



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note** **Ethiopia: Tigrayans and the Tigrayan** **People's Liberation Front**

**Version 1.0**

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# Executive summary

Tigrayans constitute about 6% of the population of Ethiopia. They mostly live in Tigray region but up to a million live in Addis Ababa with smaller communities elsewhere in the country.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is the main political group in Tigray. The TPLF dominated the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition which ruled Ethiopia until 2018 but lost its influence after the election of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister in April 2018.

From November 2020 to November 2022 the TPLF and the Ethiopian federal government (FG) were at war which also drew in the Eritrean military and regional forces and militias from Amhara, Afar and Oromia. All parties committed human rights abuses. Sources estimate between 300,000 and 800,000 civilians died during the conflict. On 4 November 2022, the FG and the TPLF signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) which ended the war.

The signing of CoHA led to the formation of the Interim Regional Administration of Tigray (TIRA), the improvement in relations between TPLF and the FG, and the restoration of aid and other services to the region. However, the disarmament of TPLF combatants is not complete and around 20% of Tigray is still disputed and occupied by Amhara and Eritrean forces with the rest of Tigray under TIRA control.

The security and human rights situation in the TIRA-controlled areas has improved significantly but criminality and the erosion of rule of law are a problem. Living conditions and humanitarian access have also improved although not all needs are being met. In the disputed areas there continue to be reports of serious human rights violations against Tigrayans primarily by Amhara regional forces and Eritrean armed forces.

Many Tigrayans live in and have migrated to Addis Ababa, where they are able to live and work. Although those without residency in the city and lack support networks may be vulnerable to discriminatory treatment by the state.

In general:

- Tigrayans in areas under the control of the TIRA in Tigray and in Addis Ababa are unlikely to face treatment from state actors because of their ethnicity that amounts to persecution or serious harm.
- Tigrayans in other parts Ethiopia may face persecution or serious harm because of their ethnicity from (local) state actors depending on the facts of their case.

Protection is unlikely to be available.

Relocation is likely to be viable to Addis Ababa or to TIRA-controlled areas of Tigray, depending on the person's circumstances.

A decision to refuse protection is unlikely to be certified.

Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

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# Assessment

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, in general:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by the state because they are Tigrayan and/or they support the Tigray People’s Liberation Front
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within Ethiopia
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 1.2 Exclusion

1.2.1 The Tigrayans People’s Liberation Front, particularly those in the Tigrayan Defence Force, have been connected to human rights violations, including attacks on civilians, during the armed conflict between November 2020 and

November 2022 (see [General abuses by all parties to the conflict](#) and [Abuses by TDF](#)).

- 1.2.2 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 1.2.3 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.4 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention, Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## 2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Race and/or actual/imputed political opinion.
- 2.1.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.1.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 3. Risk

### 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 Tigrayans in areas under the control of the Tigrayan Interim Regional Administration (TIRA) in Tigray and in Addis Ababa are unlikely to face treatment from state actors because of their ethnicity that amounts to persecution or serious harm. However, factors such as a person's gender, age, social and educational background, whether they are a long-term resident of Addis Ababa, their ID documentation and support network, are likely to affect the risk they face. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 Tigrayans in other parts of Ethiopia may face persecution or serious harm because of their ethnicity from (local) state and/or societal actors depending on the facts of their case. The onus is on the person to demonstrate a risk.
- 3.1.3 Tigrayans linked to the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) are not likely to be at risk of persecution or serious harm because of their political opinion by state actors in TIRA-controlled areas of Tigray or Addis Ababa.

However, they may face a risk in other areas of Ethiopia, depending on the facts of their case. The onus is on the person to demonstrate a risk.

- 3.1.4 There are between 5 to 7 million Tigrayans – around 6% of the total population - in Ethiopia, residing predominantly in Tigray. Outside Tigray, the largest concentration of Tigrayans is in Addis Ababa where an estimated 500,000 to one million live (see [Demography](#)).
- 3.1.5 Between 1991 and 2018, the TPLF dominated the then ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) political coalition. Repression and abuses of power under the EPRDF fuelled grievances and spurred a mass protest movement resulting in the election of Abiy Ahmed, leader of the Oromo Democratic Party, as the prime minister in April 2018 (see Political context).
- 3.1.6 Once elected, Prime Minister Abiy began to reduce the influence of the TPLF within the federal government (FG). This led to rising tensions between the FG and TPLF which came to a head in September 2020 when the TPLF defied Abiy by holding Tigray regional parliamentary elections which the FG deemed illegal. In November 2020, Abiy accused the TPLF of attacking a federal army base outside of the Tigray capital Mekelle and ordered a military assault on the group. This was the beginning of the 2-year armed conflict in Tigray, but which spilled out into other regions of Ethiopia (see [Tigray conflict: 4 November 2020 to 2 November 2022](#)).
- 3.1.7 The conflict pitted the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) supported by the Amhara Special Forces (ASF), ‘Fano’ militia (from Amhara state) and the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) against the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) controlled by the TPLF. Other parties, such as the Oromo Liberation Army, also subsequently joined the conflict in support of the TPLF (see [Armed groups](#)).
- 3.1.8 All parties to the conflict committed numerous human rights abuses including mass killing of civilians, rape and other forms of sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detentions, enforced disappearances, incitement to violence and discrimination, forced displacement of the civilian population, ethnic cleansing, targeting of civilian infrastructure, and restrictions on humanitarian access (see [Human rights abuses by all parties](#)). The conflict death toll remains unclear, but estimates range from 300,000 to 800,000 people, including indirect deaths as a result of a lack of healthcare or starvation (see [Civilian deaths](#)).
- 3.1.9 In November 2022, the FG and the TPLF signed the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), also known as the Pretoria Agreement, brokered by the African Union. The agreement provided for an end of fighting between parties, humanitarian access to Tigray, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the TDF, withdrawal of armed groups from Tigray, return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their home areas, the restoration of services to Tigray and establishment of national transitional justice (see [Cessation of Hostilities Agreement \(CoHA\), November 2022](#)).
- 3.1.10 The control of Tigray is divided between TIRA, Amhara forces and the EDF. In March 2023, the FG transferred the administration of the areas under its control to the TIRA. Most of the Central, Eastern, Southern and North



Western zones and the whole Mekelle and of South Eastern zones are under the control of the TIRA (see [Control of territory](#)).

- 3.1.11 Although the EDF and Amhara forces withdrew from major towns they have remained in some areas in Western, North Western, Central, Eastern, Southern zones of Tigray. At the time of writing, around 20% of Tigray remains contested. These ‘disputed’ territories include:
- the entire Western zone (known to the Amhara as Welkait), including Welkait, Tsegede, and Humera woredas, under the control of Amhara regional militias (Fano)
  - parts of North Western zone along the border with Eritrea, under the control of the Eritrea armed forces
  - parts of the Eastern zone along the border with Eritrea under the control of the Eritrean armed forces
  - parts of the Southern zone (known to the Amhara as Raya-Alamata), under the control of Amhara forces (see [Control of territory](#)).
- 3.1.12 Relations between the TPLF and the FG have improved since the CoHA. The TPLF has been removed from the FG’s terrorist organization list (see [TPLF de-proscribed as a terrorist organisation and release of prisoners](#)) TPLF has been re-registered, albeit conditionally, as a political party (see [TPLF recognised as a political party, June 2024](#)), the TPLF has been holding meetings with the FG and the ruling Prosperity Party (see [Relations between TIRA and the federal government](#)) and almost all Tigrayans who were detained during the conflict have been released including former Tigrayans members of ENDP imprisoned on treason charges. However, sources estimate around 2,000 Tigrayans linked to the Ethiopian security forces remain in detention (see [Release of prisoners](#)).

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## 3.2 Tigray

- 3.2.1 Since November 2022 there has been a significant improvement in the security situation in Tigray. Armed Conflict & Location Event Data Project (ACLED) indicative data shows a 92% fall in organised violence events (battles, explosive/remote violence, and violence against civilians) from 1,002 between November 2020 and 4 November 2022 to 78 between 5 November 2022 and 16 August 2024. ACLED also documented a 98% fall in fatalities resulting from political violence events from 5,168 to 105 between the same periods. Attacks on civilians also fell. ACLED recorded a 76% fall in civilian targeting events [where civilians are the main or only target] from 178 between 4 November 2020 and 4 November 2022 to 78 between 4 November 2022 and 16 August. ACLED also recorded a 98% fall in fatalities from civilian targeting from 3,077 to 55 between the same periods (see [Political violence](#) and [Fatalities from violent attacks](#)).
- 3.2.2 Living conditions in TIRA-controlled areas of Tigray have improved since the end of the conflict, although these remain difficult for many. Humanitarian access to assist people has also improved although it remains insufficient to meet all needs. Sources note:

- the economic situation remains poor, with unemployment very high (a western embassy referred to estimates of over 80%)
  - over 2 million people required immediate food assistance as of April 2024, with internally displaced person (IDP) households having the greatest need. The UN Organisation for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) stated that as of March 2024, over one million people had been provided with food assistance (see [Food assistance](#))
  - despite improvements, access to medical treatment is still poor. The WHO's April 2024 assessment of health facilities indicated that 3% were fully damaged, 86% partially damaged, and 2% intact (see [Access to health](#))
  - the TIRA and FG have made some progress to open schools, but access is limited outside of towns and cities: the UN human rights office reported in June 2024 that 22% of schools were occupied by Eritrean and Amhara forces, while 4.2% are occupied by IDPs (see [Access to education](#))
  - other basic services such as banking, electricity, telecommunication and educations are being restored but remain limited (see [Other services](#)).
- 3.2.3 The end of conflict allowed over 900,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) to return to Tigray (see [IDPs returns](#)) however there are still between 600,000 and over a million IDPs as of mid-2024. These are mainly people from the disputed territories where ongoing tensions and violence mean it is not safe to return (see [Numbers of internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#)).
- 3.2.4 The human rights situation has also improved in TIRA-controlled areas, with a decline in violations including extra-judicial killings and sexual and gender-based violence. The country evidence does not indicate that there is targeting of specific groups by the TIRA or other state or non-state agents. However, criminality has increased and is widespread, includes trafficking, illegal mining and kidnapping (mostly of women and children). The TIRA lacks capacity to manage crime effectively (see [Human rights situation since CoHA and Criminality](#)).
- 3.2.5 However, in the disputed areas – in the Western, Central, North Eastern and Southern zones - there continue to be reports of serious human rights violations against Tigrayans primarily by Amhara regional forces and Eritrean armed forces, including extra-judicial killings (see [Extra-judicial killings](#)), sexual violence (see [Conflict related sexual violence](#)), arbitrary arrest and detention (see [Arbitrary arrest and detention](#)). These abuses have prevented the return of IDPs to these areas although reports in June 2024 indicated that some return to areas controlled by Amhara forces have occurred (see [Internally displacement persons](#)).

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### 3.3 Addis Ababa

- 3.3.1 Large numbers of Tigrayans continue to live and work in Addis Ababa (AA). Sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 estimated that there are up to one million Tigrayans in the city, with many thousands moving to

the capital since the end of the conflict because of better security and facilities (see [Demography](#) and [Migration to Addis Ababa \(AA\)](#)).

- 3.3.2 While there is no discrimination against Tigrayans in the law, their position and influence in Ethiopian society has diminished as a result of the conflict in Tigray. Sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 noted that most Tigrayans had been removed from positions in power in the FG, parliament, and the security forces, and had not yet returned. Businesses and properties were confiscated during the conflict but had not been given back (see [Situation of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa](#)).
- 3.3.3 During the Tigray conflict, Tigrayans were arrested in 10,000s because of their ethnicity. However, sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 were consistent that most of the arrested had been released, with only around 2,000 who were linked to the ENDF remaining detained. The sources also indicated that there is no longer systematic or large scale targeting of Tigrayans for arrest and detention. Tigrayans, as other groups, may be subject to arbitrary arrests, sometimes before public holidays or major public events, but often as a result of opportunistic short-term detentions (a day or 2) to secure a bribe. However, sources considered that Tigrayans who previously would have had contacts to call on for assistance would now not be able to rely on their contacts for support. Across Ethiopia, those who do not have the right contacts are likely to face similar difficulties. Other factors may affect a person's vulnerability to arrest, including whether they are long-term residents of AA and had a city ID card: those without ID were more likely to face arbitrary arrest if stopped by the security forces (see [Situation of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa](#) and [Addis Ababa city ID: access to services](#)).
- 3.3.4 Tigrayans in Addis Ababa can access housing if they can afford the rent, health and schooling. Sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 noted that a kebele ID card (obtained from the kebele they were resident in Tigray or elsewhere) or an AA city ID card could be used to access a range of services including accommodation, education, and healthcare. However, an AA city ID is needed for other activities including to establish a business and open / operate a bank account. The card also confirms residence in AA. Tigrayans can obtain an Addis Ababa ID but find it difficult since, amongst others, it requires a letter of authority from the kebele where the person was previously resident. Consequently, a couple of sources noted that Tigrayans often bought (paid a bribe) an AA city ID (see [Obtaining an Addis Ababa city ID](#)).
- 3.3.5 There are no reports of the FG government targeting TPLF members and supporters or their family members amongst the sources (see [Political developments post CoHA](#)).

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## 3.4 Elsewhere in Ethiopia

- 3.4.1 There is limited information about the treatment of Tigrayans in areas outside of Tigray and Addis Ababa. Sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 considered it unsafe for Tigrayans to live in these areas, providing one specific example of Tigrayans killed in Afar. A couple of sources also noted that there had been anti-Tigrayan propaganda during the

conflict leading to a decline in social relationships with other groups. However, this evidence does not amount to a consistent pattern of ill-treatment affecting large numbers of Tigrayans amounting to persecution or serious harm (see [Migration to other regions of Ethiopia \(except Addis Ababa\)](#))

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### 3.5 Returns

- 3.5.1 There is no specific information on the number or experiences of Ethiopian or Tigrayan unsuccessful asylum seekers (UAS) returned to Ethiopia from the UK or the European Union (EU). The UK and EU returned by force and voluntarily over 300 Ethiopians between January 2022 and June 2024, however the publicly available data does not indicate if these included UAS. Sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 were not able to provide specific documented examples of UAS facing ill-treatment since the end of the conflict. The Danish Immigration Service, which also visited Ethiopia in May 2024, also a report that there is no evidence ill-treatment of UAS per se (see [Returns](#)).
- 3.5.2 The country evidence does not indicate that there is consistent pattern of serious ill-treatment that a UAS returning by force or voluntarily faces a real risk of serious harm.

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## 4. Protection

- 4.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the federal government or Tigrayan People's Liberation Front they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection from the authorities.
- 4.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from non-state actors, including local militia and 'rogue' state actors, decision makers must assess whether the state can provide effective protection.
- 4.1.3 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 In general, there are parts of the country such as Addis Ababa and the TIRA-controlled areas of Tigray where a person could relocate.
- 5.1.2 Tigrayans who have a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.3 Tigrayans who fear local state actors in Tigray, such as the Amhara militias or the Eritrea Defence Forces, are likely to be able to relocate to TIRA-controlled areas or Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa is a large, diverse city with a significant Tigrayan population estimated to be up to one million (see [Demography](#), and [Country Policy and Information Note Ethiopia: Background information, including internal relocation](#)). Since the end of the war a large number of Tigrayans, possibly in the hundreds of thousands, have moved to Addis Ababa (see [Migration to Addis Ababa \(AA\)](#)).

