⁹⁷, while some described being threatened that their

¹⁹⁰ Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Protect civilians from harassment, arbitrary detention and attacks, 15 July 2021, [url](#); BBC News, Tigray crisis: Ethiopian teenagers become pawns in propaganda war, 19 August 2021, [url](#); UNHCOHC, Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 48th session of the Human Rights Council, Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, 13 September 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 79-81; UNFPA, UNFPA Ethiopia Response to the Northern Ethiopia crisis - Situation report (1 to 30 January 2022), 22 February 2022, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹¹ UNHCOHC, Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 48th session of the Human Rights Council, Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, 13 September 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p. 82

¹⁹² AI, Ethiopia: Tepid international response to Tigray conflict fuels horrific violations over past six months, 4 May 2021, [url](#); UNHCOHC, Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 48th session of the Human Rights Council, Statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, 13 September 2021, [url](#); EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), p. 85; HRW, World Report 2022 - Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#); AI, 'We Will Erase You from This Land': Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), pp.167-169

¹⁹³ CNN, 'Practically this has been a genocide', 22 March 2021, [url](#); Telegraph (The), 'We're here to make you HIV positive': Hundreds of women rush to Tigray hospitals as soldiers use rape as weapon of war, 27 March 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Health official alleges 'sexual slavery' in Tigray, 15 April 2021, [url](#); AI, 'I don't know if they realized I was a person': Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, 11 August 2021, [url](#), p. 12; HRW, 'I Always Remember That Day', 9 November 2021, [url](#); AI, HRW, 'We Will Erase You from This Land': Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 145-146

¹⁹⁴ CNN, 'Practically this has been a genocide', 22 March 2021, [url](#); Telegraph (The), 'We're here to make you HIV positive': Hundreds of women rush to Tigray hospitals as soldiers use rape as weapon of war, 27 March 2021, [url](#); HRW, 'I Always Remember That Day', 9 November 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ AI, 'I don't know if they realized I was a person': Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, 11 August 2021, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁹⁶ Reuters, Health official alleges 'sexual slavery' in Tigray, 15 April 2021, [url](#); AI, 'I don't know if they realized I was a person': Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, 11 August 2021, [url](#), pp. 14-16

¹⁹⁷ CNN, 'Practically this has been a genocide', 22 March 2021, [url](#); AI, 'I don't know if they realized I was a person': Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, 11 August 2021, [url](#), pp. 17-18, 32; AI, HRW, 'We Will Erase You from This Land': Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 126-127

bloodlines would be ‘cleansed’¹⁹⁸. Amnesty International specifically noted that apart from rape, soldiers often subjected Tigrayan women and girls to ‘brutal additional acts of torture and practices’, including ‘beatings, insults, threats, demeaning comments and ethnic slurs’ that ‘clearly aimed at terrorizing and humiliating their victims’.¹⁹⁹

There have been further reports about acts of ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Tigrayans by Amhara regional authorities and militias in western Tigray region, including mass expulsions²⁰⁰, killings and arrests²⁰¹, language restrictions and denial of identification cards.²⁰² Some Tigrayans reported that the new identification cards were written in Amharic and did not indicate their Tigrayan ethnic origin.²⁰³ Human Rights Watch noted that the authorities in Western Tigray ‘imposed restrictions on movement, humanitarian assistance, speaking the Tigrinya language, and access to farmland to coerce Tigrayans to leave. Amhara security forces, and in some places Eritrean forces present in Western Tigray, looted crops, livestock, and equipment, depriving Tigrayans of their means of survival.’²⁰⁴ Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, conducted 427 interviews and other research between December 2020 and March 2022 and found that ‘Amhara regional officials and regional special forces and militias, with federal forces’ complicity, are responsible for the ethnic cleansing of Tigrayans from Western Tigray’.²⁰⁵

The U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS) has also cited reports indicating that ‘ethnic Tigrayans have been targeted based on their ethnicity, and hate speech and dehumanizing language are rising’ and that ‘Ethiopian security forces have committed acts of ethnic cleansing’.²⁰⁶

Lawyers acting for Tigrayan civilians have filed a complaint to African Union’s human rights commission over alleged human rights violations by federal forces since the conflict erupted in Tigray, in November 2020.²⁰⁷

