

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BETWEEN SECESSION AND GENOCIDE – INVESTIGATING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WITHIN ETHIOPIA



1. Welcome Letter

Distinguished delegates,

It is our great delight to welcome you to the 2022 edition of TEIMUN and to the United Nations Human Rights Council, as it is our utmost pleasure to assist you through what will be one of the most exquisite experiences of your Model United Nations career!

The topics at hand are indeed broad and complex but, dare we say, also extremely compelling, and we expect that they will ignite high-quality debates. The background paper is meant to be solely a starting point for your research, so keep in mind that you should try to accumulate as much valuable and relevant information to make use of during the debates.

Trust that your evolution will be assessed objectively and that we will make it our top priority to give you constructive feedback. What is more, feel free to ask us any questions that you may have at any point during the conference, as we wish to help you with truly understanding everything and anything and clarifying any misunderstandings and uncertainties.

Granted, the MUN format is structured to ensure a fair share of entertainment and bonding with the amazing people from the community. Thus, there will be no shortage of social interactions, parties and excursions, and we encourage you to indulge in them as long as you keep a clear distinction between formal sessions and networking.

I, Finley, am very excited to see a fruitful debate and delve into all aspects surrounding this question. I have been doing MUN for several years now and am eager to get back into doing them physically. My Bachelor's in Law helps me stay objective and find the important information when it comes to research and I will apply this to your debate so that it is as constructive as possible.

Just as well, I, Diana have been doing MUN for the past 5 years and, despite my specialization not being directly related to politics and international relations, I have always had a keen interest in everything related to the field. There truly is nothing I love more than a heated debate, but at the same time I adore meeting people and having (much calmer) talks about anything really - although book TBRs, tennis and planning trips are certainly my favourite subjects.

And I, Sandra, am also really excited to see you at the conference. For me, MUN has changed the way I perceive social issues and has improved my public speaking and diplomacy skills. I have participated in MUNs as either chair or delegate since 2019. I hope that you can also enjoy TEIMUN, enrich your knowledge from research, sharpen your negotiation skills, and not to forget to have fun and make as many friends as you can.

To conclude, we wish you the best of luck, and we are eager to hear you speak your mind and do your best to improve yourself during the conference!

Faithfully yours,

Diana Velea, Finley Quinn and Sandra Novita

2. Introduction to the United Nations Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council was created as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, comprising 47 Member States of the UN responsible for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva¹.

To this end, the UNHRC has the mandate to address and make recommendations in regard to human rights violations wherever found and to discuss all human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. Some of these situations include but are not limited to violence against women and children, sexual violence in conflict, genocide, or human trafficking.

The Human Rights Council operates based on an “institution-building package” that guides its work and establishes the main mechanisms and procedures. Some of these include:

- universal periodic review mechanism, by which the human rights records of each Member State are assessed;²
- the Advisory Committee, which is the council’s “think tank” for advice on thematic human rights issues;³
- the complaint procedure, through which individuals and civil-society organizations can bring human rights violations to the attention of the council.

As part of its work, UNHRC collaborates with special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts, and working groups that monitor, examine, advise, and report publicly on human rights issues and on particular human rights situations in various countries.



¹ OHCHR.org, 'Promotion And Protection Of Human Rights Around The Globe,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/home>>

² OHCHR.org, 'Basic Facts About The UPR,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/basic-facts>>

³ OHCHR.org, 'Universal Periodic Review,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>>

3. UNHRC's Involvement in Humanitarian Crises Generated by Conflict

All humanitarian action undertaken by the Human Rights Council is underlined by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence⁴.

Bearing a non-political mandate, UNHRC is guided by these principles in responding to all humanitarian crises, including those caused by conflict. For example, the “*do no harm*” principle obliges the organization to prevent and mitigate any negative impact of its actions on affected populations. Just as well, UNHCR is committed to *rights-based* and *community-based approaches* that include efforts to engage and empower those affected in decisions that negatively impact their lives.

Nonetheless, the States are those that have the prime responsibility to protect and assist people within their territories who are affected by armed conflicts and violence. The humanitarian action undertaken by the UN is meant to complement and support States in fulfilling these responsibilities - it should neither undermine or supplement state responsibility.