- 5.1.4 Tigrayans who fear local state actors in Tigray, such as the Amhara militias or the Eritrea Defence Forces are unlikely to be able to relocate to other parts of Ethiopia outside of Tigray and Addis Ababa (see [Migration to other regions of Ethiopia \(except Addis Ababa\)](#)).
- 5.1.5 There are no travel restrictions in the TIRA-controlled areas but insecurity from criminality may restrict movement especially at night. In the contested areas that are occupied by Amhara and Eritrean forces, general insecurity prevented people from moving freely (see [Travel within Tigray](#)).
- 5.1.6 Movement between Tigray and Addis Ababa is possible by air and road. In December 2022 Ethiopian Airlines resumed daily flights between Addis Ababa and Mekelle. As of June 2024, there were 8 to 9 daily flights between Addis Ababa and Mekelle, 3 daily flights between Addis Ababa and Shire and 2 or 3 daily flights between Addis Ababa and Axum (see [Air travel between Tigray and Addis Ababa](#)). Road travel between Addis Ababa and Tigray restarted in April 2023, however travel is only possible via the Afar region but not through the shorter Amhara route due to the ongoing conflict in Amhara (see [Road travel between Tigray and Addis Ababa](#)).
- 5.1.7 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

## About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before October 2024. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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## 7. Abbreviations

7.1.1 Below is a list of common abbreviations for sources and names of organisations referred to in this note:

AA	Addis Ababa
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Events Data
APUAA	Assistant Professor University of Addis Abana
ASF	Amhara Special Forces
BEOs	UK Embassy Officials
Cedoca	Belgium Office for the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons Country of Origin Information Unit
CoHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
CRS	US Congressional Research Service
CSA	Civil Society Organisation Activists
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
EDF	Eritrean Defence Forces
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Forces
FFM	Fact Finding Mission
FG	Federal Government (Ethiopia)
HDX	Humanitarian Data Exchange
HRC	Human Rights Commission

ICHREE	UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia
ID	Identity Cards
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IOM DTM	International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix
KB	Kaibram Berhe, the leader/chairman of Baytona Party
LIFOS,	Swedish Migration Agency
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
OCHA	UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
PA	Pretoria Agreement (alternative for CoHA)
REC	Regional Engagement Coordination British Embassy Addis Ababa
RHRO	Representatives of a Human Rights Organization
RIAA	Representative of Irob Advocacy Association
RTIP	Representative of Tigrayan Independent Party
TDF	Tigrayan Defence Forces
TIRA	Tigrayan Interim Regional Authority
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UKHO	United Kingdom Home Office
UNSC	UN Security Council
OWE	Officials of a western embassy

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## 8. Geographical context

### 8.1 Geography

8.1.1 Encyclopaedia Britannica noted: 'Tigray, also spelled Tegray, Tigray, or Tigre, historical region, northern Ethiopia. Its western part rises in high-plateau country where elevations generally range between 5,000 and 11,000 feet (1,500 and 3,300 metres). The region is drained by the Tekeze and Gash (Mareb) rivers. To the east lies the Denakil Plain, including the Kobar Sink (some 380 feet [116 metres] below sea level).'<sup>1</sup>

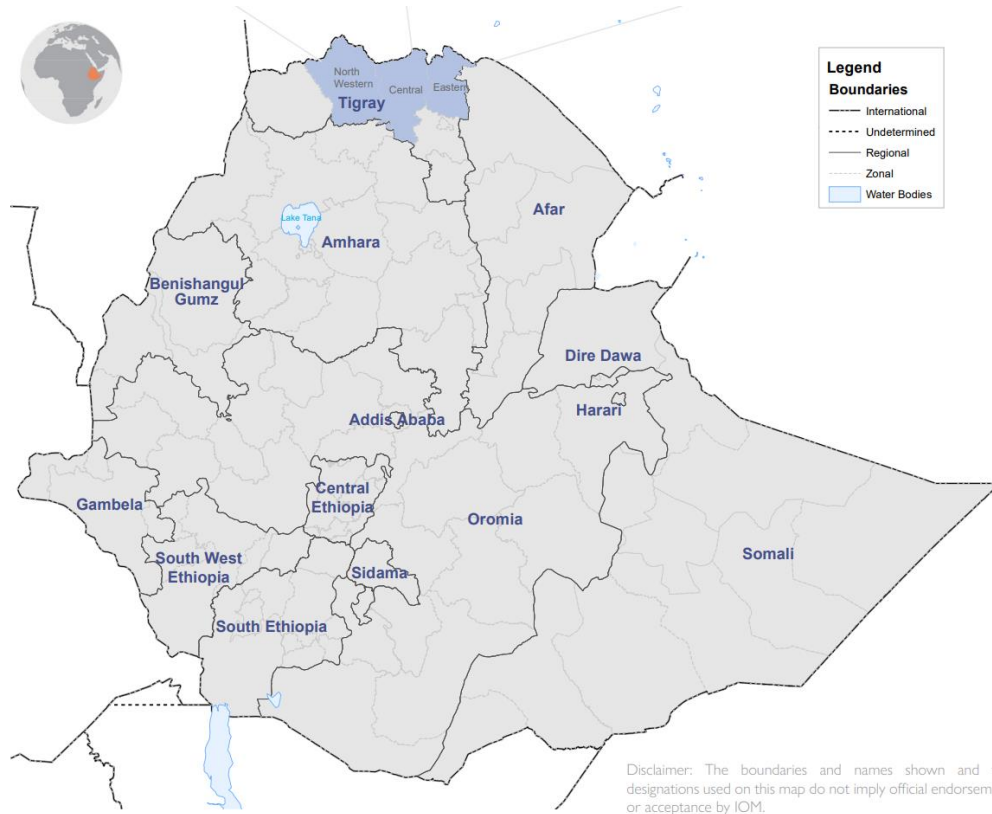
8.1.2 In a report dated 22 February 2021, Assessment Capacities Project (Acaps), a non-profit, nongovernmental project which conducts independent humanitarian analysis<sup>2</sup>, (Acaps report February 2021) stated, citing other sources: 'Tigray is located in the northern most part of Ethiopia, bordering Amhara to the south, Afar to the east, Sudan to the west and Eritrea to the

<sup>1</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Editors, '[Tigray | historical region, Ethiopia](#)', updated 10 August 2023

<sup>2</sup> Acaps, '[Who we are](#)' no date

north. The total size of Tigray is 50,079 Km<sup>2</sup> representing approximately 4.4% of Ethiopia's land mass.<sup>3</sup>

### 8.1.3 Map of Ethiopia showing regions including Tigray<sup>4</sup>



8.1.4 The 22 February 2021 Acaps report further noted: ‘... Tigray is one of ten regions in Ethiopia. It is further divided into seven zones, including the capital Mekelle. The zones are divided into 88 woredas (districts) and towns. Woredas are further divided into sub-districts called tabias, also referred to as kebeles ...’<sup>5</sup>

8.1.5 The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has produced an access map of Tigray showing regional capital, zonal capita, towns and zone and Woreda boundaries<sup>6</sup>.

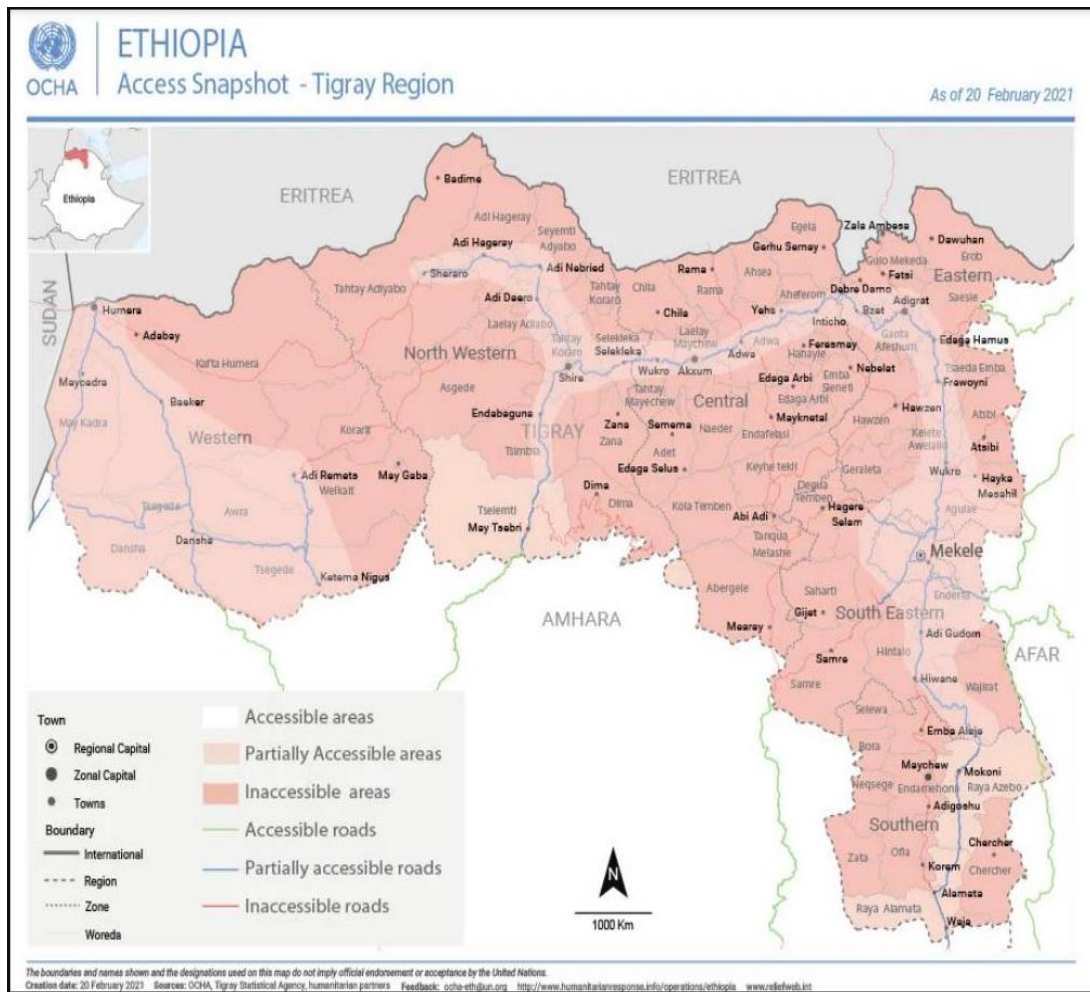
<sup>3</sup> Acaps, [‘Ethiopia - The pre-crisis situation in Tigray’](#) (page 3), 22 February 2021

<sup>4</sup> IOM, [‘DTM Ethiopia -Data for sustainable support to persons displaced by...’](#)(page 9), 8 August 2024

<sup>5</sup> Acaps, [‘Ethiopia - The pre-crisis situation in Tigray’](#) (page 3), 22 February 2021

<sup>6</sup> OCHA [Ethiopia: Access Map - Tigray Region \(as of 28 February 2021\)](#), 3 June





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## 8.2 Demography

- 8.2.1 The last population census in Ethiopia was conducted in 2007. It put the population of Tigray at 4,314,456 – equivalent to 5.8% of the country’s then 73,918,505 population<sup>7</sup>. The OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) estimated that as of 2022 Tigray’s population was 5,738,996 (or 5.5% of the total population of Ethiopia of around 105 million)<sup>8</sup>. The Atlas of Humanity, a cultural non-profit association<sup>9</sup>, (The Atlas of Humanity, no date) reckoned that Tigrayans ‘constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in Ethiopia after the Oromo, Amhara and Somali.’<sup>10</sup>
- 8.2.2 According to the 13 October 2023 comprehensive investigative findings and legal determinations’ report by International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia on violations and abuses committed in Tigray, Amhara, Afar, and Oromia since 3 November 2020 (13 October 2023 ICHREE report) ‘Prior to the conflict, Tigray region was home to almost 6 million people, the majority of them Ethnic Tigrayan, although the region is also home to other

<sup>7</sup> FDRE, ‘[Summary and statistical report of the 2007 ... Census results](#)’ (page 10), December 2008

<sup>8</sup> OCHA HDX ‘[Ethiopia - Subnational population statistics](#)’, March 2023

<sup>9</sup> Atlas of Humanity, ‘[About](#)’, no date

<sup>10</sup> Atlas of Humanity, ‘[Tigray people, Ethiopia](#)’, no date

ethnic communities, including the Irob and Kunama who live close to the Eritrean border.<sup>11</sup>

8.2.3 The table below based on OCHA HDX data<sup>12</sup> shows Tigray's population disaggregated by zone and sex:

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
North Western	464,703	468,647	933,350
Central	726,577	752,711	1,479,288
Eastern	482,565	528,647	1,011,212
Southern	393,388	405,467	798,855
Western	246,024	230,536	476,560
Southeastern	258,634	263,900	522,534
Mekelle	262,109	255,087	517,196
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,834,000</b>	<b>2,904,996</b>	<b>5,738.996</b>

8.2.4 The February 2021 Acaps report noted that Tigrayans were the predominant ethnic group in the Tigray region (comprising 96.6% of the population). Other ethnic groups include Amhara (1.6%), Irob (0.7%), Afar (0.2%), Oromo (0.2%) Eritrean (0.1%), Kuna and Ari (0.7% each)<sup>13</sup>.

8.2.5 In June 2024, the UK Home Office officials conducted a fact-finding mission to Ethiopia to gather information from a range of sources about the situation of Tigrayans following the cessation of hostilities between the federal government and Tigrayan People's Liberation Front in November 2022 (UKHO FFM 2024). The UK HO FFM 2024 interviewed a representative of the Irob Advocacy Association (UKHO FFM RIAA 2024), a civil society organisation focussing on the Irob ethnic group, who noted that Irob are a minority group in Tigray with an estimated population of 60,000 and that they are mostly Roman catholic<sup>14</sup>. A consultant interviewed by the UKHO FFM 2024 (UKHO FFM consultant 2024) also noted that 'the Irob are estimated to be about 60,000 while the Kunama about 10,000.'<sup>15</sup>

8.2.6 LIFOS, the Swedish Migration Agency, stated in their 2022 Country Information report on Ethiopia, based on various sources: 'The large majority of Tigrayans are settled within the regional borders [of Tigray]. Some though live in other parts of the country. Minorities are found in areas such as Afar, Amhara, and Addis Ababa. Reportedly, the spread of Tigrayans to many Ethiopian cities can partly be explained by the prominent role of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on national level for the last decades.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> HRC '[Comprehensive investigative findings and legal ...](#)' (paragraph 96), 13 October 2023

<sup>12</sup> OCHA HDX '[Ethiopia - Subnational Population Statistics](#)' March 2023

<sup>13</sup> ACAPS, '[Ethiopia - The pre-crisis situation in Tigray](#)', (page 22 Table 9) 22 February 2021

<sup>14</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>15</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), October 2024

<sup>16</sup> LIFOs, '[Etiopien-Tigreaner...'\(version 1.0\)](#)' (page 6), 31 August 2022

## 8.3 Language

- 8.3.1 Acaps report February 2022 noted that the main language of Tigray region is Tigrinya, which according to the 2007 census is spoken by 95% of the region's population<sup>17</sup>.
- 8.3.2 The US CIA World Factbook stated that Tigrigna (Tigrinya) is the official working language of the State of Tigray and is spoken by 5.9% of the Ethiopian population<sup>18</sup>.
- 8.3.3 An article on Tigray by the editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica noted: 'The Tigray [people] speak Tigrinya, a Semitic language related to Ge'ez and to Tigré, the language of a separate people (the Tigre) inhabiting northwestern Eritrea. In Eritrea the Tigray are also sometimes called Tigrinya, although linguists who work in Semitic languages note that -nya is an Amharic suffix meaning "language of..."<sup>19</sup>

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## 9. Political context

### 9.1 Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)

- 9.1.1 A 25 November 2020 article by The Guardian (UK) noted:

'The TPLF was formed in 1975 ...

'By the end of the 1980s, the TPLF was by far the biggest and most effective among the coalition of Ethiopian armed rebel groups that had united under the banner of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to fight the ailing Ethiopian regime. On 28 May 1991, TPLF troops backed by Eritrean forces seized control of Addis Ababa, the capital.

'The fall of the regime left the TPLF's leader, 36-year-old Meles Zenawi, in power and the army and intelligence services dominated by Tigrayans, who moved swiftly to consolidate their control in other sectors ...

'Mekelle thrived, its neat streets and electricity lines testament to the resources channelled to the TPLF's stronghold.

'But there was also repression so remorseless that it worried even the US, which saw Ethiopia as the cornerstone of its security strategy in the region and was prepared to tolerate most of the excesses of the TPLF leadership ...<sup>20</sup>

- 9.1.2 In a September 2021 report for the US Congressional Research Service, Lauren Ploch Blanchard, a specialist in African affairs (CRS report September 2021) explained:

'The EPRDF, a coalition of ethno-regional parties, was dominated by the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), one of the ethnically based rebel groups that united to oust the Derg. Under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the TPLF chairman who led Ethiopia for two decades until his death in 2012, members of his Tigrayan ethnic group (estimated at 7% of the population)

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<sup>17</sup> ACAPS, '[Ethiopia -The Pre-crisis situation in Tigray](#)', 22 February 2021

<sup>18</sup> US CIA World Factbook, '[Ethiopia](#)' (languages), 13 May 2024

<sup>19</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, '[Tigray](#)', last updated 5 June 2024

<sup>20</sup> The Guardian, '[Rise and fall of Ethiopia's TPLF – from rebels to rulers and ...](#)' 20 November 2020

held a disproportionate number of top government and security posts. The TPLF's dominance in the coalition continued under Meles's successor, Hailemariam Desalegn ... and abuses of power by the government generated resentment within Ethiopia's broader population.'<sup>21</sup>

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## 9.2 Weakening of TPLF and rise Abiy Ahmed, 2018

### 9.2.1 The Guardian wrote in its 25 November 2020 report:

'Meles died suddenly in 2012, and his handpicked successor, Hailemariam Desalegn, proved too weak to manage growing tensions.

'Discontent, especially among the two largest ethnic groups – the Oromo and Amhara – threatened the delicate compromise of the 1994 constitution, and representatives of the two communities eventually joined forces to outmanoeuvre the TPLF within the ruling coalition to get [Ahmed] Abiy, who is of mixed Oromo-Amharic parentage, appointed as prime minister in 2018.

'Abiy moved swiftly. Top TPLF officials were sacked from key security posts, generals were arrested on graft charges, and changes were introduced to counter the Tigrayan dominance of the armed forces. Political prisoners were freed from secret prisons, exiled dissidents were welcomed home, cumbersome state enterprises were privatised, and restrictions on the media were eased.'<sup>22</sup>

### 9.2.2 The CRS report September 2021 observed:

'Prime Minister Abiy's election in 2018 came in response to mounting pressure on the EPRDF after more than two years of protests led by the country's largest ethnic group, the Oromo, and by members of the second largest group, the Amhara. These protests were fueled by historic grievances, state violence, and mass arrests. Abiy, the EPRDF's first Oromo leader, committed to opening Ethiopia politically and economically ...