Situation outside the Tigray region

Following the recapture of the Tigray region’s capital, Mekelle, by the TPLF on 28 June 2021,

¹⁹⁸ CNN, ‘Practically this has been a genocide’, 22 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ AI, ‘I don’t know if they realized I was a person’: Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, 11 August 2021, [url](#), p. 17

²⁰⁰ International Crisis Group, Ethiopia’s Tigray War: A Deadly, Dangerous Stalemate, 2 April 2021, [url](#); AI, Ethiopia: New wave of atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#); HRW, Ethiopia: New Wave of Atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#); AI, HRW, ‘We Will Erase You from This Land’; Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 131-133

²⁰¹ BBC, Ethiopia’s Tigray crisis: Fleeing for fear of new ethnic conflict, 16 July 2021, [url](#); AI, HRW, Ethiopia: New Wave of Atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, [url](#); AI, HRW, ‘We Will Erase You from This Land’; Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 120-122, 179-181

²⁰² AI, HRW, ‘We Will Erase You from This Land’; Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 86-88

²⁰³ AP News, ‘Leave no Tigrayan: In Ethiopia, an ethnicity is erased’, 7 April 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ HRW, Ethiopia: Crimes Against Humanity in Western Tigray Zone; Immediate Humanitarian Access, Protection of Communities Key, 6 April 2022, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ AI, HRW, ‘We Will Erase You from This Land’; Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray Zone, 6 April 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁶ U.S. Congressional Research Service, Ethiopia’s Transition and the Tigray Conflict, 8 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²⁰⁷ Guardian (The), Ethiopia accused of ‘serious’ human rights abuses in Tigray in landmark case, 8 February 2022, [url](#)

there were several reports of ethnically motivated, mass arbitrary arrests of Tigrayan civilians by the Ethiopian forces in Addis Ababa.²⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch noted that:

‘Witnesses said that security forces [in Addis Ababa] stopped and arrested Tigrayans on the streets and in cafés and other public places, and in their homes and workplaces, often during warrantless searches. In many cases, security forces checked people’s identification cards to confirm their identity before taking them to a police station or other detention facility’.²⁰⁹

The joint investigation by EHRC and OHCHR covering human rights violations that occurred between November 2020 and June 2021 noted, regarding the mass arrest of Tigrayan civilians in Addis Ababa, that the Federal Attorney General ‘confirmed that around 1 000 Tigrayans were initially detained on the basis of reasonable suspicion that they were providing at least financial support to the TPLF’ and that ‘the detainees were brought before a court of law within 48 hours and most of them were released on bail’.²¹⁰

There have been also various reports of closure of Tigrayan-owned businesses in Addis Ababa, between July and September 2021.²¹¹

On 2 November 2021 the government declared a six-month state of emergency, which allowed ‘the authorities to arrest and detain anyone without a warrant if there is reasonable suspicion of cooperation with terrorist groups, and to detain them without judicial review for as long as the proclamation is in place’.²¹² On 12 November 2021, Amnesty International noted that 10 days after the declared state of emergency :

‘the arrests have intensified as fighters from the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) took control of strategic towns in Amhara region some 400 km from Addis Ababa. Arrests are conducted through house-to-house searches by security forces with support from vigilante groups who check the IDs of people on the street. Detainees, including civil servants, Orthodox priests and a lawyer are being held in youth centres and other informal detention centres across Addis Ababa because police stations are overflowing’.²¹³

The Guardian reported on 26 November 2021 that ‘in recent weeks it [the government] has interned more than 30,000 ethnic Tigrayan civilians in Addis Ababa and unknown numbers

²⁰⁸ Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Tigray Region: Need for urgent measures to ensure the safety and security of civilians, 3 July 2021, [url](#); AI, Ethiopia: End arbitrary detentions of Tigrayans, activists and journalists in Addis Ababa and reveal whereabouts of unaccounted detainees, 16 July 2021, [url](#); UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 19 July 2021, 19 July 2021, [url](#), p. 3; International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch-Ethiopia, July 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ HRW, Ethiopia: Ethnic Tigrayans Forcibly Disappeared, 18 August 2021, [url](#)