Humanitarian principles have practical operational relevance, especially in situations of open armed conflict and hostility. UNHRC distinguished itself from other actors by:

- Gaining and maintaining access and proximity to affected populations;
- Mitigating risks to affected populations, staff, partners and assets;
- Promoting the rights and dignity of affected populations;
- Establishing a principled engagement with authorities and also, where appropriate, with non-State parties to a conflict⁵.

The principal motivation of humanitarian action is to save lives and alleviate suffering in a manner that respects and restores personal dignity. Accordingly, **humanity** is the principal driver for any response to a crisis.

At the same time, humanitarian actors distinguish themselves for their **impartiality**. This means that humanitarian action is based solely on need, with priority given to the most urgent cases irrespective of race, nationality, gender, religious belief, political opinion or class.

The **neutrality** of humanitarian action is further upheld when humanitarian actors refrain from taking sides in hostilities or engaging in political, racial, religious or ideological controversies. At the same time, **independence** requires humanitarian actors to be autonomous⁶.

During an armed conflict, when multiple actors are involved, adherence to humanitarian principles requires a clear division of labour between humanitarian and other actors, especially those in political and military realms.

⁴ UNHCR. org, 2022, 'UNHCR|Emergency Handbook,' [online] Available at: <<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/44765/humanitarian-principles>>

⁵ UNHCR. org, 2022, 'UNHCR|Emergency Handbook,' [online] Available at: <<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/44765/humanitarian-principles>>

⁶ UNHCR. org, 'UNHCR|Emergency Handbook,' [online] Available at: <<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/44765/humanitarian-principles>>

4. Introduction to the topic

“Between Secession and Genocide - Investigating Human Rights Violations within Ethiopia, with a Focus on the Tigray Region”

The United Nations (UN) is currently investigating human rights violation in Ethiopia stemming from the war at hand (see Section 6). The war between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has resulted in the deliberate blocking of humanitarian aid directed to the people of Ethiopia and more specifically the Tigray region, the consequences of which are worsening the already present famine. To add onto this, there have been reports of shootings, murders and acts of sexual violence. Similarly, the situation has escalated by the neighbouring country of Eritrea supporting the Ethiopian government and blocking off the region of Tigray further. Due to this, Ethiopia declared a state of emergency.⁷

In December 2021, the UNHRC has established the International Commission of Human Rights Experts (ICHRE) with the purpose to provide a panel of experts which will look into these human rights violations. The panel was created with 21 States voting in favour, 15 voting against and 11 abstaining from the vote. The panel is made up of three members who will have a full year to gather evidence regarding the responsible persons for committing the human rights violations. The UN has urged all involved parties to cease fire and allow the passage of humanitarian relief, however, this has not been done.⁸ The Ethiopian government refused to cooperate with the investigation.



5. Problem Specification

The continuation of human rights violations in Ethiopia requires the UN and the international community to now reassess the grave nature of these crimes and the consequences that derive thereof. The killings, mass shootings, acts of sexual violence and blocking off of aid have put Ethiopia in serious reach of being accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Ethiopian government is claiming their actions are justified because they are fighting the radicals, namely TPLF. However, upon viewing the actions of the Ethiopian government, a different result can be formulated.

⁷NBC News, 2021, 'Ethiopia Declares State Of Emergency As Rivals Make Way Toward Capital' Available at:

<<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/ethiopia-declares-state-emergency-rivals-make-way-toward-capital-n1283080>>

⁸ OHCHR, 2022, 'International Commission Of Human Rights Experts On Ethiopia,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ICHRE-Ethiopia/index>>

Similarly, the actions of Eritrea (in aiding the Ethiopian government suppress the people of the Tigray region) causes more problems. Their actions can also be seen as violations of human rights and subsequently in blocking passage of aid to the people of Ethiopia - including those in the Tigray region.⁹

The current conflict has led to thousands dying and the displacement of almost two million people. These violations are grave and ongoing which is why there is need for intervention. Ethiopia has failed to block the formulation of a committee that will investigate these violations. The UN Secretary General's spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, stressed the importance of investigating human rights violations as this upholds the accountability pillar required under current legislation¹⁰.

Due to the severity of the issue, namely the violence upon and the famine of Ethiopian people, there is need for immediate action and solutions as it remains unclear how much longer this can go on.

