



Genocide Watch  
The Alliance Against Genocide

## Genocide Emergency: Ethiopia (November 2021)

Genocide Watch is issuing a Genocide Emergency Alert regarding the Ethiopian government's persecution of the Tigrayan people in its war with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Genocide Watch also condemns the TPLF's targeting of the Amhara ethnic group. [All parties to the conflict](#) have committed gross violations of international law, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and torture. Ethiopia's ethnic fractionalization has produced dozens of ethnic militias that are committing crimes against humanity.

The fighting in Tigray [began in November 2020](#) after Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed cancelled general elections on the pretext of public health measures against COVID-19. The TPLF [held regional elections](#) anyway. The TPLF then captured key Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) bases in Tigray. With the Eritrean Army, the ENDF struck back to regain control of Tigray and permanently oust the TPLF. The ENDF retook Mekelle, the capital of Tigray. But the TPLF fought back and retook most of Tigray. The conflict has now killed thousands of civilians and displaced [over two million people](#).

The ENDF and its Eritrean allies and Amhara militias, as well as the TPLF, have carried out [mass rape](#) with the explicit aims of "[cleansing the bloodlines](#)" of the Tigrayan and Amhara people. Both sides have [committed ethnic-based massacres](#) of hundreds of civilians. Because both sides target each other based on ethnic identity and intentionally destroy significant parts of ethnic groups, both sides are committing genocide. The civil war has created a humanitarian emergency in Tigray. The Ethiopian government has intentionally blocked food supplies to Tigray, using access to food aid as a weapon of war. This is a war crime. The government is [intentionally starving](#) the Tigrayan population. As many as [900,000 Tigrayans](#) face famine. [Tens of thousands](#) of Tigrayans have fled to Sudan.

Since the beginning of the ENDF assault on Tigray, Prime Minister Abiy, an ethnic Oromo and recipient of the [2019 Nobel Peace Prize](#), has promoted hate speech and incited genocide. Abiy [recently called](#) for Ethiopian citizens to take up arms and to "sacrifice our blood and bones to bury this enemy [the TPLF]." He [describes Tigrayans](#) as "rats" and a "cancer," dehumanizing terms that indicate his genocidal intent.

In recent weeks, the conflict has taken another alarming turn. [Eight rebel groups](#), including the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), have joined the TPLF to topple Abiy's government. The OLA has joined the TPLF in response to the Ethiopian government's [brutal crackdown in Oromia](#). The ENDF has detained thousands of ethnic Oromos and killed hundreds. TPLF and OLA forces have expanded beyond Tigray and now threaten the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Prime Minister Abiy has declared a "[state of emergency](#)" granting him broad powers. The ENDF is arbitrarily arresting ethnic Tigrayans. The ENDF has gone door-to-door, rounding up and [detaining thousands](#) of Tigrayans in the capital, among them [16 UN staff members](#), whom the Ethiopian government has falsely accused of "terrorism."

This genocidal violence threatens all of Ethiopia. Without a diplomatic solution to the conflict, Ethiopia's fragile federal system, including ten regional governments presiding over 80 ethnic groups, is at risk. The breakup of Ethiopia would set off a vicious civil war and spark further genocide.

Due to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's hate speech and calls for war, the ENDF's brutal attacks against Tigrayans, and the atrocities committed by the TPLF, Genocide Watch considers Ethiopia to be at **Stage 4: Dehumanization, Stage 6: Polarization, Stage 8: Persecution, and Stage 9: Extermination.**

### Genocide Watch Recommends:

- A ceasefire must be declared and honored by all sides, enforced by AU and UN peacekeepers.
- Food aid to Tigray must be allowed to reach Tigray. If the ENDF or TPLF block it, it should be taken in from Sudan, under the armed protection of African Union troops with US and UN support.
- The TPLF and OLA must halt their advance on Addis Ababa.
- The TPLF and Ethiopian government should engage in peace talks mediated by regional and international organizations such as the African Union or UN.
- Facebook, Twitter, and all other social media companies should block hate speech in Ethiopia.
- All sides must allow free access everywhere in Ethiopia for international observers and journalists.