²¹⁰ EHRC, OHCHR, Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties, 3 November 2021, [url](#), footnote 105, p. 39

²¹¹ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch-Ethiopia, July 2021, [url](#); U.S. Congressional Research Service, Ethiopia’s Transition and the Tigray Conflict, 8 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2; Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Tigray Region: Ensure uninterrupted and improved provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians, 11 September 2021, [url](#)

²¹² AI, Ethiopia: Tigrayans targeted in fresh wave of ethnically motivated detentions in Addis Ababa, 12 November 2021, [url](#)

²¹³ AI, Ethiopia: Tigrayans targeted in fresh wave of ethnically motivated detentions in Addis Ababa, 12 November 2021, [url](#)

elsewhere’.²¹⁴ In her oral update, covering the period between 22 November 2021 and 28 February 2022, Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, highlighted that ‘OHCHR recorded more than 15 000 arbitrary arrests and detentions in connection with the state of emergency decreed by the Government. Most appeared to be ordinary citizens of Tigrayan ethnicity’.²¹⁵

With regard to the attacks in Abala, a town in the Afar region, Al Jazeera interviewed survivors and witnesses who alleged that the Ethiopian allied forces ‘went door to door for five days straight [in December 2021], targeting Tigrayans’. One of the witnesses stated that ‘they [soldiers] protected civilians of other ethnicities and erased the Tigrayans. They killed, gang-raped, looted and arrested every Tigrayan they found in the town. Only if you knew an Afar to either hide you or help you escape, could you be saved’. Al Jazeera further noted that ‘Fifteen survivors also recounted how Afar militiamen and Eritrean troops went from house to house, seeking Tigrayans out in a killing campaign that continued over five consecutive days’.²¹⁶

Humanitarian situation

In April 2021 the International Crisis Group reported the following:

“Tigray suffers from chronic food shortages. Even before the war, these had been aggravated by the worst desert locust invasion in decades. Fighting then broke out around harvest time. The shutdown of telecommunications, closure of banks and, seemingly primarily at Eritrean troops’ hands, destruction of more than two thirds of health facilities and widespread looting of public and private property – including food stores and oxen for ploughing – has exacerbated the hardship’.²¹⁷

In June 2021, Human Rights Watch reported that the warring parties have ‘directly contributed’ to the high levels of famine that has affected millions in Tigray. Human rights Watch further noted that ‘government restrictions on aid access to the region and to basic services in the early months of the fighting pushed many people over the edge. Ethiopian, Eritrean and Amhara forces have also looted property, burned crops, and attacked factories, hospitals, and other infrastructure key to people’s survival’.²¹⁸

In his September 2021 statement, the UN Acting Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia, Grant Leaiti, noted that the ‘while humanitarian access is now viable and overall secure inside most of Tigray, the region remains under a de facto humanitarian aid blockade, where access to bring life-saving humanitarian relief continues to be extremely restricted’. Mr. Leaiti further noted that ‘an estimated 5.2 million people, or 90 percent of the population across the Tigray region, urgently need humanitarian assistance, including 400 000 people already facing famine-like conditions’.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ Guardian (The), The warning signs are there for genocide in Ethiopia – the world must act to prevent it, 26 November 2021, [url](#)

²¹⁵ OHCHR, Oral Update on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and on progress made in the context of the Joint Investigation, 07 March 2022, [url](#)

²¹⁶ Al Jazeera, ‘Ethnic cleansing’: Ethiopian allies accused of Abala massacre, 22 February 2022, [url](#)

²¹⁷ International Crisis Group, Ethiopia’s Tigray War: A Deadly, Dangerous Stalemate, 2 April 2021, [url](#)

²¹⁸ HRW, G7 Leaders Can’t Ignore Ethiopia’s Looming Famine, 11 June 2021, [url](#)

²¹⁹ UNOCHA, Statement by Acting Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia, Grant Leaiti, on the operational constraints and de facto humanitarian blockade of Tigray, 2 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the WHO, has noted that the blockade has created ‘hell and is an insult to our humanity’, and accused the Ethiopian government of deliberately blocking food and medicine to millions of people in the region.²²⁰