'Condemning what he characterized as divisive ethnic politics, Abiy led a merger of the EPRDF's ethno-regional parties and allied ones into a new Prosperity Party [PP] in late 2019, formally ending the EPRDF coalition. The TPLF objected and refused to join the new party ...

'With Abiy's dissolution of the EPRDF, relations with the TPLF—already strained—frayed further. While many Ethiopians cheered efforts to prosecute former officials and elites for abuses and alleged corruption, the TPLF viewed the anti-corruption prosecutions as excessively targeting Tigrayans and TPLF-linked businesses, and saw the party increasingly cast as a scapegoat for the country's ills. Ethnic Tigrayans, meanwhile, suggest they felt increasingly isolated and unsafe.'<sup>23</sup>

### 9.2.3 The ICHREE report October 2023 observed:

'...Dr Abiy Ahmed took office promising political and economic reform, amid great optimism and with strong international support ...

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<sup>21</sup> CRS, '[Ethiopia's Transition and the Tigray Conflict](#)' (pages 3 and 4), updated 9 September 2021

<sup>22</sup> The Guardian, '[Rise and fall of Ethiopia's TPLF – from rebels to rulers and ...](#)' 20 November 2020

<sup>23</sup> CRS, '[Ethiopia's Transition and the Tigray Conflict](#)' (pages 3 and 4), updated 9 September 2021

'Resentment focused on TPLF. Tigrayans had continued to occupy key leadership positions in federal military and security between 2012 and 2018. After the April 2018 change of Prime Minister, TPLF leaders were widely seen as having been displaced from the centres of power. In a series of controversial moves, the new Prime Minister appointed some of TPLF's strongest critics or espoused their centrist rhetoric ...'<sup>24</sup>

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## 10. Tigray conflict: 4 November 2020 to 2 November 2022

### 10.1 Origins of conflict

#### 10.1.1 The CRS report September 2021 observed:

'In early 2020, citing COVID-19 concerns, Abiy's government postponed the general elections that were scheduled for August 2020 and extended its term—an act that the TPLF dismissed as unconstitutional. The TPLF-led regional government proceeded with Tigray's state council elections in September, despite federal objections and warnings from Abiy and parliament. The election disputes led federal and regional authorities to challenge each other's legitimacy, with the federal government reducing federal budget support to the region and the Tigray regional government declaring that federal authorities lacked legal authority. A subsequent federally ordered change of command for military forces stationed in Tigray became a flashpoint.

'On November 4, 2020, Prime Minister Abiy announced the start of military operations in Tigray, following a TPLF attack on a military base that Abiy asserted had forced the federal government into a military confrontation. His government described the TPLF attack as high treason and termed the military's actions "law enforcement operations." Federal authorities have since accused the TPLF of instigating conflicts along ethnic and religious lines to make Ethiopia "ungovernable," and in May 2021 designated the party a terrorist group. The TPLF denies initiating the conflict, asserting that the government had massed troops on Tigray's borders days beforehand and that Tigray forces moved to take the base after officers defected and warned of a pending attack. The TPLF accused Abiy of starting a war "to consolidate his personal power."<sup>25</sup>

#### 10.1.2 The September 2023 Danish Immigration Service report on the security and human rights situation in Ethiopia since February 2022 which draws on a variety of sources (DIS report September 2023), observed that during 2021, the conflict spilled over into the regions of Amhara and Afar. According to the report in December 2021 Tigrayan forces withdrew from Amhara and Afar but fighting continued in areas bordering Tigray, especially in Afar<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> HRC, '[Comprehensive investigative findings and legal ...](#)' (paragraphs 66 to 67), 13 October 2023

<sup>25</sup> CRS, '[Ethiopia's transition and the Tigray Conflict](#)' (page 5), 8 September 2021

<sup>26</sup> DIS, '[Ethiopia: An update on the security and human rights ...](#)' (page 8), September 2022

## 10.2 Armed groups

- 10.2.1 The CRS report September 2021 noted that the conflict escalated into a civil war, featuring a complex array of armed groups. On one side were forces aligned with the federal government, ‘... including the militaries of Ethiopia and Eritrea, paramilitary forces from Ethiopia’s regional states, and informal militia ...’ against ‘... an ethnic insurgent group led by a former head of Ethiopia’s military, consisting of ex-soldiers, Tigray regional security forces, militias, and civilian recruits.’<sup>27</sup>
- 10.2.2 A November 2021 report by the UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR report November 2021) noted:  
‘On 3 November 2020, the Tigray Special Forces (TSF) and allied militia attacked the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) and took control of the bases and the weaponry. On 4 November 2020, the federal government announced a military operation against the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and its forces. The ENDF, the Amhara Special Forces (ASF) and allied militia, and the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) accordingly started a military offensive against the TSF and allied militia in Tigray.’<sup>28</sup>
- 10.2.3 According to the 13 October 2023 ICHREE report October 2023, the conflict involved various armed groups including the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF), Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF), and various Ethiopian Special Forces, notably from the Amhara and Afar regions. The Tigray fighters comprised former ENDF members, Tigray Special Forces, and regional police, as well as informal militias, oppose these government forces. The Tigray fighters, also known as the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF), were aligned with the TPLF and the Tigray regional authorities and at times formed alliances with Agew and Oromo armed groups<sup>29</sup>.

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## 10.3 State of emergency: arrest and detention

- 10.3.1 The DIS report September 2023 observed:  
‘... With the Tigrayan forces and their allies, making operational gains in Afar and Amhara and advancing south towards the capital Addis Ababa [in 2021], the federal government announced a state of emergency in November 2021. The state of emergency authorised the government security forces to take various repressive measures of control against its citizens, such as restricting their rights to freedom of movement, expression and assembly, and to carry out arbitrary and unlawful detentions. The arrests and human rights violations were ethnically motivated, targeting ethnic Tigrayans.’<sup>30</sup>
- 10.3.2 On 26 January 2022 Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), the state-owned national wire news centre<sup>31</sup> reported the end of the state of emergency.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> CRS, ‘[Ethiopia’s transition and the Tigray conflict](#)’ (Summary), 8 September 2021

<sup>28</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Tigray conflict: Report calls for accountability for violations and ...](#)’, 3 November 2021

<sup>29</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings ...](#)’ (paragraphs 87, 91, 93 to 94), 13 October 2023

<sup>30</sup> DIS, ‘[Ethiopia: An update on the security and human rights ...](#)’, (pages 8 to 9), September 2022

<sup>31</sup> ENA, ‘[About us](#)’ no date

<sup>32</sup> ENA, ‘[Council of ministers submits proposal that terminates state of emergency](#)’, 26 January 2022

## 10.4 Treatment of TPLF

- 10.4.1 On 17 November 2020, the Ethiopian Monitor, the website of the privately owned English language Addis Ababa-based newspaper, the Daily Monitor<sup>33</sup>, reported: ‘The Federal Attorney General Office has decided to freeze the bank accounts of 34 Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) affiliated enterprises over their alleged involvement in various conflicts in Ethiopia.’ The report added: ‘Last week, the Federal Police have banned at least 14 private security companies which, they said, were working plotting to create chaos in various parts of the country collaboration with Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF).’<sup>34</sup>
- 10.4.2 On 31 May 2021, ENA reported:
- ‘The Federal Peace and Security Joint Task Force has issued today an order freezing the assets of members and leaders of the terrorist TPLF group to prevent the use of financial facilities for their terrorism mission in a way harmful to the national security ...
- ‘These are individuals who have been working with the terrorist TPLF group in a move to create havoc and dismantle the country, had amassed the nation’s wealth in Addis Ababa and other parts of the country disregarding the responsibility bestowed on them to faithfully work for the interest of the nation ...’<sup>35</sup>
- 10.4.3 On 5 October 2023, Africa Report, a Paris-based English language quarterly magazine<sup>36</sup>, stated that TPLF’s assets remain frozen<sup>37</sup>.
- 10.4.4 On 31 May 2024 the Addis Standard, a tri-lingual independent news publication,<sup>38</sup> reported that in January 2021, the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) revoked the TPLF's legal registration as a political party, citing its involvement in ‘armed violence against the government.’ The board also barred TPLF officials from acting on behalf of the party and requested the Federal Attorney General’s office to investigate the TPLF's assets, with plans to use any remaining funds for civic and voter education programs after settling the party's debts<sup>39</sup>.
- 10.4.5 A 7 May 2021 statement by the Ethiopian Embassy in the UK stated that TPLF was designated a terrorist organization by the Ethiopian government. In a 1 May 2021 statement, the Office of the Prime Minister cited the group as responsible for various attacks across the country, asserting that their actions meet the legal definition of terrorism as outlined in Proclamation No 1176/2020. On 5 May 2021, the Ethiopian parliament unanimously approved this designation<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> BBC-Monitoring, [Media Guide: Ethiopia](#), 18 September 2023

<sup>34</sup> Ethiopia Monitor, ‘[Govt freezes bank account of 34 TPLF-affiliated enterprises](#)’, 17 November 2020

<sup>35</sup> ENA, ‘[Court freezes assets of TPLF leaders, members](#)’, 31 May 2021

<sup>36</sup> The Africa Report, ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>37</sup> The Africa Report ‘[Ethiopia: Violent suppression of Tigray protests ...](#)’, 5 October 2023

<sup>38</sup> Addis Standard, ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>39</sup> Addis Standard, ‘[News: Council of Ministers endorses draft bill to reintegrate ...](#)’, 31 May 2024

<sup>40</sup> FDRE Embassy (UK), ‘[TPLF and Shene designated as terrorist organisations](#)’, 7 May 2021

## 10.5 Human rights abuses by all parties

10.5.1 A November 2021 joint investigation report into alleged human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the conflict in Tigray by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), an independent federal state body established as a national human rights institution with a mandate to promote and protect human rights,<sup>41</sup> and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (EHRC/OHCHR report November 2021) concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe the following major violations and abuses occurred in the context of the conflict:

- attack on civilians and civilian objects
- unlawful killings and extra-judicial executions
- torture and other forms of ill-treatment
- arbitrary detentions
- abduction and enforced disappearances
- sexual and gender-based violence
- forced displacement of the civilian population
- restrictions on freedom of movement
- restriction on freedom of expression and access to information
- pillage
- looting and destruction of property
- denial of access to humanitarian relief<sup>42</sup>.

10.5.2 A February 2023 LIFOs report noted:

‘... Tigrayans around the country are reported to have been targeted in different ways, and to varying degrees by the government and its allies ...

‘Information about the government side's most serious abuses against the ethnic group, such as massacres, systematic sexual violence, and the blockade of humanitarian aid and other necessities, has so far mainly come from the Tigray region, although conflict areas outside Tigray have also been included in the reporting.

‘Outside Tigray, reporting on state measures against Tigrayans has so far focused on arrests and detentions, at least periodically with ethnic overtones, as well as other discriminatory measures that fall into what is sometimes referred to as ethnic profiling (various forms of economic sanctions, travel obstacles etc.). The state response is reported to have taken place in a media climate colored by incitement against the Tigranian ethnic group.’<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> EHCR, ‘[About EHRC](#)’ no date

<sup>42</sup> EHRC/OHCHR, ‘[Joint investigation into alleged violations ...](#)’ (pages 1 to 5) 3 November 2021

<sup>43</sup> Lifos, [Ethiopia. Tigrayans and their situation outside Tigray](#) (page 8 to 9), February 2023



- 10.5.3 The 13 October 2023 ICHREE report noted that the conflict was characterized by widespread violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law by all parties including: mass killings of civilians<sup>44</sup>, arbitrary arrests<sup>45</sup>, incitement to violence and discrimination<sup>46</sup>, attacks on civilian infrastructure<sup>47</sup>, extra-judicial killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence<sup>48</sup> and denial of humanitarian access<sup>49</sup>.
- 10.5.4 With respect to the TDF, 13 October 2023 ICHREE report noted: ‘During the conflict, Tigray forces and their allied militias committed wide-ranging violations against civilians in Amhara region. These included, but were not limited to extrajudicial killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence, looting and the destruction of property...’<sup>50</sup> The same source noted with respect to Afar: ‘[T]he Commission confirmed violations and abuses by Tigray forces and their allied militias, including attacks on civilians, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and looting and destruction of property.’<sup>51</sup>
- 10.5.5 In June 2024, New Lines Institute, a think tank ‘focusing on US foreign policy and global geopolitics’<sup>52</sup>, produced a summary report of a full report, entitled ‘Genocide in Tigray: Serious breaches of international law in the Tigray conflict, Ethiopia, and paths to accountability’, which is based on analysis of various secondary sources and interviews’ (New Lines Institute Summary report 2024). It observed:

‘There is a reasonable basis to believe that ... ENDF, ASF, and EDF members carried out at least four acts constituting the crime of genocide: killing Tigrayans, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions of life upon Tigrayans calculated to bring about their destruction, and imposing measures intended to prevent births among Tigrayans ... Members of all three groups also allegedly caused serious bodily and mental harm to numerous Tigrayans, including by means of torture, rape, and other forms of sexual violence, and mutilation. Alleged conduct which may potentially have caused exclusive mental harm to the required standard include the commission of the above-noted acts in front of family members, and interference in traditional burial practices ...’<sup>53</sup>

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## 10.6 Civilian deaths

- 10.6.1 The New Lines Institute Summary report 2024 stated: ‘While the total number of Tigrayan fatalities is impossible to calculate on the evidence available so far, conservative estimates would certainly be in the tens of thousands. Of the violent crimes, men and boys were disproportionately

<sup>44</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings ...](#)’ (paragraphs 98 to 99, 275), 13 October 2023

<sup>45</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings and ...](#)’ (paragraphs 107 to 108), 13 October 2023

<sup>46</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings and ...](#)’ (paragraphs 434 to 446), 13 October 2023

<sup>47</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings ...](#)’ (paragraphs 216 to 220), 13 October 2023

<sup>48</sup> | HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings and ...](#)’ (paragraphs 134 to 150), 13 October 2023

<sup>49</sup> HRC, [Comprehensive investigative findings...](#)’ (paragraphs 212 to 214, 221) 13 October 2023

<sup>50</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings...](#)’ (paragraph 274), 13 October 2023

<sup>51</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings...](#)’ (paragraph 315), 13 October 2023

<sup>52</sup> New Lines Institute, ‘[About](#)’, no date

<sup>53</sup> NLI, ‘[Summary: Genocide in Tigray: Serious breaches of ...](#)’ (pages 20 to 21), 3 June 2024

targeted for homicide crimes ... Members of the ENDF, ASF, and EDF allegedly killed numerous Tigrayans unlawfully ...<sup>54</sup>

- 10.6.2 In May 2024 the Belgium Office for the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons country of origin information unit (Cedoca) published a report, based on various sources, on the security situation in Tigray between the signing of the CoHA and March 2024 (Cedoca COI report May 2024). It noted:

‘... The number of people killed in the war is unknown. As of February 2023, ACLED had recorded 9,861 reported fatalities in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions from 1 November 2020 to 31 January 2023. However, the AU envoy Olusegun Obasanjo noted in an interview with the Financial Times that as many as 600,000 people might have died during the conflict in northern Ethiopia. According to a study led by Professor Jan Nyssen of the University of Ghent, estimates of civilian fatalities in the period from November 2020 to November 2022 range from 300,000 to 800,000, including indirect deaths (people dying because of a lack of healthcare, malnutrition, etc.):

“Our calculations of the total number of civilian deaths in Tigray, updated up to 31 December 2022, lead to an average estimate of 518k civilian victims in Tigray. The lowest estimate we could realistically make is 311k, and at the upper end a scary 808k. Of these, approx. 10% would be due to massacres, bomb impacts and other killings, 30% due to the total collapse of the healthcare system, and 60% to famine.”<sup>55</sup>

- 10.6.3 ACLED, a US-based non-profit organization specializing in ‘disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping collects information on the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world<sup>56</sup> recorded 5,273 fatalities from organised violence – battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians – in Tigray between 4 November 2020 and 16 November 2022<sup>57</sup>.