The civil conflict in Ethiopia's Northern Tigray Region has seen the death of thousands of people, the displacement of over 50,000 Tigrayan locals¹¹, countless mass killings, gang rapes and the exacerbation of famine and starvation in the region, constituting not only a political crisis in dire need of mediation, but also a humanitarian emergency.

Despite a ceasefire being instated, allegations of abuse continue to be gathered, with countless victims reporting extra-judicial executions, torture and sexual violence among others. Almost all human rights watchdog organizations have been banned from the region, as well as international media, while both Tigrayan and Eritrean forces continue to be implicated with serious human rights violations and abuses.

While the Ethiopian government is obliged to protect all its citizens and residents from these mass atrocities and violations of their human rights, it is evident that intervention from competent international institutions is needed. This is further complicated by UN officials being expelled from the country, as well as by the ongoing information black-outs that are enforced.

6. Brief History of The Conflict

As one of the biggest countries in Africa, Ethiopia boasts diverse regions with different ethnic groups. Under Colonel Mengistu's brutal communist dictatorship, over 30.000 people

⁹ Declan Walsh and Abdi Latif Dahir, 2022, 'Why Is Ethiopia at War With Itself?', Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/article/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained.html>>

¹⁰ UN.org, 2022, 'Daily Press Briefing By The Office Of The Spokesperson For The Secretary-General | Meetings Coverage And Press Releases', Available at: <<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/db220331.doc.htm>>

¹¹ Khalid Abdelaziz, Ali Mirghani, Nafisa Eltahir, 2020, 'Analysis-Spillover from Tigray conflict adds to pressure on Sudan', Available at: <<https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-sudan-analysis-int-idUSKBN28S1X1>>

were killed, with ethnic groups being treated as second class citizens.¹² Because of this, two big militias have popped up in response, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Eritrea People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

Mengistu was overthrown in 1991 and TPLF became the biggest militia, forming a coalition with another bigger party in Ethiopia. At the same time, seeing the domination of Tigray people in Ethiopia, Eritrea declared its independence.¹³ Even with economic development and the progress TPLF made in Ethiopia, people have realized that the situation is not a democratic one - many activists, political opponents, and journalists have been jailed.

In 2018, a new hope came to Ethiopia when Abiy Ahmed was elected to be the prime minister of Ethiopia, replacing the former prime minister who resigned due to a protest movement against the authoritarian and highly repressive government. Abiy Ahmed appeared to be a dynamic politician who supported peace, unity and reconciliation. In fact, he made efforts to reconcile the country by establishing a new party called the Prosperity Party, to which TPLF were also invited, but refused to join. Regardless, Abiy was able to end the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea – for which he also received a Nobel Peace prize decades later. Unfortunately, even with this action, the ethnic groups have been flaring up in Ethiopia and the manner in which Abiy responded to this issue was similar to his former leaders - locking up political opponents and police responding brutally to the movement by arresting thousands of people in military camps.

In 2020, the Tigray War flared up again because Abiy was accused of using the pandemic as an excuse to postpone the election that should have taken place. This aroused the anger of Tigrayans which then held their own election and choose their own government. In response, Abiy's government mobilized its military to re-establish stability. These initial protests have now turned into a civil war where thousands of refugees from Tigray have crossed into Sudan.



¹² The Ethiopian Committee on Immigration, 1982, 'Human Rights Violations in Ethiopia: The Case for Permanent Adjustment of Immigration Status for Ethiopians in the United States,' *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 12, no. 1/2: 16–21. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1166532>.

¹³ Harold G. Marcus and Donald Edward Crummey, 'Ethiopia – Socialist Ethiopia (1974-91),' [online] Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia/Socialist-Ethiopia-1974-91>>

Similarly, Eritrea, as a neighbouring country with a long history of animosity, is reported to send its troops in helping the Abiy Government against TPLF troops¹⁴.