In its January 2022 report, covering the human rights situation in Ethiopia during 2021, Human Rights Watch provided that:

‘By mid-year, these abuses had left an estimated 350 000 people facing starvation. After government forces withdrew from many parts of Tigray in late June, it imposed an effective siege on Tigray, blocking virtually all humanitarian aid from reaching the region, violating international humanitarian law and possibly committing the war crime of using starvation as a weapon of war’.²²¹

In its February 2022 regional update, UNHCR reported that:

‘The overall humanitarian situation in Tigray region continues to deteriorate with lack of access to basic needs. Health facilities including the seven One-Stop centres have ceased to function due to lack of basic needs such as food, clothing, cash assistance and medical equipment to facilitate timely provision of services.’²²²

In its quarterly bulletin on security-related developments and threats to the civilian population, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) noted that as of 1st March 2022:

‘The conflict has caused a humanitarian catastrophe to unfold across northern Ethiopia, with at least 9.4 million people in Tigray, Afar and Amhara in urgent need of aid. Humanitarian aid convoys have routinely been blocked, attacked and looted by parties to the conflict and 23 aid workers have been killed’.

The source further noted, that ‘UN officials have asserted that access to food is being used as a weapon of war while aid groups have reported a growing number of starvation-related deaths’.²²³ According to a food security assessment by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), after one year since the onset of the conflict in northern Ethiopia, 37 percent of Tigrayans are suffering an extreme lack of food.²²⁴

Citing the United Nations, Amnesty international noted on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia during 2021:

‘following the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Tigray in July, the Ethiopian federal government allowed only 10% of the humanitarian aid intended for Tigray to enter the region, resulting in starvation. [...] All medicine was blocked from entering the region from July. This led to an alarming deterioration in the health of the population as a result of depleted anti-HIV, cancer and diabetes medication, as well as starvation. The

²²⁰ DW, Ethiopia at crossroads as drone attacks worsen Tigray crisis, 14 January 2022, [url](#)

²²¹ HRW, World Report 2022 - Ethiopia, 13 January 2022, [url](#)

²²² UNHCR, Regional Update #29 Ethiopia Emergency Situation (28 February 2022), 8 March 2022, [url](#), p. 4

²²³ GCR2P, R2P Monitor, Issue 60 (1 March 2022), 1 March 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²²⁴ WFP, Emergency Food Security Assessment- Tigray Region, Ethiopia, 28 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 5, 7

last aid convoy allowed into Tigray was on 25 November, and it was not carrying medicine.²²⁵

Since the eruption of the conflict in Tigray region, and even after the ceasefire on 28 June 2021, telecommunications and internet connectivity have remained disrupted.²²⁶ Human Rights Watch noted that ‘since late June 2021, the Ethiopian government has effectively besieged Tigray, largely blocking aid including food, medical supplies, and fuel from entering the region, while maintaining a blanket shutdown of banking, telecommunications, and electricity.’²²⁷

According to UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric ‘no trucks carrying humanitarian supplies have been able to enter Tigray since 15 December 2021’.²²⁸ Aid agencies can only transport supplies by air to Tigray.²²⁹ In its February 2022 situational update, UNHCR noted that ‘fuel remains in extremely short supply, humanitarian goods are currently only coming in by air, and communication, electricity, and banking services remain intermittent’.²³⁰

At the time of drafting, on 24 March 2022, a humanitarian truce was announced by the Ethiopian Federal Government in the conflict-affected Tigray region which Tigrayan authorities have said they will respect if sufficient aid reaches Tigray within a reasonable timeframe.²³¹

3.3 Displacement

Internal Displacement

As of 31 December 2021, UNHCR estimated the figure of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia at 4.2 million, reporting that ‘most of the internal displacement is due to conflict, including the expansion of the Tigray conflict into Afar and Amhara and beyond, as well as more localised conflicts’.²³² IOM estimated that between 27 July and 4 October 2021 there were 2.11 million IDPs displaced due to the Northern Ethiopia Crisis; 1.8 million IDPs displaced in Tigray, 151 040 IDPs in Amhara and 149 329 IDPs in Afar regions.²³³ The same source reported that 78% of IDPs were living with host communities.²³⁴ According to key informants to IOM:

‘In the second half of 2021, armed conflict moved further down south which resulted in an increase in the number of IDPs in Amhara and Afar regions which is estimated by key informants to have reached around 1.4 million IDPs and 470 000 IDPs respectively at the peak of displacement in early December 2021’.²³⁵

²²⁵ AI, Amnesty International Report 2021/22; The State of the World's Human Rights; Ethiopia 2021, 29 March 2022, [url](#), p. 164-165

²²⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

²²⁷ HRW, Ethiopia's Warring Parties Should End Attacks on Women, Girls; Destruction of Health Care, Blocking of Aid, Further Harms Survivors of Rape, 8 March 2022, [url](#)

²²⁸ UN News, Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, 6 January 2022, [url](#)

²²⁹ USAID, Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis Fact Sheet #5, Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Format, 25 February 2022, [url](#), p. 3; BBC, Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: What's stopping aid getting in?, 18 March 2022, [url](#)

²³⁰ UNHCR, Regional Update #29; Ethiopia Emergency Situation (28 February 2022), 8 March 2022, [url](#), p.1

²³¹ AI, Ethiopia: Federal government humanitarian truce in Tigray is a positive step forward and must lead to humanitarian access, 25 March 2022, [url](#)

²³² UNHCR, EHAGL: Internally Displaced Persons- Regional Overview - January-December 2021, 16 March 2022, [url](#), p.3

²³³ IOM DTM, Ethiopia: Emergency Site Assessment 8 (27 July - 4 October 2021), 10 December 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²³⁴ IOM DTM, Ethiopia: Emergency Site Assessment 8 (27 July - 4 October 2021), 10 December 2021, [url](#), p. 7

²³⁵ IOM DTM, Ethiopia: Mobility Overview 2021, 2 March 2022, [url](#), p. 1

Freedom House reported that ‘the number of IDPs in Ethiopia surpassed 2 million in 2021, and humanitarian groups have struggled to meet the growing need’.²³⁶ In its January 2022 update, UNHCR reported that ‘over 15 months into the conflict, the overall security situation [in Northern Ethiopia] remains complex and fluid, hindering effective delivery of lifesaving assistance to the most affected populations’.²³⁷

In its fact sheet on the humanitarian and human rights situation, as well as the security situation of IDPs as of 1 February 2022, UNHCR reported the following:

‘Since December 2021, the security situation has improved in selected zones of Amhara and Tigray, prompting the spontaneous and voluntary returns of almost 240 000 to their area of origin. However, IDP returnees and affected populations are facing challenges such as unexploded ordnance, stigma, psychosocial, and family separation’.²³⁸

Citing regional authorities, R2P noted that the fighting in Afar ‘displaced over 300 000 people to remote areas between January-February 2022’.²³⁹

Throughout the reporting period, there have been several reports highlighting the lack of access of IDPs to basic services, such as food, water and shelter.²⁴⁰

With regard to the targeting of IDPs and IDP camps, in an April 2021 joint communication, multiple UN Working Groups and Special Rapporteurs noted the following:

‘Internally displaced persons have endured exhausting and dangerous journeys in search for safety, some walking for weeks to reach their destination. During their journey, some have reportedly been killed or beaten, especially young men. There are reports of women who were raped during the journey, or pregnant women who had to deliver on the way and lost their babies’.²⁴¹

²³⁶ Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2021 – Ethiopia, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

²³⁷ UNHCR, Northern Ethiopia Emergency Update January 2022, 1 February 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²³⁸ UNHCR, Fact Sheet; Northern Ethiopia Emergency Update; 01 February 2022, 18 March 2022, [url](#), p. 1