- 10.6.4 The ACLED fatalities figures should be taken as estimates and not as the actual fatality counts. ACLED noted:

‘ACLED only records estimated fatalities when reported by the source material. When and where possible, ACLED researchers seek out information to triangulate the fatality numbers reported by sources, but ACLED does not independently verify reported fatality estimates. Additionally, ACLED is a living dataset, so all fatality figures are revised and corrected — upward or downward — if new or better information becomes available (which, in some cases, can be months or years after an event has taken place). Fatality data are typically the most biased, and least accurate, component of conflict reporting. They are particularly prone to manipulation by armed groups, and occasionally the media, which may overstate or underreport fatalities for political purposes. These figures should therefore

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<sup>54</sup> NLI, ‘[Summary: Genocide in Tigray: Serious breaches of international ...](#)’ (page 20), 3 June 2024

<sup>55</sup> Cedoca, ‘[COI focus Ethiopia: Security situation in Tigray](#)’ (pages 7 to 8), 16 May 2024

<sup>56</sup> ACLED, ‘[About ACLED](#)’, no date

<sup>57</sup> ACLED, ‘[Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project Codebook](#)’ (pages 22 to 23), 2023

be understood as indicative estimates of reported fatalities, rather than definitive fatality counts.<sup>58</sup>

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## 11. Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), November 2022

11.1.1 A November 2022 report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), an independent organisation working to prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world,<sup>59</sup>(ICG report November 2022) observed:

‘On 2 November [2022], Ethiopia’s federal government and leaders of the country’s northern Tigray region agreed to end two years of devastating war. The welcome deal, brokered by the African Union (AU) in the South African capital Pretoria, was a triumph for Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, as Tigray’s embattled leaders assented to disarm their forces and restore federal authority in the region. In exchange, the Ethiopian military, and Eritrean troops who had been fighting alongside federal forces, halted their advance toward Tigray’s capital, Mekelle, and Addis Ababa said it would end its de facto siege of the region. In follow-up talks, Tigray authorities secured an additional pledge that Eritrean forces would withdraw.’<sup>60</sup>

11.1.2 A 2 December 2022 press release by Ethiopian Embassy, London, UK, stated: ‘... the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) signed a peace agreement in South Africa on the 2nd of November 2022, ending the two-year-long conflict in northern Ethiopia. This was followed by a declaration of senior commanders of the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF on the modalities for the implementation of the agreement on 12 November 2022.’<sup>61</sup>

11.1.3 The website of the Ethiopian Embassy, London, UK, set out the objectives of the peace agreement:

1. ‘Reach an immediate permanent cessation of hostilities with a view of silencing the guns, and creating a conducive environment for laying the foundation for sustainable peace;
2. ‘Restore the constitutional order disrupted due to the conflict in the Tigray Region;
3. ‘Reject violence as a method of resolving political differences;
4. ‘Guarantee security for all;
5. ‘Ensure a lasting settlement for all;
6. ‘Provide a framework for addressing matters arising out of the conflict;
7. ‘Provide a framework to ensure accountability for matters arising out of the conflict;
8. ‘Foster reconciliation and rehabilitation of social bonds;
9. ‘Facilitate economic recovery and reconstruction;

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<sup>58</sup> ACLED, ‘[Armed Conflict Location & Event Data \(ACLED\) Codebook](#)’ updated 3 October 2024

<sup>59</sup> ICG, ‘[Who we are](#)’, no date

<sup>60</sup> ICG, ‘[Turning the Pretoria deal into lasting peace in Ethiopia](#)’, 23 November 2022

<sup>61</sup> Embassy of Ethiopia, UK, ‘[The gov’t of Ethiopia is ensuring effective ...](#)’, 2 December 2022

10. 'Commit to addressing the underlying political differences;
11. 'Provide a framework for monitoring and verification of the implementation of the agreement.'<sup>62</sup>

11.1.4 A November 2023 report by HRW observed:

'The November 2022 agreement outlines key measures to protect civilians, resume basic services, provide for unhindered humanitarian assistance, enable internally displaced people to return to their original areas, and to carry out the Ethiopian government's commitment to create a transitional justice policy aimed at "accountability, truth, redress, reconciliation, and healing." It lacks details on criminal accountability for crimes committed, notably on the types of mechanisms that could investigate alleged crimes for future prosecution.'<sup>63</sup>

11.1.5 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted that that CoHA had 3 pillars: 'the restoration of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and unrestricted humanitarian support.' However, the consultant went on to note, 'none of these pillars have been fully implemented, leading to a continued state of unrest and dissatisfaction among the Tigrayan people ... The consultant concluded that the outcome of the Pretoria Agreement could be rated at a mere 15 to 20%, indicating a largely unfulfilled and ineffective implementation of its core objectives.'<sup>64</sup>

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## 12. Political developments post CoHA

### 12.1 Formation of Tigrayan Interim Regional Administration (TIRA)

12.1.1 The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) observed in its March 2023 Briefing Notes:

'A conference was held in Mekelle, the capital of the Ethiopian regional state of Tigray, from 01.03.23 to 04.03.23 to form an Interim Regional Administration (IRA) for Tigray. This was an essential part of the November 2022 agreement concluded between the Ethiopian central government and the Tigray regional government, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), on the "permanent cessation of hostilities" ... General Tadesse Worede Tesfay, commander of the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) and chair of the conference, said the participants included members of the TPLF, TDF, civil society organisations and opposition parties. It was decided that the interim government will rule for between six months and one year and that within this period an election will be held under the auspices of the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) ... The TPLF remains the dominant force, which has been criticised by the members of the opposition in Tigray.'<sup>65</sup>

12.1.2 On 23 March 2023, Reuters reported:

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<sup>62</sup> Embassy of Ethiopia, UK, '[The peace agreement ending the conflict in...](#)', 10 November 2022

<sup>63</sup> HRW, '[Ethiopia: Atrocities mar ceasefire anniversary](#)', 2 November 2023

<sup>64</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), October 2024

<sup>65</sup> BAMF, '[Briefing Notes](#)', Ethiopia, 6 March 2023

'Ethiopia has established an interim administration for the country's war-ravaged northern Tigray region, the prime minister's office said on Thursday, a key step in the implementation of a peace agreement.

'As had been expected, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appointed Getachew Reda, the spokesman of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) ... as the head of the interim administration ...

"The head of administration has been entrusted with the responsibility of leading and coordinating the executive body of the region," the prime minister's office said in a statement.

'Getachew must set up "an inclusive administration that ensures the representation of various political forces operating in the region," the statement said...'<sup>66</sup>

12.1.3 On 6 April 2023, The East African, a biweekly newspaper published in Kenya by the Nation Media Group, an independent media house in East and Central Africa,<sup>67</sup> reported:

'The newly appointed president of Tigray's interim administration Getachew Reda on Wednesday unveiled a new cabinet which will lead the political transition in the region ...

'Tigray government sources confirmed that the new cabinet comprises of 27 members including two military commanders who led the Tigray forces in the two-year-long war against the Ethiopian national army and the allied Eritrean soldiers.

'The two senior army leaders — Gen Tsadkan Gebretensae and Lt Gen Tadesse Werede — will join Getachew as the two vice presidents of the Tigray region.

'... The new cabinet is dominated by TPLF members but includes two members of a Tigrayan opposition party, National Congress of Great Tigray (Baytona).'<sup>68</sup>

12.1.4 In January 2024 the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a report on Ethiopia based on various sources (GoN COI report January 2024). It noted with respect to the composition of TIRA: 'The interim government consisted [of]... 49% of parties other than the TPLF. None of the Tigrayan political parties that had sided with the federal government during the conflict had a seat in the interim government.'<sup>69</sup> In an interview with the HO FFT in June 2024, a representative of Tigrayan Independent Party (UKHO FFM RTIP 2024) stated: 'The TIRA is 51% TPLF, the rest are not politicians – academics, civil society, and so on, but are appointed or financed by TPLF. So, they indirectly support the TPLF.'<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Reuters, [Ethiopia establishes Tigray interim administration as part of peace plan](#), 23 March 2023

<sup>67</sup> The East African, '[Who we are](#)' no date

<sup>68</sup> The East African, '[Tigray leader Getachew names new cabinet as Ethiopia peace ...](#)', 6 April 2023

<sup>69</sup> GoN, '[General country of origin information report on Ethiopia](#)' (pages 9 to 10), 31 January 2024

<sup>70</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview TPPs), 2024

## 12.2 TPLF factional fighting

### 12.2.1 The Cedoca report May 2024 noted:

'The TIRA is involved in a simmering power struggle with the TPLF. The inclusion of other stakeholders in the TIRA, including the TDF and academics, was a compromise which some TPLF leaders saw as an attempt to diminish the party's influence in Tigray, according to journalist Abel Tesfaye. Getachew stirred further resentment when he voiced his intention to separate party affairs from the government by taking measures such as banning the TPLF from using government funds to pay its personnel ... This has led to overt challenging of the authority of the TIRA, with reports indicating that some regional government entities are disregarding the administration's orders. In October and December 2023, the TIRA ousted a number of key officials.

'The TIRA also faces resistance from opposition parties in Tigray. According to representatives from opposition parties Cedoca spoke to in Mekelle in November 2023, the TDF initially represented a popular struggle without party affiliation. However, when the TDF entered Mekelle in June 2021, the TPLF took the lead. Various groups who played their part during the war expected the creation of an inclusive political environment in the war's aftermath. This did not materialize as many had wished, the opposition demanding to play a more decisive role in the TIRA.

'Finally, frequent demonstrations in Mekelle are putting pressure on the TIRA to solve issues of pension payments, displacement, and medical care for former TDF soldiers.'<sup>71</sup>

### 12.2.2 On 30 July 2024 Addis Standard reported:

'The President of Tigray Interim Administration (TIA) and deputy leader of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) Getachew Reda, has issued a scathing indictment of the leadership of the TPLF, accusing them of widespread corruption, mismanagement, and jeopardizing the plans of the IA and regional security.

'In an extensive interview with Dimtsi Weyane, TPLF affiliated regional outlet, Getachew detailed a complex web of challenges facing Tigray, including organized mineral theft, weapons smuggling, land grabbing, kidnapping and human trafficking compounded by rampant insecurity, and internal political divisions.

'He described the region as being in "a state of crisis", with the TPLF leadership unwilling to take action, prioritizing personal interests over the welfare of the Tigrayan people.

'Getachew openly admitted a breakdown in governance in the region due to lack of cooperation between the interim administration, security forces, and the judiciary, with "internal divisions within the TPLF leadership further exacerbating the crisis."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Cedoca, '[Ethiopia: Security situation in Tigray](#)' (pages 10 to 11), 16 May 2024

<sup>72</sup> Addis Standard, '[Interim president depicts Tigray's state of crisis, finger points to ...](#)', 30 July 2024

12.2.3 A 12 August 2024 Addis Standard Op-ed by Weldeslassie Hailai Abera, an independent researcher affiliated with the University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa based on research and analysis that drew on diverse sources and methods, commented:

‘Our research reveals a deep and potentially irreconcilable divide within the TPLF, primarily between two major factions:

‘The Debretsion Faction:

‘This hardline faction, led by Debretsion Gebremichael (PhD), chairperson of the party, represents the TPLF’s old guard. It comprises veterans who still adhere to the principles of revolutionary democracy and the developmental state model. Our findings indicate that this group is effectively seeking power realignment within Tigray and among regional actors...

‘Interviews with TPLF members aligned with this faction reveal a deep-seated belief that only by maintaining tight control over Tigray’s political structures can they protect TPLF interests. However, this stance has put them at odds with many Tigrayans prioritizing peace and reconstruction over political dominance.

‘The Getachew Reda Faction:

‘Getachew Reda leads this faction and represents a more pragmatic and conciliatory approach. Our review shows that this group fundamentally accepts the Pretoria Agreement despite its imperfections and seeks to maintain peace at almost any cost ...

‘Various public media interviews with members of this faction reveal a pragmatic understanding of the TPLF’s diminished position and the urgent needs of the Tigrayan people. They argue that the path to relevance addresses immediate humanitarian concerns rather than pursuing political goals.

‘Yet, the Getachew Reda faction has faced criticism for its shortcomings in providing effective leadership during this critical transition, notably its failure to establish its dominance and guarantee local security, casting doubts over the faction’s ability to provide the bold, visionary leadership required to guide Tigray through this tumultuous period.’<sup>73</sup>

12.2.4 According to the same source ‘The power struggle between the Debretsion and Getachew Reda factions creates a volatile political environment that could quickly reignite conflict. This instability threatens to delay crucial reconstruction efforts and complicate negotiations with the federal government.’<sup>74</sup>

12.2.5 On 17 August Borkena.com reported:

‘The TPLF on Saturday announced that it has removed central committee and Audit commission members who did not attend the 14th Congress. They can only continue as ordinary members from now on, according to the TPLF statement.

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<sup>73</sup> Addis Standard, [‘Op-ed: Echoes of Mekelle: TPLF factions and the quest for...’](#) 12 August 2024

<sup>74</sup> Addis Standard, [‘Op-ed: Echoes of Mekelle: TPLF factions and the quest for...’](#) 12 August 2024

‘Getachew Reda, TPLF’s Deputy Chairman and President of Tigray region Interim administration, is among the seventeen party officials that the TPLF dismissed.

‘The party said that they can no longer undertake the party’s political work anywhere without the party’s institutional practice and law. In a statement it released on Saturday, the TPLF said the termination of the central committee members and audition commission was in accordance with the party rule. It said that they were elected during the 13th congress and that their terms of service had ended.

Well before the TPLF started the party congress, Getachew Reda and members of the audit commission announced they will not take part in the congress on grounds that the way it is organized violates the party’s rule ...

‘Getachew Reda alleges that those who are undertaking the congress “want to control the Regional Interim Administration’s power and if they can’t do that to trigger conflict,” as reported by VOA Amharic service.’<sup>75</sup>

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### 12.3 Relations between TIRA and the federal government

#### 12.3.1 UKHO FFM RTIP 2024 noted that:

‘There are 2 TPLFs: “original” and “fake”. The original TPLF opposes Prime Minister Abiy and is marginalised by the [federal government] FG. It has its own forces. The “fake” TPLF supports and was created by Abiy and forms the TIRA. The original TPLF view TIRA as “hybrid Prosperity Party (PP)”. There is fear and mistrust within the TPLF which may cause another conflict. RTIP said it is hard to predict the FG’s attitude towards TPLF, it is like a mafia style government ... RTIP added that politically trust is slowly building between the FG and TIRA but on the ground life for individuals has not changed.’<sup>76</sup>

#### 12.3.2 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted:

‘The TPLF’s hardline faction see Getachew Reda, TIRA’s interim leader, as a representative of Prime Minister Abiy. Since the signing of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement new political alliances have developed. Fano (Amhara militia) are no longer enemies of the TPLF, they see common interest in fighting the FG. The FFM team questioned such an alliance given Fano forces were occupying West Tigray. RIAA claimed that Eritrea’s president, Isaias Afwerki is the godfather of the Fano, and the Fano is not in West Tigray (also known as Welkait). The Fano and the Welkait Committee – groups occupying West Tigray - are different. While West Tigray is important to the Tigrayan people, the TPLF is interested in power and not Welkait, hence its alliance with the Fano.’<sup>77</sup>

#### 12.3.3 In an interview with the UK HO FFM in June 2024 representatives of a human rights organisation (UKHO FFM RHRO 2024) stated: ‘The relationship between the FG and TIRA is complex and difficult to understand.

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<sup>75</sup> Borkena.com, ‘[TPLF Congress dismisses central committee, audit committee ...](#)’ 17 August 2024

<sup>76</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs ), 2024

<sup>77</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RIAA), 2024



FG and TIRA do appear to be trying to work together. The TPLF (which dominates the TIRA) has different wings with different attitudes towards the FG. There is “warmongering” between the TIRA and the Amhara. The FG may want the TIRA to fight the Fano. People are tired – caught between the FG and the TPLF.’<sup>78</sup>

12.3.4 On 10 February 2024, Borkena.com, an online platform that share news and informed opinion about Ethiopian news<sup>79</sup> reported that Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and TPLF chairman Debretsion Gebremichael met for the first time since the end of the war. The meeting, which included senior government members, focused on post-conflict construction and evaluating the progress of the Interim Regional Administration in Tigray<sup>80</sup>.

12.3.5 On 13 April 2024, Addis Standard reported via a post on X that senior representatives from Ethiopia’s ruling Prosperity Party (PP) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) met in Addis Ababa as part of ongoing dialogue between the two parties. They agreed on principles for future discussions and began setting the agenda for subsequent meetings. This was the second party-to-party consultation, following the first meeting on 2 April in Mekelle, Tigray’s capital. These talks are part of the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) aimed at addressing the political causes of the two-year conflict in Tigray<sup>81</sup>. On 15 May 2024, Addis Standard reported that the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) held their third round of party-to-party political dialogue in Mekelle<sup>82</sup>.

12.3.6 In an interview with the UK HO FFM in June 2024 an expert (UKHO FFM expert 2024) noted:

‘The federal government’s (FG) actions were not predictable. While the official narrative was to promote good relations between the FG and the TIRA/Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), non-government commentators – which were informal mouthpieces of the government such as representatives of National Movement of Amhara (NAMA) that have joined the Prosperity Party (PP) in government – were providing a different narrative, suggesting that the TPLF should be split into 2: the hardliners should be separated and arrested while absorbing the moderates into the PP – which is a potential for another round of conflict. TPLF’s refusal to join the PP was one of the reasons for the conflicting relations between PP and TPLF before the start of the war in 2020. Seyoum Teshome, government mouthpiece, often airs on his online show such narratives and the above statements are directly attributable to him.’<sup>83</sup>

12.3.7 The UKHO FFM 2024 interviewed British embassy officials (UKHO FFM BEOs 2024) who noted that ‘... the TPLF remains a visible symbol of opposition to Prime Minister Abiy/FG, but the FG may want Tigrayan

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<sup>78</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>79</sup> Borkena.com, [About Borkena](#), 14 January 2013

<sup>80</sup> Borkena, ‘[Tigray’s performance evaluation in Addis Ababa as Abiy meets ...](#)’, 10 February 2024

<sup>81</sup> Addis Standard, ‘[@addisstandard](#)’, 13 April 2024

<sup>82</sup> Addis Standard, ‘[Prosperity Party, TPLF convened for the third round of peace ...](#)’ 15 May 2024

<sup>83</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayans](#)’ (Interview with expert), 2024

assistance and support in addressing conflicts in Amhara or for dealing with the Eritreans (who continue to occupy parts of the border areas in Tigray).<sup>84</sup>

12.3.8 Officials of a Western Embassy interviewed by the UK HO FFM in June 2024 (UKHO FFM OWE 2024) noted, ‘the TIRA does not have a great relationship with the federal government (FG).’<sup>85</sup>

12.3.9 In an interview with the UK HO FFM in June 2024, an associate professor at Addis Ababa University (UKHO FFM APAAU 2024) noted: ‘Prosperity Party (PP) politicians are interacting with members of TPLF informally. This may not be in public but there is dialogue between them which is a shift. However, there is pressure on both sides to justify the war (November 2020 to November 2022) and now normalisation (peace) from individuals’ constituencies and the media.’<sup>86</sup>

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## 12.4 Tigrayan representation in the federal government

12.4.1 The UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted:

‘Before the war, Tigray had 38 (out of 547) seats in the Ethiopian parliament but the TPLF recalled them.