¹⁴ BBC News, 2022, 'Ethiopia's Tigray war: The short, medium and long story,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54964378>>

7. Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMAS)

7.1 QARMA 1: How can the international community and non-political organizations intervene so as to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the Tigray region?

a. Background of the problem

Ever since 2020, the struggle for power between the federal government of Ethiopia and the political leaders of the Tigray region has evolved into a humanitarian crisis, with more than 90% of the population there in urgent need of assistance. The conflict has been continuously escalating, with several million having been forced out of their homes and civilian sites being targeted by the governmental forces. Just as well, the authorities of Ethiopia have been accused by numerous international organizations of blocking medical supplies to the region, as well as all other convoys carrying food and humanitarian aid.

Families are exhausting all remaining means to access food, with three quarters of the population reported to be using extreme coping strategies to survive, the UN says. "The level of food insecurity is expected to worsen in the coming months as remaining food stocks from the last harvest, which was half of normal year production, get depleted."¹⁵

b. Recent developments

Recent reports of the UN state that the region of Tigray “stands on the edge of a humanitarian disaster”¹⁶: only 10% of the required supplies have reached the region since July 2021, the population is running out of food and medical supplies, including those essential for the treatment of malnourished children.

Overall, the humanitarian situation for civilians is deteriorating still. Hospitals have been destroyed and food insecurity is on the rise. The UN estimates that about 2.3 million people require assistance, although these figures are constantly growing.

Nonetheless, the humanitarian truce agreed between the Ethiopian government and opposition forces in March 2022, has meant that the first aid has begun arriving as of April 1st. Until this point, the only aid deliveries since December 2021 had been made by air, which is far more costly and less effective. The road blockade has been somewhat lifted for humanitarian convoys, although the process continues to be a difficult one and fuel scarcity remains a prime challenge¹⁷.

c. Relevant actors / institutions

World Food Programme - the main body responsible for the distribution of food supplies in the region for those in need. It has been distributing cereals, pulses, and oil to Tigray,

¹⁵ BBC News, 2022, ‘Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: Why it's hard getting aid into the region.’ [online] Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/57929853>>

¹⁶ BBC News, 2022. ‘Tigray: ‘We were trying to hide’’. [online] Available at: <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0bh9jtt>>

¹⁷ Hrw.org, 2022, ‘Tigray Conflict | Human Rights Watch,’ [online] Available at: <<https://www.hrw.org/tag/tigray-conflict>>

although its last supplies were donated back in January. The agency has stated that the stocks of nutritionally fortified food for the treatment of malnourished children and women have been exhausted. Fuel for the delivery of the resources has also been running low, according to the agency. “We’re now having to choose who goes hungry to prevent another from starving,”¹⁸ said Michael Dunford, WFP’s regional director for eastern Africa. Furthermore, immediate guarantees from all parties to the conflict for safe and secure humanitarian corridors via all routes across northern Ethiopia have been requested. “The lack of both food and fuel means we’ve only been able to reach 20% of those we should have in this latest distribution in Tigray” according to Dunford¹⁹.

World Health Organization (WHO) - it was only in March 2022 that WHO was permitted to deliver medical supplies to Tigray. However, due to the lack of fuel (as fuel has not been allowed into Tigray since August 2021 until recently), there are no means to distribute them to the health centres in the region. The WHO shipments are part of 33.5 metric tonnes of planned deliveries, that still represent a small part of what is needed. In the absence of access to supplies, health workers are trying to continue to provide health services with almost no medicines or functioning equipment. WHO has been calling for unfettered access to provide humanitarian aid in Tigray.

OCHA - main agency responsible for coordinating the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. According to OCHA, health partners estimate the following supplies are required to meet the urgent nutrition and health needs of the people in Tigray: 2,200 metric tonnes of emergency health kits; 1.5 million doses of cholera vaccine; polio oral vaccination for 888,000 children under five years; more than 30,000 metric tonnes of nutrition supplies for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition in outpatient clinics and 100 metric tonnes for children hospitalized at stabilization centres; about 830 metric tonnes of nutrient supplements to fortify the nutrition of 1.4 million people, mainly women and children; and 15,000 metric tonnes of Vitamin A supplements.²⁰

d. Past international action

The grand majority of the international response has been focused on the provision of humanitarian aid to the region of Tigray and it has been mediated and shouldered by UN agencies.