²³⁹ GCR2P, R2P Monitor, Issue 60, 1 March 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²⁴⁰ MSF, People in Tigray, Ethiopia, are lacking medical care, 5 March 2021, [url](#); ICRC, Operational Update on Ethiopia: ICRC concerned about humanitarian situation in rural areas of Tigray, 12 March 2021, [url](#); UNHCR, COVID-19 and Operational Update, 9 March 2021, [url](#), p. 4; MSF, Ethiopia: Tigray’s cities fill with displaced people in need of aid, 29 March 2021, [url](#); CARE International, Tigray Conflict Rapid Gender Analysis, April 2021, [url](#), p. 1; Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Tigray Crisis: ‘We are suffering from a lack of medical care’, 5 May 2021, [url](#); ACAPS, Humanitarian Access Overview, July 2021, [url](#), p. 7; UNHCR, Displaced nurses provide vital health care to others displaced in Ethiopia’s Tigray, 5 July 2021, [url](#); IOM DTM, Ethiopia — National Displacement Report 10 (August - September 2021), [url](#), pp. 19-22; IOM DTM, IOM DTM, Ethiopia: Emergency Site Assessment 8 (27 July - 4 October 2021), 10 December 2021, [url](#), pp. 7-9; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 25 Nov 2021, [url](#), pp. 4-5; Annys, S., Vanden Bempt, T., Negash, E., De Sloover, L., Ghekiere, R., Haegeman, K., Temmerman, D., Nyssen, J., 2021. Tigray: atlas of the humanitarian situation. Version 2.1. Ghent (Belgium): Ghent University, Department of Geography, 27 December 2021, [url](#), p. 50; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 20 January 2022, [url](#), pp. 3-4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 24 February 2022, [url](#), p. 4; UNOCHA, Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update Situation Report, 10 March 2022, [url](#), p. 4

²⁴¹ Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Public communication on allegations

In a June 2021 situational report, UNOCHA reported that:

‘On the night of 24 May [2021], more than 200 people were arrested during military raids into Tsehaye and Adi Wonfeto internally displaced collective sites in Shire, North-Western zone, hosting a combined 12 000 internally displaced persons. Most of the men detained have been reportedly released on 27 May [2021]. The humanitarian community, through an official statement released by the Humanitarian Coordinator on 28 May [2021], condemned the arbitrary arrest, beatings and other forms of ill-treatment of civilians by members of the armed force’.²⁴²

Reuters reported that on 8 January 2022, two aid workers, informed their Agency, citing local authorities and eyewitness accounts, that during the night of 7 January 2022, ‘an air strike in Ethiopia’s Tigray region killed 56 people and injured 30, including children, in a camp for displaced people’. The spokesman for the TPLF commented in a tweet post that ‘Another callous drone attack by Abiy Ahmed in an IDP camp in Dedebit has claimed the lives of 56 innocent civilians so far’, while, according to Reuters, the government’s spokesman and the Prime Minister’s spokeswoman had denied to comment on the allegations.²⁴³ UNOCHA announced on 9 January 2022 that aid agencies of the area were forced to halt after the deadly air raid and noted that the lack of essential supplies, especially medical supplies and fuel, was ‘severely disrupting the response to the injured, and (has) led to the nearly total collapse of the health system in Tigray’.²⁴⁴

In March 2022, Human Rights Watch reported that on 7 January 2022, ‘an Ethiopian government airstrike hit a school compound hosting thousands of displaced Tigrayans in North-Western Tigray. Laetitia Bader, Horn of Africa director at Human Rights Watch noted that:

‘The Ethiopian drone struck the Dedebit school compound three times, killing and maiming displaced Tigrayans, mainly older people, women, and children, as they slept in plastic-sheeted tents and a school building. Using guided bombs without evidence of any military target indicates that this was an apparent war crime’.²⁴⁵

Ethiopian refugees

As of 28 February 2022, there were some 144 166 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries²⁴⁶, a slight decrease when compared to the estimated 149 000 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers recorded as of 31 March 2021²⁴⁷.