‘RIAA noted that in ministerial (executive body) offices, there are Tigrayans who are members of the ruling Prosperity Party. RIAA noted there was a defence minister, Abraham Belay, who was from Tigray until recently. However, in the lawmaking bodies (House of People's Representatives and Federation House), there are no Tigrayans. Security area positions have also not been taken by Tigrayans.

‘The [federal government] FG security forces are dominated by the Oromo with some Amhara. Tigrayans are being asked back but have not taken up their positions yet.’<sup>87</sup>

12.4.2 In June 2024 the UKHO FFM interviewed 4 civil society activists (UKHO FFM CSA 2024). CSA1 noted that ‘Tigrayan representation in government (executive) and parliament is not permitted. Also, Tigrayans are not in government bodies. CSA3 added: Tigrayans did not have a seat in parliament and there is just one person in parliament who speaks Tigrinya and claims to be from Tigray but Tigrayans do not accept him as a true Tigrayan. At ministerial level, the judiciary and military, there is no Tigrayan representation.’<sup>88</sup>

12.4.3 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted that:

‘There is no representation of Tigrayans in the military and police nor in any federal agencies including the parliament. There are Tigrayans in the private sector including academia. Tigrayans do not feel confident to be part of Ethiopia’s political system and government.

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<sup>84</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayans](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>85</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayans](#)’ (Interview with OWE), 2024

<sup>86</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with APAAU), 2024

<sup>87</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>88</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with CSAs), 2024

‘Since 2021, Tigrayans have had no representation in the FG, including in parliament, the police, and cabinet. This exclusion has left a significant gap in the political landscape of the country. During the war, almost all Tigrayan elites were detained and imprisoned, creating a void in leadership and representation. While some Tigrayan workers, such as university employees, have returned to their positions, the majority still feel like second-class citizens due to their lack of political representation and influence.

‘The absence of Tigrayan representation in the FG for 5 years poses a serious threat to Ethiopian unity. The lack of inclusion undermines the principles of federalism and equal representation, fostering a sense of alienation and disenfranchisement among Tigrayans. This marginalization can exacerbate ethnic tensions and contribute to a growing divide between Tigray and the central government. The prolonged exclusion of Tigrayans from the political process not only impacts their community but also destabilizes the broader political framework of Ethiopia. Tigrayan politicians may leverage this period of non-representation to argue for secession or greater autonomy, citing the years of exclusion and lack of representation as a basis for their demands. The prolonged absence from the federal government strengthens their case for a separate political trajectory, challenging the notion of a unified Ethiopia.’<sup>89</sup>

12.4.4 The UKHO FFM RTP 2024 noted: ‘Tigrayans are not represented in the FG - not represented in any of the political and legal institutions.’<sup>90</sup>

12.4.5 UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted: ‘there is a significant decrease in the number of Tigrayans in the police and security services since the war. APAAU added that there are still Tigrayans in the police and military, but they aren’t many. These are the people who decided not to join the TPLF during the war. APAAU noted that Tigrayans had not yet returned to other sectors, including parliament.’<sup>91</sup>

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## 12.5 TPLF de-proscribed as a terrorist organisation and release of prisoners

12.5.1 The 27 March 2023 BAMF Briefing Notes stated:

‘The Ethiopian parliament removed the TPLF from the country's official list of terrorist groups on 23.03.23, fulfilling one of the key points of the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) agreement ... Charges against 62 former and current TPLF officials for terrorist offences - including TPLF Chairman Debretsion Gebremichael and TPLF spokesperson Getachew Reda - are also expected to be dropped. At the same time, the Ethiopian government approved Getachew's appointment as president of the Tigray region's interim administration, in line with a decision by the TPLF Central Committee on 17.03.23 ...’<sup>92</sup>

12.5.2 On 30 March 2023, the Addis Standard, reported: ‘Following the decision by the Ministry of Justice earlier today to terminate criminal charges against

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<sup>89</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>90</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>91</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with APAAU), 2024

<sup>92</sup> BAMF, ‘[Briefing Notes](#)’ (Ethiopia), 27 March 2023

former top civilian and military leaders who were members of the TPLF, three senior TPLF officials who held senior positions in the federal government have been released from jail nearly two years after their arrests.’ Those released were TPLF executive members Keria Ibrahim, Dr Abraham Tekeste and Dr Addis Alem Balema<sup>93</sup>.

- 12.5.3 The 5 April 2023 report by Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO), an ACLED project launched in 2021 to serve as a dedicated platform for governments, media, civil society, and the public to access reliable information and analysis about political violence and unrest across the country<sup>94</sup>, noted that the federal government’s decision to remove the TPLF from the list of terrorist organizations and to withdraw criminal charges against TPLF civil and military leaders despite opposition from some members of the opposition and Prosperity Party were ‘major steps toward normalizing the relationship between the federal government and the TPLF.’<sup>95</sup>
- 12.5.4 Freedom House report covering events in 2023 noted that the removal of the TPLF from a list of terrorist groups eased pressure on Tigrayans<sup>96</sup>.
- 12.5.5 The Addis Standard reported in January 2024 Tadesse Werede, vice-president of TIRA, stated that 220 Tigrayan ex-soldiers were in detention following a conviction in a military court. However, on 10 September 2024, that the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) announced that it had pardoned 178 former army members of Tigrayan origin who were convicted by military courts, with some facing death or lengthy sentences. They were arrested after the Tigray war began, with those charged with treason receiving death sentences and others charged with ‘direct links’ with the TPLF receiving prison sentences ranging from 8 to 18 years.<sup>97</sup>

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## 12.6 TPLF recognised as a political party, June 2024

### 12.6.1 Citing sources, the GoN COI Report 2024 observed:

‘In June 2023, the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) rejected the request from the TPLF to be registered as a political party. The Board’s reasoning for this was that a political party known as the TPLF had already existed, and that this would lead to confusion. In January 2021, the Board had dissolved the TPLF as a political party, due to the party’s involvement in an armed conflict. After the ceasefire was signed, the TPLF asked to be re-registered as a political party. This request was refused, however, as the electoral law did not provide for the restoration of dissolved political parties. The Tigrayan transitional authorities argued that this decision by the Election Board had undermined the ceasefire and made it impossible to recognise the participation of TPLF leaders in the transitional authority. According to the TPLF, it was not a matter for the Election Board. They said it was a political matter, just like the decision to remove the TPLF from the list of

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<sup>93</sup> Addis Standard, [Senior TPLF, former federal gov. officials, opposition leader...](#), 30 March 2023

<sup>94</sup> EPO, [‘About’](#), 25 March 2023

<sup>95</sup> EPO, [‘EPO March 2023 monthly: Political violence trends decline amid ...’](#), 5 April 2023

<sup>96</sup> FH, [‘Freedom in the World 2024 – Ethiopia’](#) (section B1), 29 February 2024

<sup>97</sup> Addis Standard, [‘News: Some 178 Tigrayan former army members facing...’](#) 10 September 2024

terrorist organisations. In August 2023, the decision of the Election Board was upheld by a court.’<sup>98</sup>

12.6.2 On 10 August 2024, The Reporter, a private Ethiopian newspaper published in English and Amharic<sup>99</sup> reported:

‘The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has registered the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) as a political party, reversing the legal recognition it lost during the two-year northern war. The Board granted the recognition under “special circumstances.”

‘The NEBE decision, announced on August 9, 2024, follows a recommendation for reinstatement from the Ministry of Justice, which says it recognizes the TPLF’s commitment to adhere to constitutional law and cease involvement in criminal activity. The move also comes amid reports of a widening rift among TPLF leadership.

‘A press release from the Board says the decision to reinstate the party is in alignment with the recently amended Political Parties Registration and Electoral Ethics Proclamation, which allows the re-registration of previously banned parties under strict conditions ...

‘The Board has instructed the TPLF to approve its bylaws and elect new leadership within a six-month window.

“The TPLF has been directed to convene a general meeting within six months of this decision to ratify,” reads the press release.’<sup>100</sup>

12.6.3 On 10 August 2024 Addis Ababa Standard reported:

‘The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has rejected once again the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)’s request to reinstate its former legal status, instead granting it a certificate of legal personality as a new political party under special conditions.

‘In a statement issued on Friday, 09 August 2024, NEBE said the decision has been made in accordance with the amended Party Registration and Ethics Reform bill approved in May 2024, which outlines provisions for granting legal recognition to political groups with a history of violent activities.

‘The board stated that there is no legal basis to reinstate TPLF’s previous legal status ...

‘According to NEBE, the newly registered TPLF must now hold a general assembly within six months to approve its bylaws and leadership under the inspection of the election board which will also monitor the party’s activities to ensure adherence to peaceful conduct.

‘It was in January 2021 that the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) canceled TPLF’s legal registration as a political party citing the party’s engagement in “armed violence against the government”; it also prevented TPLF officials from operating on behalf of the party.’<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> GoN, ‘[General country of origin information report on Ethiopia](#)’ (pages 10 to 11), 31 January 2024

<sup>99</sup> The Reporter, ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>100</sup> The Reporter, ‘[Election Board reinstates TPLF under ‘special circumstances’](#)’ 10 August 2024

<sup>101</sup> Addis Standard, ‘[News: Electoral Board once again rejects TPLF reinstatement ...](#)’ 10 August 2024

## 12.7 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

### 12.7.1 The Cedoca COI report May 2024 noted:

‘With the Pretoria Agreement, the TDF agreed to be demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life or other security institutions. The Nairobi Agreement specified that TDF demobilization should take place simultaneously with full withdrawal of non-ENDF and foreign forces from the administrative boundary of Tigray and be contingent on the availability of programs and resources to properly rehabilitate the combatants into productive civilian life. On 10 January 2023, the African Union’s Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM) team, appointed for oversight purposes, confirmed the start of the disarmament process as Tigrayan combatants handed over heavy weapons to the ENDF. According to a report of the AU-MVCM of May 2023, 85 to 90 % of the heavy weapons disarmament of Tigrayan combatants was completed.’<sup>102</sup>

### 12.7.2 On 7 November 2023 the BBC also reported: ‘Tigrayan forces have handed over their heavy weapons but it is believed that small and light arms have not been given up.’ The source added that a government statement evaluating the year since the peace deal suggested that ‘the administration [TIRA] was still keeping combatants despite agreeing to disarm.’<sup>103</sup>

### 12.7.3 The New Humanitarian 2 November 2023 and the EPO 24 February 2024 reported that 270,000 TDF members had not been disarmed and were waiting to be demobilised<sup>104 105</sup>. The OHCHR report June 2024 covering events in 2023 noted with respect to Tigray: ‘The National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC)<sup>106</sup> through DDR programme, seeks to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate an estimated 370,000 ex-combatants ... some 55,000 ex-combatants were disarmed, whereas those not disarmed remained in disengagement sites.’ The source noted in a footnote that, ‘Unverified reports indicate the demobilization of 100,000 ex-combatants by TIRA as of March 2024.’<sup>107</sup>

### 12.7.4 UKHO FFM CSA1 2024 noted that ‘the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process is not fully functional.’ At the same interview, UKHO FFM CS2 also noted that ‘the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process (DDR) has been delayed.’<sup>108</sup>

### 12.7.5 UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted that progress made since March 2024 included ‘measures towards demobilization and reintegration of former Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) combatants with support from the UK government.’<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Cedoca, [COI Focus Ethiopia: Security situation in Tigray](#) (page 13), 16 May 2024

<sup>103</sup> BBC News, [‘Ethiopia plans vote to solve Tigray-Amhara territory dispute’](#) 7 November 2023

<sup>104</sup> The New Humanitarian, [‘Ethiopia’s unfinished peace deal leaves hundreds ...’](#), 2 November 2023

<sup>105</sup> EPO, [‘EPO Monthly Update | February 2024 clashes in Tigray’s disputed...’](#), 19 March 2024

<sup>106</sup> ENA, [‘Gov’t Establishes National Rehabilitation Commission that integrates ...’](#) 30 December 2022

<sup>107</sup> OHCHR, [‘Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia’](#) (paragraph 49), June 2024

<sup>108</sup> UKHO [‘FFM report on situation of Tigrayan’](#) (Interview CSAs), 2024

<sup>109</sup> UKHO [‘FFM report on situation of Tigrayan’](#) (Interview with BEOs), 2024

## 12.8 Control of territory

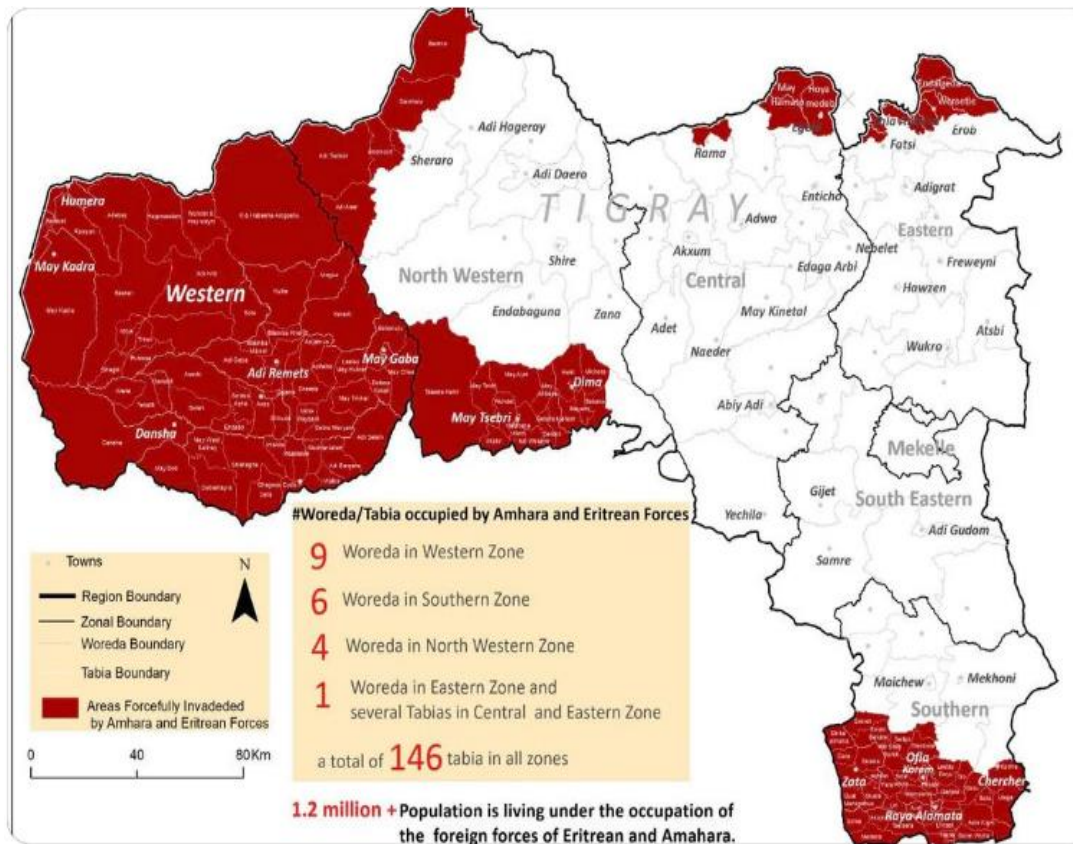
- 12.8.1 The May 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea observed: ‘... [A] declaration signed on 12 November [2022] in Nairobi by Ethiopian and Tigrayan military officials, setting out the details for the implementation of the agreement, provided that the Tigrayan disarmament process “will be done concurrently with the withdrawal of foreign and non-[Ethiopian National Defence Forces] from the region”, without specifically referring to Eritrean forces.’<sup>110</sup>
- 12.8.2 A 24 February 2024 report by the EPO stated: ‘Authorities from Amhara region have been in de facto control of disputed territory along the Amhara and Tigray regional borders since the beginning of the northern Ethiopia conflict. The disputed territory ... includes the entirety of Western Tigray zone — Welkait, Tsegede, and Humera woredas — Tselemt woreda in North-Western Tigray zone, and Raya-Azebo and Alamata woredas in Southern Tigray zone.’<sup>111</sup>
- 12.8.3 Citing sources, the Cedoca COI report 2024 observed:
- ‘When war broke out in November 2020, the [Amhara special; forces] ASF and Fano militia annexed the area which the Amhara refer to as Welkait, Tselemt, Tsegede, and Kafta-Humera and the Tigrayans call Western Tigray zone and North Western Tigray zone. Amhara forces also seized parts of Southern Tigray zone, another disputed area, which the Amhara refer to as Raya-Alamata. Amanuel Assefa, chief cabinet secretariat of TIRA until November 2023, noted in April 2023 that Amhara forces controlled the entire Western Tigray zone, nine woredas in North Western Tigray zone, and Raya, Korem, Alamata and other areas of the Southern Tigray zone.
- ‘From the start of the war, Eritrea claimed areas that were awarded to it by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), but were occupied by Ethiopia. It also took territory it claimed sovereignty over although the EEBC judged it to belong to Ethiopia, such as parts of Irob ...
- ‘... Irob Anina Civil Society, a nonprofit organisation advocating for the Irob, argued that Eritrean presence goes well beyond these territories. According to the organization, Eritrean troops are present in “Zalambessa town, Gulemekada woreda (sub-districts: Marta, Addis Tesfa, Addis Alem, Shewit Lemlem, and Sebeya) and Irob woreda (sub-districts: Endalgeda, Weratle, Agerelekoma and Alitena). In the North Western zone, the EDF occupy parts of several woredas, including Tahtay Adiyabo (sub-districts: Rural Badme, Badme Town, Gemhalo, Ademeyti, Adi Tsetser, Lemlem, Shembelina, Mentebteb, Adi Aser), Maekel Adebayo (sub-districts: Adi Awala, Kushet Ayay, May Abay), Seyemti Adiyabo (Adiyabiya Digum sub-district). Lastly, in the Central Zone, they occupy parts of two districts: Egela (sub-districts: Hoya Medeb (specific villages: Kolo Birdo, Sebeo Belesa, Adi Kutu, Ouna Shehaq), Erdi Genanu; Kushet Egri Sebeya, Ziban Sesewe) and Rama (Mereb sub-district) ...
- ‘During a visit of the AU-MVCM to Zalembessa in early April 2024, the mayor disclosed that approximately 75% of the city is under the control of Eritrean