¹⁸ World Food Programme, 2021, ‘No food, no fuel, no funding: WFP’s northern Ethiopia operations grinding to a halt,’ [online] Available at: <<https://www.wfp.org/news/no-food-no-fuel-no-funding-wfps-northern-ethiopia-operations-grinding-halt#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe're%20now%20having%20to,all%20routes%2C%20across%20northern%20Ethiopia.>>

¹⁹ World Food Programme, 2021, ‘Statement on humanitarian assistance and food and nutrition security in Ethiopia’s Tigray Region,’ [online] Available at: <<https://www.wfp.org/news/statement-humanitarian-assistance-and-food-and-nutrition-security-ethiopia-tigray-region>>

²⁰ World Health Organization, 2022, ‘Lack of fuel prevents distribution of critically-needed medical supplies in Tigray region,’ [online] Available at: <<https://www.who.int/news/item/14-02-2022-lack-of-fuel-prevents-distribution-of-critically-needed-medical-supplies-in-tigray-region>>

Following the killing of multiple aid workers in the Tigray region in October and November 2020, non-essential aid workers were withdrawn from the region. It was particularly difficult to assess the severity of the situation and deliver aid, as the security issues were intertwined with the suspension of internet and phone service, but also with entry restrictions. As a result of this, UN agencies have spent plenty of time lobbying the Ethiopian government and military to receive access permits to Tigray. In late December 2020, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR were able to deliver a month's worth of food to some Eritrean refugees, while other parts of the Tigray region remained out of reach. On 6 February 2021, the WFP announced that they had reached an agreement with the Ethiopian government to redeploy all UN staff to the Tigray region and allow further aid workers to enter the country. In exchange, the Ethiopian government made promises to be involved in identifying and prioritizing communities in need.

7.2 QARMA 2: How can the UNHRC ensure better access for aid workers in the Tigray region?

a. Background of the problem

Ever since the beginning of the conflict in the Tigray region, reaching the people in need has proven to be a difficult task to achieve. At first, the internet blockade and the disruption of all communication systems and even the cuts of electricity meant that little information could leave and reach Tigray. It was almost impossible to determine the extent of the casualties, how many people required assistance and how much humanitarian aid is needed.

Ensuing this, the government of Ethiopia has been continuously blamed for not allowing aid to reach the region, as humanitarian workers required special permits issued by the government in order to enter Tigray. Just as well, roads have been blocked numerous times, with aid only being delivered through air. The restricted access is a part of what the United Nations has called a “de facto humanitarian aid blockade” that the government has imposed on Tigray since June. This illegal blockade also includes the shutdown of telecommunications, electricity and banking services in the region and severe access restrictions for aid workers to the region – all of which is hampering the humanitarian response and exacerbating the crisis ²¹.

b. Recent developments

In March 2022 a truce between the Ethiopian government and rebels in the embattled region of Tigray was declared in order to allow humanitarian aid to finally reach the millions of people in need. Food, water and medicine in the northern region have been limited to small plane deliveries for months due to both the conflict and accusations that both sides are blocking the roads²².

²¹ UN News, 2021, ‘Aid agencies renew appeals for aid access to all areas in Ethiopia’s Tigray,’ [online] Available at: <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1083902>>

²² The Guardian, 2022, ‘Ethiopia: Tigray rebels agree ‘cessation of hostilities’ after government truce,’ [online] Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/25/ethiopia-tigray-rebels-agree-cessation-of-hostilities-after-government-truce>>

Aid organizations continue to study the declarations made by the government so as to determine the extent of the access they will receive. For example, Hassan Khannenje, the head of the Horn Institute for Strategic Studies, does not believe the government and the TPLF will give aid groups a free hand, as this might expose human rights abuses.²³

c. Relevant agencies and actors

Ethiopian Government and Tigray's People Liberation Front as the main conflicting parties and also as the ones that have instituted the road blockades and the disruptions in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Amnesty International - actively campaigning for “a world where human rights can be enjoyed by everyone, no matter what situation they are in”. As the restriction of humanitarian aid comes in violation of international law, they have been militating for the rights of the people in the Tigray region and demanding full and unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray²⁴.

d. Past international action

In a statement on 8 February 2021, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs of the European Union Josep Borrell voiced his concern over the humanitarian situation in Tigray and the reports of attacks on civilians and human rights violations. He identified limitations on humanitarian access imposed by Ethiopia as a reason for continued loss of life²⁵.