As of 28 February 2022, the distribution of the 144 166 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries was as follows:

- In Sudan: 73 335 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers,
- In Kenya: 30 571 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers,

related to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Eritrean Army in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, 19 April 2021, [url](#), pp. 5-6

²⁴² UNOCHA, Ethiopia – Tigray Region Humanitarian Update, 3 June 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²⁴³ Reuters, Aid workers say Ethiopia air strike in northwest Tigray killed 56 people, 10 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁴ France24, Aid agencies suspend work in northwest Tigray after deadly air strike, 9 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ HRW, Ethiopia: Airstrike on Camp for Displaced Likely War Crime, 24 March 2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ UNHCR, Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region Ethiopia Situation | Refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs as of 28 February 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), p.1

²⁴⁷ UNHCR, Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region Ethiopia Situation | Refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs as of 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 1

- In Somalia: 21 711 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers,
- In Djibouti: 13 222 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers,
- In South Sudan: 5 312 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers, and
- In Eritrea: 15 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers.²⁴⁸

Refugees in Ethiopia

As of 31 March 2021, there were some 805 164 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, from the following countries of origin:

- From South Sudan: 364 794 refugees,
- From Somalia: 206 122 refugees,
- From Eritrea: 178 931 refugees,
- From Sudan: 44 864 refugees,
- From Yemen: 2 258 refugees and
- From Other nationalities: 8 195 refugees.²⁴⁹

According to the latest data published by the UNCHR, as of 28 February 2022 there were some 837 533 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, in the following regions: The refugees were from the following countries of origin:

- From South Sudan: 390 612 refugees,
- From Somalia: 228 797 refugees,
- From Eritrea: 158 662 refugees,
- From Sudan: 46 789 refugees,
- From Yemen: 2 490 refugees, and
- From Other nationalities: 10 183 refugees.²⁵⁰

Eritrean refugees

Data collected at the beginning of the conflict showed that, by 10 November 2021, there were some 178 315 Eritrean refugees present at that time in Ethiopia, of which some 96 223 were living in Tigray region.²⁵¹ At that time, other Eritrean refugees outside Tigray lived predominately in Afar region (approximately 51 800), and in the capital Addis Ababa (approximately 30 722).²⁵²

According to the latest data published by the UNCHR, as of 28 February 2022 there were some 158 662 Eritrean refugees in all of Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the same source stated that only some 36 776 refugees, of unspecified nationalities, were at that time still in Tigray region.²⁵³ On 26 March 2021, UNHCR announced that it had ‘gained access to the Shimelba and Hitsats refugee camps in Ethiopia’s northern Tigray region for the first time since November 2020’. The source confirmed that it had found ‘both camps completely destroyed, and all the humanitarian facilities looted and vandalized’.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ UNHCR, Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region Ethiopia Situation | Refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs as of 28 February 2022, 30 March 2022, [url](#), p.1

²⁴⁹ UNHCR Ethiopia Fact Sheet, March 2021, 17 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

²⁵⁰ UNHCR, Ethiopia Data Portal, last updated 28 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁵¹ UNHCR, Tigray Situation Update #1, 10 November 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²⁵² UNHCR, Tigray Situation Update, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p.2

²⁵³ UNHCR, Ethiopia Data Portal, last updated 28 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ UNHCR, UNHCR reaches destroyed camps in northern Tigray, 26 March 2021, [url](#)

Mid-July 2021, Tigrayan forces captured Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps, and reportedly abducted Eritrean refugees from Adi Harush, although this was subsequently denied by Tigrayan leaders.²⁵⁵ However, on 15 July 2021, UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia stated that the death of a refugee had been confirmed, while also quoting ‘credible reports of arrests, detentions, beatings, looting, and sporadic gunfire’.²⁵⁶

On 5 January 2022, ‘three Eritrean refugees, two of them children, were killed [...] in an airstrike that hit the Mai Aini refugee camp’, according to a statement by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.²⁵⁷

On 3 February 2022, among the fighting that took place in the area around Barahle, in Afar region, armed men reportedly entered Barahle refugee camp, killing at least five Eritrean refugees and kidnapped several women, according to a UNHCR report.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Crisis Group, Crisiswatch Ethiopia, last update February 2022, [url](#); AP, Eritrean refugees under attack in Ethiopia’s Tigray war , 23 July 2021, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ UNHCR, News comment: UNHCR latest update on deteriorating situation of Eritrean refugees in Tigray, 15 July 2021, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ UNHCR, News Comment by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on attack that hit Mai Aini refugee camp in Tigray, 6 January 2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ UNHCR, Thousands of Eritrean refugees displaced in clashes in Ethiopia’s Afar region, 18 February 2022, [url](#)

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