<sup>110</sup> OHCHR, [Report of the special rapporteur on the situation of...](#) (paragraph 22), 1 May 2023

<sup>111</sup> EPO, [‘EPO Monthly Update | February 2024 clashes in Tigray’s disputed ...’](#), 19 March 2024

forces, while the remaining 25% remains under the jurisdiction of the ENDF. The EDF further control six kebeles of Gulomekeda woreda, and are strategically positioned at the gateway to Zalambessa.’<sup>112</sup>

12.8.4 Map of Tigray showing areas under Amhara and Eritrean forces<sup>113</sup>.



12.8.5 On 17 April 2024, BBC Monitoring citing Tigray TV reported:

“The deputy president and security chief of the Interim Regional Administration of Tigray, Lt Gen [ret] Tadesse Werede, has said that an agreement had been reached with the federal government on the need to withdraw Amhara militia from Tigray land, dismantle local administrations illegally set up by the Amhara regional government and return displaced Tigrayans to their respective localities in a safe manner,” said Tigray TV...

“He said they had agreed for Tigray to return to its pre-war administrative status,” the TV added...

‘The federal government has yet to confirm or deny Tadesse's claims.’<sup>114</sup>

12.8.6 On 23 April 2024, BBC Monitoring referencing the privately-owned Ethiopian Reporter website reported that the TPLF was ‘reportedly demolishing administrative structures in disputed Alamata, Korem, Zata and Oflla districts

<sup>112</sup> Cedoca, ‘[Security situation in Tigray](#)’ (pages 16, 17 to 18), 16 May 2024

<sup>113</sup> Cedoca, ‘[Security situation in Tigray](#)’ (page 16), 16 May 2024

<sup>114</sup> BBC Monitoring, ‘[Briefing: Ethiopian government agrees to return disputed land ...](#)’, 17 April 2024



in northern Ethiopia following the ongoing clashes between Amhara and Tigrayan forces.<sup>115</sup>

- 12.8.7 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted 'West Tigray remains under the control of the Amhara forces ... A similar situation exists in Irob Woreda (district), where the area and its people are still under the control of external forces, including Eritrean troops. This ongoing occupation by outside forces indicates that a significant portion of the region and its population remains unsettled, contrary to the [CoHA] agreement's goals.'<sup>116</sup>
- 12.8.8 UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted: 'About 20% of Tigray is occupied by Amhara and Eritrean forces' which included 'the disputed territories' of 'Western Tigray/Wokaiyt and Southern Tigray/Raya'<sup>117</sup>.

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## 12.9 Accountability

- 12.9.1 The 14 September 2023 ICHREE report observed with respect to government efforts to prosecute perpetrators of conflict related sexual violence:

'The Commission has consolidated estimates by health care providers in seven one-stop centers in Tigray of the numbers of survivors of sexual violence who sought care between November 2020 and July 2023. This figure alone exceeds 10,000 survivors, primarily women and girls. By comparison, the Commission is aware of only 13 concluded and 16 pending Ethiopian military court cases addressing sexual violence committed during the conflict. Such cases cannot be said to render meaningful justice for survivors, particularly considering the historical and contemporaneous impunity in Ethiopia for such acts.'<sup>118</sup>

- 12.9.2 The 14 September 2023 report of the ICHREE added: 'EDF attacks on civilians in Tigray, past and current – in particular sexual and gender-based violence – have been abetted or tolerated by the Federal Government, which has failed in its legal duty to protect its population from violations by a foreign army, or by Amhara militia present in the areas of Western and Southern Tigray.'<sup>119</sup>

- 12.9.3 The HRW world report covering events in 2023 noted: 'Government efforts toward accountability for past and ongoing abuses, including atrocities carried out during the conflict in northern Ethiopia, have been inadequate and lacked transparency and independent oversight.'<sup>120</sup>

- 12.9.4 The OHCHR report June 2024 observed:

'... Despite several documented instances where perpetrators had been brought to justice, the lack of progress on accountability and redress for victims remained a concern. The initial steps on accountability undertaken under the framework of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force established to

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<sup>115</sup> BBC Monitoring, '[Briefing: Ethiopia's TPLF reportedly 'demolish' administration in ...](#)', 23 April 2024

<sup>116</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with OWE), October 2024

<sup>117</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with UKBEOs), October 2024

<sup>118</sup> HRC, '[Report of the International Commission ...](#)' (paragraph 52 ), 14 September 2023

<sup>119</sup> HRC, '[Comprehensive investigative findings and...](#)' (paragraph 2), 13 October 2023

<sup>120</sup> HRW, '[World Report 2024 – Ethiopia](#)', 11 January 2024

implement the recommendations of the OHCHR/EHRC Joint investigation on violations committed in the context of the Tigray conflict were slowed down after the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) on 2 November 2022, with the Government seeking to realign them with the ongoing transitional justice process.<sup>121</sup>

#### 12.9.5 The New Lines Institute Summary report 2024 stated:

‘There is a reasonable basis to believe that Ethiopia failed to prevent the genocide against the Tigrayan people. There is a reasonable basis to believe that Ethiopia failed, and continues to fail, to punish those responsible for the genocide against the Tigrayan people. Even if the genocide took place at a “grassroots” level, and irrespective whether it may be attributed to Ethiopia, there is in any event also a reasonable basis to believe that Ethiopia as a State failed to discharge its responsibility under international law to prevent such acts. This failure contributed to and perpetuated the situation of manifest and serious risk that acts of genocide would occur.’<sup>122</sup>

#### 12.9.6 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted:

‘Nearly everyone in Tigray has been affected by the conflict. There is no redress for criminal acts against civilians, including sexual violence committed during the conflict and no sign that the government is going to provide this soon. The FG wanted transitional justice to be the solution, but the Tigrayans are opposed to this mechanism as a way of addressing crimes committed during the war, arguing that the ‘perpetrators’ are still in power. This masks that all sides, including Tigrayans, committed abuses. So, redress for ordinary people is a long way off.

‘Outside of Tigray, Tigrayans are subject to arbitrary acts, as other Ethiopians are, as there is a general decline in rule of law and due process. This particularly impacts on Tigrayans, following the conflict, as they cannot: take back properties confiscated during the war – there is no redress mechanism. Tigrayans lost businesses and property in Addis Ababa (AA) during the war, purely because they were Tigrayan - not necessarily combatants ...’<sup>123</sup>

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## 12.10 Transitional justice

### 12.10.1 The OHCHR report June 2024 observed:

‘The Transitional Justice Working Group of Experts (TJWGE) that was established to lead the transitional justice process through the development of a comprehensive victim-centered and human rights-compliant national transitional justice policy was very active in the delivery of its mandate during the reporting period. In January 2023, the Working Group publicly released a transitional justice Green Paper, outlining policy options, and requested feedback from national and international experts, including OHCHR. As part of its consultative process, the TJWGE carried out over 60 extensive public consultations with over 3,300 individuals (33 percent women) across the

<sup>121</sup> OHCHR. ‘[Report on the human rights situation in 2023](#)’ (page 4), 14 June 2024

<sup>122</sup> New Lines Institute, ‘[Summary: Genocide in Tigray: Serious breaches ...](#)’ (page 23), 3 June 2024

<sup>123</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), 2024

country ... Grassroot consultations concluded with the release of a public report, on 29 December 2023.

'In its outcome report, the TJWGE recommended the adoption of a policy that encompassed all pillar components of transitional justice, including criminal accountability for gross violations. It also recommended the inapplicability of conditional amnesty for serious international crimes or gross violations, and provision of due attention to the independence of institutions which would be created and mandated with transitional justice to ensure that justice is served for all.

'In an important development, a transitional justice policy was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 17 April 2024 and its implementation was launched on 9 May 2024 ... The transitional justice policy, as adopted, was informed by the findings contained in the report of the TJWGE ... The policy endeavors to uphold a holistic approach to transitional justice by including the four key elements of transitional justice; truth-seeking, criminal prosecutions, reparations and guarantees on non-recurrence ...

'The transitional justice policy provides for the establishment of new institutions, such as a truth commission, a special prosecution unit, and a special bench and the Institutional Reform Commission to lead institutional reforms and prevent non-recurrence ...'<sup>124</sup>

#### 12.10.2 The 14 September 2023 report of the ICHREE observed:

'The vast majority of Ethiopians asked by the Commission about accountability and healing expressed their complete lack of trust in Ethiopian State institutions to carry out a credible process of transitional justice. The Commission's own assessment of the Government's actions to date bears out this mistrust. The Government's consultation process falls well short of African Union and international standards... Impunity, rather than accountability, is the norm regarding past violations. Support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence is non-existent in many areas. Instead of engaging with the Commission on transitional justice, the Government has publicly postured to demonstrate forward movement on the issue while little of substance is taking place ...'<sup>125</sup>

#### 12.10.3 A December 2023 report by OHCHR and EHRC on consultations about the transitional justice process noted 'that all participants [in Tigray] expressed their scepticism about the capacity of the domestic justice system to investigate and prosecute "heinous crimes committed by non-Ethiopian forces."<sup>126</sup>

#### 12.10.4 The OHCHR report June 2024 observed: 'While the national transitional justice process is acknowledged as pertinent and of absolute necessity, the Tigrayan Interim Administration and civil society have expressed reservations on its independence and limited focus on Tigray.'<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> OHCHR. '[Report on the human rights situation in 2023](#)' (paragraphs 65 to 68), June 2024

<sup>125</sup> HRC, '[Report of the International Commission ...](#)' (paragraph 3 ), 14 September 2023

<sup>126</sup> OHCHR/EHRC, '[Report of the RHRC and OHCHR...](#)' (paragraph 96), 28 Dec 2023

<sup>127</sup> OHCHR. '[Report on the human rights situation in 2023](#)', (paragraphs 65 to 68), June 2024

12.10.5 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted ‘The [federal government] FG wanted transitional justice to be the solution, but the Tigrayans are opposed to this mechanism as a way of addressing crimes committed during the war, arguing that the “perpetrators” are still in power. This masks that all sides, including Tigrayans, committed abuses. So, redress for ordinary people is a long way off.’<sup>128</sup>

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### 13. Security situation post CoHA

#### 13.1 General security situation

13.1.1 The 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community released on 11 March 2024 noted: ‘While the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in November 2022 between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigrayans ended a two-year war, unresolved territorial issues could lead to a resumption of conflict.’<sup>129</sup>

13.1.2 The EHRC report February 2024 observed: ‘In areas which were under the control of the TIRA, significant improvement was observed in the overall security after the Peace Agreement.’<sup>130</sup>

13.1.3 The OHCHR report June 2024 observed with respect to Tigray: ‘Regarding deaths of individuals, there was a significant decrease of incidents that affected the right to life in Tigray in 2023, with 16 incidents (44 deaths) registered compared to 31 incidents (487 civilian deaths) registered in 2022 ... [T]he prevalence of violations and abuses of human rights in 2023 was largely registered in the disputed areas, and in areas reportedly under the control of the EDF.’<sup>131</sup>

13.1.4 The UKHO FFM OWE 2024 noted that large scale fighting had stopped but ‘The 3 disputed areas – west, north-east (along the border with Eritrea) and south-east Tigray – are very tense, though they understood that there are plans to return internally displaced persons (IDPs) to these areas.’<sup>132</sup>

13.1.5 UKHO FFM CSA 2024 noted with respect to security situation in Tigray. ‘CSA1 2024 noted that Eritrean forces are contesting border areas, which are volatile and are not safe. There is also a new security challenge in most urban areas. Ex-combatants are a threat to internal security...’

‘Even though it seems that there is security in the TIRA-controlled areas there are still problems with informal (armed) groups, which are not part of the TIRA. Guns are easy to get, people feel insecure ... There is also insecurity in the border areas from Eritrean forces (in the north-east) and Amhara forces (in West Tigray). The TIRA has not established a sustainable peace structure or justice system.

‘CSA2 said the TIRA is not able to control security because of infighting between TPLF factions and because it lacks resources and capability ...

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<sup>128</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>129</sup> ODNI, ‘[Annual threat assessment of the U.S. intelligence community](#)’, 11 March 2024

<sup>130</sup> EHRC, ‘[Human rights monitoring report on Tigray](#)’ (paragraphs 62 to 64), 28 February 2024

<sup>131</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#)’ (paragraph 46), June 2024

<sup>132</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with OWE), 2024

'CSA3 noted that the TIRA does not have control over the 'disputed territories' (north-east, west and south-east Tigray) and that they lack capacity, resources and management skills. There is a sense of insecurity among people, the situation feels like there is no government present.'<sup>133</sup>

13.1.6 UKHO FFM RTIP 2024 noted: 'no one has any guarantee that they will survive until tomorrow – all security is controlled by the TPLF but people cannot ask for help. Some towns (particularly Zone and districts towns) are unprotected. FG forces have left Tigray but this has left a gap in the provision of security.'<sup>134</sup>

13.1.7 When asked about the security situation in Tigray UKHO FFM RIAA 2024: 'Characterised it as 'chaos' and that the cause of this is the internal power struggle within TPLF, some of its members are in the TIRA, some outside. There are 2 wings of TIRA: i) 'propaganda representatives of the FG', and ii) the TPLF party cadres (hardline) led by Debretsion Gebremichael. The latter has control on the ground in Tigray.

'... Security challenges included the presence of militants with no chain of command and human traffickers. The police are not properly trained. Security forces engage in human trafficking; some officials have been arrested but then released.

'To illustrate the levels of insecurity, RIAA gave the example of Adigrat, a town near to the Irob areas in the north of Tigray. There are 2 or 3 people killed each week in a population of 160,000 ... RIAA added that Mekelle may be safer than other areas because of the presence of the TIRA...'<sup>135</sup>

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## 13.2 Political violence

13.2.1 ACLED data shows a significant fall in recorded political violence events (battles, explosions and remote violence, violence against civilians) and as well as civilian targeting in Tigray since the signing of the CoHA. From 5 November 2022 to 16 August 2024 ACLED recorded 78 organised violence events compared to 1,002 from 4 November 2020 to 4 November 2022.<sup>136</sup> This represents a 92% fall in organised violence events.

13.2.2 ACLED also recorded a significant reduction in civilian targeting events, that is, events in which civilians were the main or only target of an event<sup>137</sup>. Between 4 November and 16 August 2024, it recorded 42 which represent a 76% decrease from 178 recorded between 4 November 2020 and 4 November 2022<sup>138</sup>. The below graph, based on ACLED data<sup>139</sup> shows monthly trends in civilian targeting events from 4 November 2020 to 16 August 2024.