To a certain extent, the temporary halt of the conflict and the entrance of humanitarian aid convoys comes as a result of the pressure exerted on the Ethiopian government and rebel groups. The humanitarian truce comes as a response to the growing calls by the international community to allow humanitarian access to the Tigray region.

7.3 QARMA 3: How assertive should the UN be in attempting to prevent human rights abuses?

a. Background of the problem

As the most relevant and comprehensive international organization of our times, the United Nations was born with and continues to have as its prime goal the protection of peace and security. This is accomplished by working to prevent conflict, helping parties in conflict

²³ Khannenje, H, 2021, 'The Future of Democracy in Africa: COVID-19 and Geopolitics,' *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, 19, 222–233, Available at: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48617366>>

²⁴ Amnesty International, 2022, 'Crimes Against Humanity in Ethiopia's Western Tigray Zone,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/04/ethiopia-crimes-against-humanity-in-western-tigray-zone/>>

²⁵ European External Action Service, 2021, 'Ethiopia: Joint-Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen and Commissioner Janez Lenarčič,' [online] Available at: <https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92765/ethiopia-jointstatement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-commissioner-jutta_en>

make peace, deploying peacekeepers and creating the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish.

Moreover, the UN is the primary international forum where human rights standards are negotiated and adopted into treaty law. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether the UN can effectively ensure the adherence by states to human rights law given that, in international affairs, politics more often than not trumps both morality and law.²⁶

b. Recent developments

There is a growing political conviction within the UN that human rights are at the core of protecting international peace and security. As a result, UN agencies, funds and programs are now expected to apply the human-rights based approach in their programs and operations.²⁷

c. Important actors

Peacekeeping corps have proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist countries to navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate political processes, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support constitutional processes and the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law and extending legitimate state authority.²⁸

Peacebuilding - UN peacebuilding activities are aimed at assisting countries emerging from conflict, reducing the risks of relapsing into conflict and laying the foundation for sustainable peace and development. The UN peacebuilding architecture comprises the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office.²⁹

d. Past international action

Ensuing the breakout of the conflict in Ethiopia, human rights were among the first casualties. While both main parties involved shift the blame from one another, it is becoming increasingly difficult for international organizations to monitor the situation of human rights. What is more, as international law regarding the protection of civilians and of their human rights has been breached, it is imperative to see how those guilty will be held accountable, and what role the UN will come to play into this.

²⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022, 'Human Rights - The UN Commission on Human Rights (1946–2006) and the UN Human Rights Council,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-rights/The-UN-Commission-on-Human-Rights-1946-2006-and-the-UN-Human-Rights-Council#ref1034224>>

²⁷ Unsdg.un.org, 2022, 'UNSDG | Human Rights-Based Approach,' [online] Available at: <<https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach>>

²⁸ UN Peacekeeping, 2020, 'United Nations Peacekeeping: What is Peacekeeping?' [online] Available at: <<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-ispeacekeeping>>

²⁹ United Nations, 2020, 'Global Issues: Peace and Security,' [online] Available at: <<http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/peace-andsecurity/index.html>>

7.4 Are there any implications for regional peace and the wellbeing of people beyond the borders of Ethiopia? How can the State of Eritrea influence the severity of the human rights violations occurring in the Tigray region?

a. Background of the problem

Eritrea and Ethiopia are bordering countries in Africa. In 1998 Eritrea and Ethiopia had a war which resulted in tensions between these two countries. Similarly, they have had several border disputes. Although these tensions were seemingly solved in 2018 when a peace agreement was formed, there is some obvious animosity for certain regions in Ethiopia, especially the Tigray region, as this is the part of Ethiopia that borders Eritrea. The border span is 1000km. The prime minister of Ethiopia - Abiy Ahmed - increased his need for political control and did so without regard for the TPLF. When the Tigray war broke out in Ethiopia, Eritrea took the side of the Ethiopian government and helped assist them in blocking Tigray. It has done this by sending thousands of soldiers. Eritrea provided this aid because the TPLF is seen as an 'enemy' due to the tensions this party had with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) party in the 1970's. The actions of Eritrea have worsened and prolonged the war, creating worse conditions for the people harmed thereof.

b. Recent developments

The willingness of Eritrea to help Ethiopia in this situation is an attempt on behalf of Eritrea to gain more regional importance. Eritrea's assistance has allowed it to come out of its isolation and provide means to destabilize an already fragile State. This is done through its troops being deployed in Ethiopia but also by exerting influence in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. These 'ulterior motives' could be seen as a way to regain the territory of the TPLF. Eritrea inserting itself in times of conflict is not a new scenario.