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<sup>133</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>134</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview TPPs), 2024

<sup>135</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

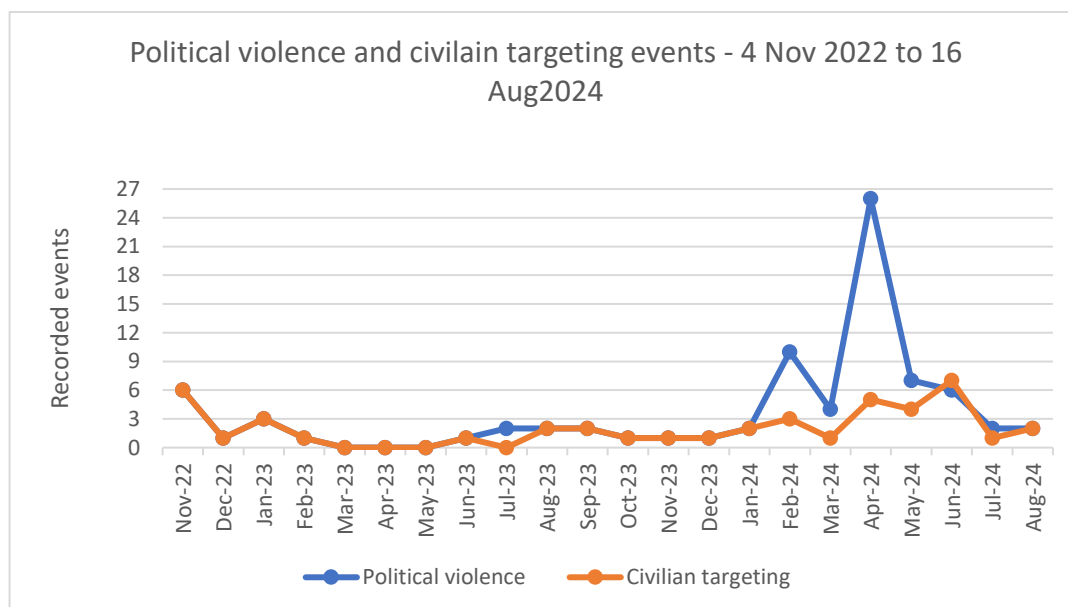
<sup>136</sup> ACLED, '[ACLED Explorer](#)' (political violence/events/fatalities/Tigray), accessed on 22 August 2024

<sup>137</sup> ACLED, '[Armed Conflict Location & Event Data \(ACLED\) Codebook](#)' updated 3 October 2024

<sup>138</sup> ACLED, '[ACLED Explorer](#)' (political violence/events/fatalities/Tigray), accessed on 22 August 2024

<sup>139</sup> ACLED, '[ACLED Explorer](#)' (political violence/events/fatalities/Tigray), accessed on 22 August 2024

13.2.3 The below graph, based on ACLED data<sup>140</sup> shows monthly trends in political violence and civilian targeting events from 4 November 2022 to 16 August 2024. The spike in February and April 2024 is explained by clashes between Tigray and Amhara forces on 21 February in Zatta<sup>141</sup> and between 13 and 17 April 2024 in Chercher, Raya Bala, Alamata, Raya Alamata, Zata and Ofra<sup>142</sup>.



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### 13.3 Fatalities from violent attacks

13.3.1 From 4 November 2022 to 16 August 2024 ACLED recorded 105 fatalities from political violence (battles, explosive/remote violence, violence against civilians). This represents a 98% fall in fatalities from 5,168 fatalities recorded between 4 November 2020 and 4 November 2022. ACLED also recorded 55 fatalities from civilian targeting between 4 November 2022 and 16 August 2024 which represents a 98% decline from 3,077 recorded between 4 November 2020 and 4 November 2022<sup>143</sup>.

13.3.2 The graph below, based on the ACLED data<sup>144</sup>, shows the monthly trends in fatalities from political violence between 4 November 2022 and 16 August 2024.

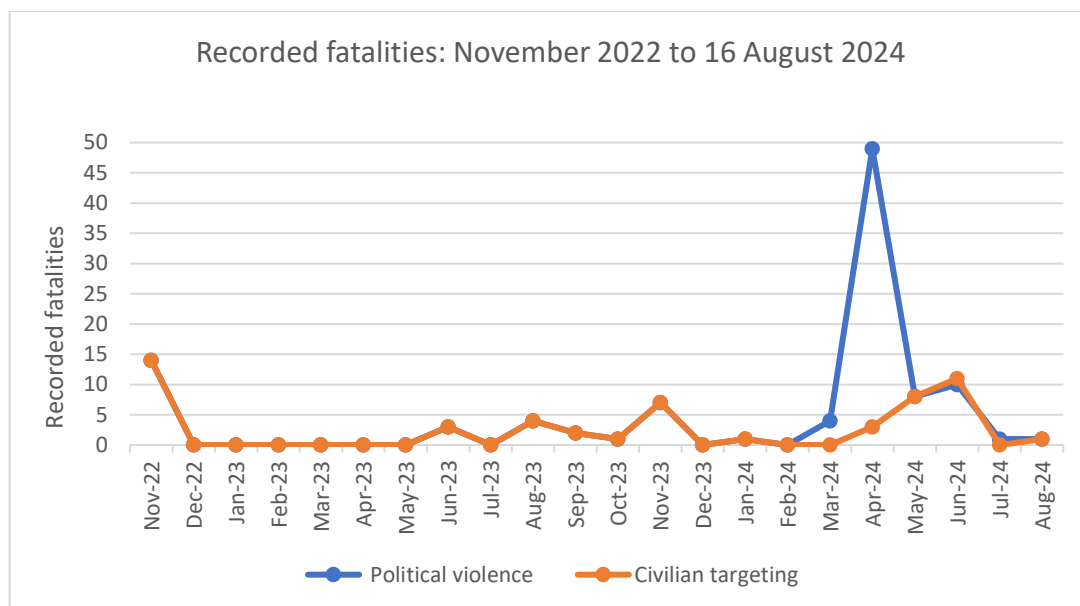
<sup>140</sup> ACLED, '[ACLED Explorer](#)' (political violence/events/fatalities/Tigray), accessed on 22 August 2024

<sup>141</sup> EPO, '[EPO Monthly Update | February 2024 clashes in Tigray's disputed...](#)', 19 March 2024

<sup>142</sup> EPO, '[EPO Weekly Update \(23 April 2024\)](#)' 24 April 2024

<sup>143</sup> ACLED, '[ACLED Explorer](#)' (political violence/events/fatalities/Tigray), accessed on 22 August 2024

<sup>144</sup> ACLED, '[ACLED Explorer](#)' (political violence/events/fatalities/Tigray), accessed on 22 August 2024



13.3.3 The Protection Cluster (network of NGOs) / UNHCR Ethiopia monthly protection overview – July 2024 (PC/UNHCR overview July 2024) observed: ‘In July, there were no reported attacks on civilians ...’<sup>145</sup>

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## 13.4 Criminality

13.4.1 On 30 May 2024, Borkena.com reported:

‘An opposition party operating in the Tigray region of Ethiopia says ... Human trafficking, illegal mining, and kidnapping are becoming common in the region ...

‘Individuals are being kidnapped and disappearing. Women are the main victims of the problem ...

‘Civilians’ lives and properties are in danger due to the situation, it said. Incidents involving homicide cases are not getting justice.

‘The party is linking the [rise in crime] ... to a failure to implement the Pretoria agreement on the part of authorities in the region.’<sup>146</sup>

13.4.2 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted: ‘[T]he transitional government in Tigray is perceived as weak ... Crime rates are high in towns and cities, further exacerbating the sense of insecurity and instability in the region.’<sup>147</sup> While the UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted: ‘[T]he youths are on the streets, with nothing to do and there has been an increase in crime. TIRA-controlled areas suffer from criminality and are dangerous at night. Some of the youths are armed but [the source] was [not] sure if they are part of the military.’<sup>148</sup>

13.4.3 The UKHO FFM team interviewed 4 Tigray-based civil society activists in June 2024 (UKHO CSA 2024). CSA1 ‘did not consider the TIRA to be functioning well or to be well managed ... If a person reports a crime to the

<sup>145</sup> Protection Cluster/UNHCR, [Monthly Protection Overview – July 2024 – Ethiopia](#), 20 August 2024

<sup>146</sup> Borkena, ‘[Opposition reports Worsening Security Situation in the Tigray region](#)’, 30 May 2024

<sup>147</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with consultant), October 2024

<sup>148</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), October 2024

police, it is registered but the police do not have capacity to follow it up. There is news of many crimes but no investigations are conducted to resolve them.’ CSA3 noted, ‘there is joblessness and a sense of hopelessness - forcing people into crime ... There are also a mixture of armed groups including young people, unknown groups and Tigray Defence Forces (part of the TPLF/TIRA) ... In general, there is no strong law enforcement.’<sup>149</sup>

13.4.4 The UKHO FFM team interviewed the British Embassy’s regional engagement co-ordinator in June 2024 (UKHO FFM REC 2024), who noted:

‘People are not attacked by the state or police, but poverty and lawlessness has led to crime. Young girls are reportedly kidnapped by traffickers. TIRA has no capacity to provide security, which has led to the increase in crime. REC did not know who was committing the crime but thought the 100,000 demobilized TPLF ex-combatants and returnees from Saudia Arabia might be the main cause. There are no resources to integrate former combatants. Towns are more insecure and have more crimes, than rural areas because in rural areas people know each other.’<sup>150</sup>

13.4.5 The UKHO FFM OWE noted:

‘There is a lot of criminality and corruption’, and agreed with the FFM Team’s suggestion that the perpetrators were likely to be ex-combatants. They added that generally in Ethiopia the police are known to detain people and demand ransoms for their release. They expect the situation to be the same in Tigray.

‘The disputed areas are far more dangerous than the “core” areas of Tigray, controlled by the Tigray Interim Regional Authority (TIRA).

‘The FFM team asked whether the high levels of crime were because of lack of resources or unwillingness of the officials. The OWE thought both.’<sup>151</sup>

13.4.6 The PC/UNHCR overview July 2024 noted: ‘... crime has become a significant problem in the region. Ayder Specialized Referral Hospital in Mekelle announced that it had provided medical services to 482 individuals who had been attacked by robbers over the past three months’<sup>152</sup> The same source added: ‘Incidents of abduction, rape and killings on women and girls continue in the region’.<sup>153</sup>

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## 14. Human rights post CoHA

### 14.1 Extra-judicial killings

14.1.1 The US State Department human rights report covering events in 2023 (USSD HR report 2023) stated: ‘... there were reports of extrajudicial killings by the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) and regional militia in Tigray, as well as reports of killings of civilians by other militia groups.’<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>150</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>151</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with OWE), 2024

<sup>152</sup> Global Protection Cluster Ethiopia, ‘[Monthly protection overview -Ethiopia](#)’ (page 1), July 2024

<sup>153</sup> Global Protection Cluster Ethiopia, ‘[Monthly protection overview -Ethiopia](#)’ (page 8), July 2024

<sup>154</sup> USSD, ‘[Reports on human rights practices, 2023](#)’ (section I), 23 April 2024



#### 14.1.2 The EHRC report 28 February 2024 stated:

‘... The signing of the Peace Agreement led to ... decrease in reports of unlawful and extra-judicial killings; particularly in areas currently under the control of the TIRA.

‘Residents and the TIRA officials interviewed by EHRC note that reports of unlawful and extra-judicial killings have significantly decreased after the Peace Agreement.

‘EHRC has confirmed that at least two instances of extra-judicial killings have been committed against ethnic Tigrayans in Mai Tsebri and its environs under the control of Amhara forces ...’<sup>155</sup>

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### 14.2 Arbitrary arrest and detention

#### 14.2.1 On 29 August 2023 an OHCHR press statement noted:

‘We have ... received allegations that at least 250 Tigrayans have been detained in Western Tigray, as part of joint operations by Amhara police, local authorities and local militias, including armed youths from Wolkait. Those detained were then reportedly taken by armed Wolkait youth to an area controlled by the Tigray Interim Regional Administration, where they were intercepted by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF). The ENDF then reportedly screened and gave those detained the option of either returning to Western Tigray or remaining in the Tigray Interim Regional Administration area.’<sup>156</sup>

#### 14.2.2 The 13 October 2023 ICHREE report noted:

‘Credible information indicates that detention and abductions of civilians are ongoing, in particular of ethnic Irob and Kunama civilians in northwest and northeast Tigray ...

‘An economy of extortion is developing in the areas of Irob woreda under EDF control, one which is ongoing. One former detainee explained that he was only released from detention because an elder served as his “guarantor” and paid Eritrean administrators to release him. Another man described having to pay a bribe of 8,000 Nakfa (around 530 USD) to the EDF administrator of his area to allow him to rebury his son’s body in the church, and further described EDF administrators collecting money each week from families living in areas under their control. Practices of seeking ransom from relatives abroad for Irob abductees have also been reported and require further investigation.’<sup>157</sup>

#### 14.2.3 The EHRC report 28 February 2024 observed:

‘... IDPs from Mai Tsebri town in Western Tigray told the Commission that continued harassment, and arbitrary detention targeting ethnic Tigrayans continued to drive forced displacement. Similarly, North-Western Zone officials informed the Commission that ... detention [among other things] by Eritrean forces against residents of Tahtay and Central Adiyabo as well as

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<sup>155</sup> EHRC, [‘Human rights monitoring report on Tigray’](#) (paragraphs 111 to 114), 28 February 2024

<sup>156</sup> OHCHR, [‘Ethiopia: Deteriorating human rights situation’](#) 29 August 2023

<sup>157</sup> HRC, [‘Comprehensive investigative findings and...’](#) (paragraphs 199 to 200, 424). 13 October 2023

surrounding areas forced some residents into displacement. The Commission was not able to verify these allegations...

'IDPs and TIRA officials interviewed by the Commission during the monitoring period indicated that residents of the six woreda administrations currently under the control of Amhara forces continue to face arbitrary detentions and ethnically targeted harassment. For example, in July 2023, 75 residents of Korem Woreda were reportedly arrested by authorities for travelling into TIRA controlled Maichew Town to procure fertilizers and seeds. Similarly, IDPs interviewed by the Commission stated that 76 women of ethnic Tigrayan origin were detained for 15 days in Alamata Town. Such ethnic based harassment and detention reportedly forced several civilians into displacement in Maichew and Mehoni towns ...'<sup>158</sup>

#### 14.2.4 The OHCHR report June 2024 noted:

'Despite the progress made, arbitrary arrests largely in the disputed territories of the Western Zone of Tigray accounted for most of the violations in the region in 2023. Responsibility for human rights violations and abuses in Tigray region was largely shared by the EDF and Amhara forces (Amhara Regional Police, state affiliated militia, and Selam Askebari), and, to a lesser extent, the Fano militia. Meanwhile, the Tigray Regional Police, which was still being reconstituted, was also alleged to have perpetrated some violations.

'In 2023, 73 incidents of human rights abuses and violations affected 1,716 victims ... compared to 63 incidents and 705 victims in 2022 in Tigray. The increase in 2023 is explained by the large number of ethnic Tigrayans (1,500 victims) arrested by Amhara regional forces (Amhara Regional Police, Amhara Militia and Selam Askebari) in disputed areas currently under its control. However, most of those arrested were subsequently released during the reporting period.

'In areas in Tigray under its control, the EDF perpetrated abductions, sexual violence, arbitrary detentions, and killings, in at least 25 incidents of violations affecting 77 victims (68 men, 9 women) ...'<sup>159</sup>

#### 14.2.5 The UKHO FFM CSA1 2024 noted with respect to arrests generally in Tigray and elsewhere in Ethiopia:

'[I]t's better now and not like how it was during the war. But there are still problems: detention has not totally stopped, there are family members in prison. TIRA states that there are still 2,000 Tigrayans in prison, who are political prisoners. These include people who were in the police, the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (FG armed forces), and those returned from Saudi Arabia and Sudan. There are Tigrayans in prison in Afar and Oromia. However, the "concentration camps" – where people were held in schools, government premises - in [Addis Ababa] AA and elsewhere have closed and most of the people have been released. CSA1 added that people

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<sup>158</sup> EHRC, '[Human rights monitoring report on Tigray](#)' (paragraphs 95 to 96), February 2024

<sup>159</sup> OHCHR, '[Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#)' (paragraphs 44 to 45, 47), June 2024

who were sent to arrest individuals are not trained in human rights so they did not treat prisoners properly.<sup>160</sup>

- 14.2.6 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted in regard Ethiopia generally ‘Arrests continue but not at the scale that occurred during the war. If problems arise, businesspeople and Tigrayan elite will be targeted. The consultant added that most of those arrested during the war have been released.’<sup>161</sup> The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 stated that ‘Journalists, human rights defenders that criticize the federal government are likely to face problems, including arrest. People who had given evidence to the UN human rights commission about crimes during the conflict had been targeted by the TPLF.’<sup>162</sup>

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### 14.3 Sexual and gender-based violence

- 14.3.1 On 15 February 2023, the BBC reported: ‘According to data from the official Tigray Health Bureau in November and December 2022 - after the peace deal was signed - 852 cases were reported in centres set up to help survivors. Human rights workers and aid organisations operating in Tigray have also continued to document cases of sexual violence.’<sup>163</sup>

- 14.3.2 An August 2023 report by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), a US based non-governmental organisation that uses medicine and science to investigate and document human rights violations,<sup>164</sup> that was based on a review of 305 randomly selected medical records from multiple health facilities in Tigray noted:

‘The medical records reviewed showed many instances of sexual violence occurring after the November 2022 CoHA: 169 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence occurred before the signing of the CoHA in November 2022 and 128 incidents occurred after November 2022. The scale and nature of these violations has not materially changed since the peace agreement was signed, except for the notable fact that 95 percent of conflict-related sexual violence experienced by children and adolescents under 18 years old occurred following the signing of the CoHA ...