The intervention of Eritrea is more violent and inhumane because of these earlier tensions, which is why it could be seen as adding onto the human rights violations. Refugees in Eritrea are questioned and treated inhumanely if a part of the TPLF. They also force them to join the military or put them in prison.³⁰

The biggest problem Eritrea faces is that of a united Ethiopia, so by inserting itself in the war it allows for the situation to stay escalated and consequently benefit from this scenario to hopefully obtain more power on larger scales. The disruption allows for Eritrea to influence and intervene.

Just as well, in terms of humanitarian aid, the crisis seems to have spread to neighbouring regions, with famine affecting millions of people. Especially in the regions of Amhar and Afar there are increased worries about hunger levels, as over 4 million people are thought to be in need of food assistance.

c. Relevant actors/institutions

The Ethiopian central government is the main actor considered to be committing war crimes and breaches of human rights law established in the international legal sphere. They are fighting the TPLF due to conflicts with political parties and have therefore been one of the main actors in blocking off aid to its people, and condones the violence being placed upon

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, 2022, 'World Report 2022: Eritrea,' [online] Available at: <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/eritrea>>

them by not finding a solution to ending the war. It is also the Ethiopian central government that began the military operations in the Tigray region. They have since, with the help of Eritrea, destroyed most civilian homes, businesses and more, leading to millions of people requiring assistance.

TPLF is the other main actor because it is a war between the TPLF and the Ethiopian central government. This is the political party of the Tigray region, which the central government did not recognize. They are important to recognize because they represent a majority of the people who face unjust actions. The TPLF was a dominant coalition party in Ethiopia until 2018. Once war was started against the TPLF, the people in the Tigray region soon started to feel its consequences because the blockage of aid and food by the central government is leading to a genocide.

Eritrea is an actor through looking at its involvement in the internal wars of Ethiopia. They can even be seen as instigating for their own purposes. They share a border with Ethiopia and have for a long time had disputes and bad political tensions. They have aided the Ethiopian central government in carrying out gross human rights violations and the destruction of the Tigray region. Due to these conflicts, it is important to establish the role Eritrea plays in the current conflict.

d. Past international action

The Tigray war is the current issue at hand; however, the Ethiopian-Eritrean war needs to be looked at as well. During this war in 1998, the UN Secretary General contacted the countries to tell them to stop this war and offered assistance in ending it amicably. An agreement was finally reached through the OAU summit in 1999. There was a Security Council Mission that went to both of the countries and had discussions as to how they could avoid and stop war and find peaceful solutions to prevent the renewal of war. In order to avoid the distribution of weapons to these counts resolution 1298 was adopted in 2000.

In regard to humanitarian action, the countries were faced with similar issues of famine, so aid programmes were set up. There were efforts to bring this famine to light and eventually a long-term food plan task force was established for the horn of Africa called the FOA. This was then followed by an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea - an agreement that immediately stopped hostilities.

8 Useful resources

8.1 Councils, agencies, inter-governmental bodies

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Home.aspx>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/situations/crisis-in-tigray-ethiopia>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14691.doc.htm>

<https://www.wfp.org/>

8.2 UNHCR Toolkits

Protection of civilians: the Role of UNHCR
https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/295169/Protection+in+Armed+Conflict+-+Module+4+-+Protection+of+Civilians+-+The+role+of+UNHCR/f7553be7-7318-4908-a1a6-ce53d7b0beeb#_ga=2.177116773.1794162438.1646318122-913135951.1646318122

8.3 Daily updated report on the humanitarian situation by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:

<https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia/>

8.4 Videos and Documentaries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0cYHw-joZI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXtq2-SRQdg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogiOMIisZW4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0OxwpFlaA0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amv6R3co5aE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOIhNSJSE_U

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