‘The main aim of the study was not to count all recorded cases of conflict-related sexual violence or determine a prevalence rate of conflict-related sexual violence ... As a result, the cases reported here represent only a small portion of all actual cases of conflict-related sexual violence.’<sup>165</sup>

- 14.3.3 The 13 October 2023 ICHREE report noted:

‘... [R]ape and other forms of sexual violence, in particular against women and girls, in Tigray has continued since the signing of CoHA in November 2022. Specifically, the Commission has received information about conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated in Tigray as late as June 2023. The Commission also received confidential information indicating a noticeable

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<sup>160</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview CSAs), 2024

<sup>161</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>162</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>163</sup> BBC News, ‘[Eritrean soldiers accused of rape despite peace deal](#)’, 15 February 2023

<sup>164</sup> PHR, ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>165</sup> PHR, ‘[Broken promises: conflict-related sexual violence before and...](#)’ (pages 1, 29), August 2023

increase in transactional rape for food as well as continued sexualized enslavement ... in proximity to compounds or barracks of armed groups, in particular the EDF, which has further been confirmed by OCHA.

'... Perpetrators were identified as EDF and Amhara Special Forces. Other credible organizations have also documented continuing patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in Tigray since CoHA's signing ...

'Lack of access for humanitarian workers and independent monitors, in particular to areas in northeast, northwest, and western Tigray, coupled with the ongoing presence of the EDF, Amhara forces, and militias, makes it likely that cases from these areas are seriously underreported ... According to information from the Government, only 13 cases of sexual violence during the conflict have been tried in Ethiopian military courts, while 16 are pending – although we note that these courts do not appear to be independent or to meet international legal standards.'<sup>166</sup>

- 14.3.4 The EHRC report 28 February 2024 observed: 'Most of the recorded cases of SGBV in the [Tigray] region occurred before the Peace Agreement. However, cases of SGBV including rape of women and girls were reported by survivors arriving from areas under the control of EDF and Amhara Forces. North-Western zone officials also informed the Commission that after the Peace Agreement, new cases were reported by survivors arriving from Sheraro, Asgede, Tsimbla, and Mayhasen.'<sup>167</sup> The OHCHR report 2024 observed that during the reporting period (2023 and January 2024) '... In Tigray region, 16 incidents of sexual violence affecting 22 Tigrayan victims, including 10 victims below 18 years reportedly perpetrated by the EDF.'<sup>168</sup>
- 14.3.5 HO FFM 2022 interviewed an Executive Member of the Arena Party (UKHO FFM EMAP 2024) who noted:
- 'In areas controlled by Eritreans, families get raped and have to go back to their homes from hospital and may get raped again. EMAP had been to Adigrat Hospital where 20 to 30 women who have been raped attend the hospital every day. One woman said that about 30 people were raped but only one went to hospital. The problem is invisible as not all victims report acts against them. Culture is also a big issue when it comes to reporting rape cases, as there is stigma about rape victims.'<sup>169</sup>
- 14.3.6 UKHO FFM RIAA also noted that 'rape' was one of the security problems faced in the Irob area of Tigray.'<sup>170</sup>
- 14.3.7 On 9 July 2024 Addis Standard reported:
- 'Twenty seven civil society organizations based in the Tigray region are calling for urgent action from regional authorities to address the escalating issue of gender-based violence against women.'

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<sup>166</sup> HRC, '[Comprehensive investigative findings and...](#)' (paragraphs 151 to 153), 13 October 2023

<sup>167</sup> EHRC, '[Human rights monitoring report on Tigray](#)' (paragraphs 101 to 103), 28 February 2024

<sup>168</sup> OHCHR, '[Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#)' (paragraph 24), June 2024

<sup>169</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>170</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

'In a joint statement, the groups condemned the violence, kidnappings, and killings targeting women across the region, and expressed concern about the lack of transparency and accountability within existing procedures.

'DW [Dimtsi Weyane – voice of the revolution- is a TPLF television and radio network based in Mekelle<sup>171</sup>] reported citing a Mekelle City Police report that 12 women were murdered, 80 raped, 10 kidnapped, and 178 faced attempted murder in just the past eleven months.

'The groups criticized the Tigray interim administration's security and justice institutions for failing to prevent these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are held responsible ...

This comes in the backdrop of large demonstrations held in Mekelle on 25 June 2024, where women gathered at the city's Romanat Square demanding an end to the violence and justice for victims.<sup>172</sup>

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## 15. Humanitarian situation post CoHA

### 15.1 Numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs)

15.1.1 According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) there were an estimated 878,325 IDPs in Tigray as of May 2024<sup>173</sup>. The zonal breakdown is below:

Zone where IDPS are located	Number of IDPs
Central	208,343
Eastern	101,016
Mekelle	139,918
North Western	358,054
South East	24,160
Southern	46,834
<b>Total</b>	<b>878,325</b>

15.1.2 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted, 'There are approximately 600,000 to one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tigray depending on who you ask. IDPs cannot return to the disputed territories because their land is occupied by Eritreans and Amhara.'<sup>174</sup>

15.1.3 UKHO FFM CSA1 2024 stated that according to the federal government IDP management agency data there were 688,000 displaced people as of mid 2024. The source added that 600,000 were from the disputed territories in north-west, west and south Tigray, the area breakdown is below<sup>175</sup>.

<sup>171</sup> Reuters, '[Factbox: Debretsion Gebremichael, head of Ethiopia's Tigrayan ...](#)' 25 November 2020

<sup>172</sup> Addis Standard, '[Civil Society groups demand action on gender-based violence ...](#)', 9 July 2024

<sup>173</sup> IOM, '[DTM Ethiopia — National Displacement Report 19 ...](#)' (pages 26 to 28), 26 July 2024

<sup>174</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with BEOs), October 2024

<sup>175</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with CSAs), October 2024

Zone from where people were displaced	Number of displaced people
North Western	71,675
Southern	52,443
Western	564,910

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## 15.2 Reasons for displacement

- 15.2.1 The IOM report based on data from household survey conducted in March 2024 in North Western, Central and Eastern Tigray noted that when IDP households were asked the primary reasons that triggered their decision to leave their place of origin 96.3% in Central zone (n= 324),99.1% in Eastern zone (n=216) and 99.6% in North Western zone (n=277) mentioned fear of potential conflict with the remainder mentioning fear of potential conflict/social<sup>176</sup>.
- 15.2.2 The 2024 HRW report covering events in 2023 observed: “In Western Tigray Zone, local authorities, Amhara regional forces, and militias known as “Fano” [continued an ethnic cleansing campaign and forcibly expelled Tigrayans](#) in November 2022 and January 2023. [Reports](#) of detentions and expulsions of Tigrayans from the zone continued through August.’<sup>177</sup>
- 15.2.3 The EHRC report February 2024 noted: ‘Some cases of forced displacement continue to be reported particularly from North-Western, Western and Southern zones of the region currently under the control of Amhara and Eritrean forces ... Regional authorities have reported that in February 2024 for example, they have registered 12,000 new IDPs arrivals from some of these areas.’<sup>178</sup>
- 15.2.4 On 25 April 2024, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations reported that ‘Over 50,000 people are reportedly displaced to northern Amhara following armed clashes that have taken place in the past 10 days in the contested areas of southern Tigray, more specifically in Alamata, Raya Azebo, Zata and Ofla ... Some 42,000 people fled to Kobo, North Wello and 8,300 to Sekota and Wag Hamra zones.’<sup>179</sup>

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## 15.3 IDPs returns

- 15.3.1 The 13 October 2023 ICHREE report noted:
- ‘Civilians displaced from their homes in northwestern, eastern, southern, and western Tigray are unable to return to their homes owing the continuing presence of armed groups in these areas. Displaced civilians from northwest

<sup>176</sup> IOM, ‘[Ethiopia — Data for sustainable support to persons displaced ...](#)’ (page 13), 8 August 2024

<sup>177</sup> HRW, ‘[World report 2024 – Ethiopia](#)’, 11 January 2024

<sup>178</sup> EHRC, ‘[Human rights monitoring report on Tigray](#)’ (paragraphs 90 to 92), 28 February 2024

<sup>179</sup> European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations, ‘[ECHO Daily Flash](#)’, 25 April 2024

and eastern Tigray were unable to return home because Eritrean forces were present in the area ...

Displaced persons from Western and Southern Tigray were unable to return to their homes due to the presence of Amhara forces and militias, including fano, in these areas. For displaced Tigrayans from Western Tigray, the continued forced expulsion since CoHA as well as continued discrimination against Tigrayans in that region, is another indication that it is not safe to return ...<sup>180</sup>

- 15.3.2 The EPO weekly update report 30 January 2024 reported that: ‘On 22 January 2024, IDPs in Tigray region staged protests in eight towns, to demand to “return to their villages ... IDPs are unable to return to some areas in Tigray region as they are de facto being controlled by authorities from Amhara region.”<sup>181</sup> The EHRC report February 2024 noted: ‘The return, resettlement, and reintegration of IDPs as part of durable solutions has seen little to no progress following the Peace Agreement, particularly for IDPs displaced from areas not controlled by the TIRA ...’<sup>182</sup>
- 15.3.3 Sources interviewed by the UK HO FFM noted that IDPs were unable to return to their homes in the disputed areas: UKHO FFM CSA3 2024 observed: ‘the return of IDPs to their home areas is an issue. There were IDPs in the centre of the TIRA-controlled areas but they were afraid to return to their homes (in the disputed territories), their land has been taken and there is a potential for conflict with these people.’<sup>183</sup> UKHO FFM consultant stated ‘internally displaced persons (IDPs) have not been able to return to their homes and have remained displaced instead.’<sup>184</sup> UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted ‘IDPs cannot return to the disputed territories because their land is occupied by Eritreans and Amhara.’<sup>185</sup> UKHO FFM expert 2024 stated that ‘the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their home areas had not occurred.’<sup>186</sup>
- 15.3.4 However, a July 2024 USAID report noted: ‘On May 31[2024], the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (IRA) announced a comprehensive plan to return 690,000 displaced persons to their areas of previous residence in North West, Southern, and Western zones of the region, UNICEF reports. As part of the IRA’s plan, at least 8,700 IDPs returned to their areas of previous residences in North West’s Mai Tsebri and Tselemti woredas, or districts, between June 29 and July 5, according to national media ...’<sup>187</sup>
- 15.3.5 In July 2024 the Global Protection Cluster observed:
- ‘Since the start of the government-led return initiative, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) have independently returned to their places of origin using their own means, outside of the governmentled efforts. Out of the planned 16,450 households (71,675 individuals), 4,400 households

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<sup>180</sup> HRC, [Comprehensive investigative findings...](#) (paragraphs 263 to 264, 423), 13 October 2023

<sup>181</sup> EPO, [‘EPO Weekly update’](#), 30 January 2024

<sup>182</sup> EHRC, [‘Human rights monitoring report on Tigray’](#) (paragraph 58), 28 February 2024

<sup>183</sup> UKHO [‘FFM report on situation of Tigrayan’](#) (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>184</sup> UKHO [‘FFM report on situation of Tigrayan’](#) (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>185</sup> UKHO [‘FFM report on situation of Tigrayan’](#) (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>186</sup> UKHO [‘FFM report on situation of Tigrayan’](#) (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>187</sup> USAID, [‘Ethiopia - Complex emergency fact sheet #4, fiscal year 2024’](#) (page 3), 29 July 2024

(10,134 individuals) have returned to Mai-Tsebri, Tselmti, and Lalay Tselemti Woredas.

‘Of the 10,228 households (52,243 individuals) planned for return to contested areas in the Southern part, only 3,908 households (23,730 individuals) have been able to return.’<sup>188</sup>

15.3.6 IOM Data shows IDP return to TIRA controlled areas. The 16 May 2024 IOM report noted that ‘An estimated 200,687 households comprising 840,815 IDPs were identified in 666 accessible sites in Tigray region. These figures represent a decrease of 108,556 IDPs (-11.4%) since round 34 (August - September 2023). The same source explained that ‘The decrease is largely due to an increase in both spontaneous and planned returns, in Mekelle and Central zones.’<sup>189</sup>

15.3.7 The July 2024 IOM report noted that as of April 2024, Tigray had the highest number of reported returning IDPs (an estimated 970,265 returning IDPs or 37.5% of the national caseload). The same source further noted that ‘Tigray reported the highest number of returning IDPs initially displaced due to conflict nationwide (an estimated 968,641 returning IDPs or 39.8% of the national caseload)<sup>190</sup>. As of 31 July 2024. UNHCR reported that IDP returns in Tigray stood at 976,257<sup>191</sup>.

15.3.8 CPIT has produced below table based on IOM DTM data<sup>192</sup> showing IDP returns in Tigray by zone as of May 2024.

Zone	Number of IPD sites	IDP Households	Individual IDPs
Central	304	83,986	361,477
Eastern	269	28,031	89,073
North Western	194	105,964	480,355
South East	186	7,287	21,109
Southern	111	7,405	18,251
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>1064</b>	<b>232,673</b>	<b>970,265</b>

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## 15.4 Humanitarian access

15.4.1 The ICHREE report 13 October 2023 noted:

‘Compared to the situation during the siege, the humanitarian situation in Tigray has significantly improved since the signing of CoHA ... Despite this, humanitarian access has not been fully restored and humanitarian organizations do not have access to all areas of Tigray. The Commission is particularly concerned about areas in northwestern and northeastern Tigray where Eritrean forces are still present, and western and southern Tigray where Amhara forces and militias remain. OCHA classifies these areas as either “hard-to-reach” or “partially accessible”.’<sup>193</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Global Protection Cluster, ‘[Ethiopia ‘Monthly protection overview -Ethiopia’](#), July 2024

<sup>189</sup> ‘[Report 18 Ethiopia national displacement November – December 2023](#)’ (page 21), 16 May 2024

<sup>190</sup> IOM ‘[Ethiopia — National Displacement Report 19 \(November 2023 - ...\)](#)’ (page 13), 26 July 2024

<sup>191</sup> UNHCR, ‘[Ethiopia: Refugees and displaced persons as of 31 July 2024](#)’, 20 August 2024

<sup>192</sup> IOM ‘[Ethiopia — National Displacement Report 19 \(November ...\)](#)’ (page 33 to 34), 26 July 2024

<sup>193</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings and...](#)’ (paragraphs 234 to 235), 13 October 2023



- 15.4.2 OCHA [Ethiopia national access map](#) indicated that as of 31 July 2024 most parts of Tigray was accessible apart from Western Tigray where there were some movement restrictions and some areas in North Western and Eastern which are classified as hard to reach, that is 'security situation is volatile, compromising the safety and security of the population and aid workers, impending relief operations on a quasi-permanent basis.'<sup>194</sup>
- 15.4.3 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted: 'Although some aid is being distributed, it is insufficient to meet the needs of the Tigrayan people. Many Tigrayans perceive the lack of comprehensive support as a continuation of the genocide that began during the Tigray war. This perception highlights the deep mistrust and dissatisfaction with the current level of humanitarian assistance.'<sup>195</sup> The UKHO FFM REC 2024 EC noted that 'some aid is getting in, but it is very limited.'<sup>196</sup>
- 15.4.4 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024) who noted:
- 'There is a huge humanitarian need in Eastern Tigray including the Irob areas (in the border areas with Eritrea) – with reports of near famine conditions ...
- 'Ethiopia has a humanitarian crisis, which is particularly bad in Tigray. The UN is underfunded though Ethiopia is its largest humanitarian crisis.
- 'The BEOs said that aid can get into central Tigray. However, land movement into Tigray is difficult. Land travel is not possible from AA to Tigray through the Oromia/Amhara corridor because of insecurity: to travel on this route humanitarian organizations need a military escort. It is possible to travel by land along the Afar corridor, but it is a long way.'<sup>197</sup>
- 15.4.5 The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted.
- 'The RHRO said it was not enough. People are starving. Medical needs are not met, though there is some aid. There is drought leading to famine.
- 'The FG lacks capacity to assist but sends some aid.
- 'The RHRO said that international aid has not been enough. The provision of aid is affected by other crises such as Ukraine and the government's propaganda that it is self-sufficient may also mean aid is not provided.'<sup>198</sup>
- 15.4.6 The UKHO FFM expert 2024 observed: 'aid can get there [Tigray] but had not seen it go to Tigrayans, people still lacked basic items. The TIRA has its own priorities, but not including internally displaced persons (IDPs). The expert had spoken to IDPs on his visits, his experience was that aid was not being provided. Their situation remains dismal.'<sup>199</sup>
- 15.4.7 The UKHO FFM OWE 2024 noted that:
- 'The US had stopped providing food aid in June 2023 but this had resumed in November/December 2023. On resumption aid was prioritised for the most

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<sup>194</sup> OCHA, '[Ethiopia National access map](#)', 31 July 2024

<sup>195</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>196</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>197</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>198</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>199</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with expert), 2024

needy: refugees (but not in Tigray) then IDPs (in Tigray and elsewhere). They believed it to be working well now, with local partners. They added that aid for nutrition, lactating mothers, health and education had never stopped – only food aid. Aid is generally accessible in Ethiopia but in some areas, it is delayed. It is difficult to distribute aid in Amhara and Oromia. The officials were not sure about the situation in Tigray.<sup>200</sup>

#### 15.4.8 The UKHO FFM CSA 2024 noted regarding humanitarian provision in Tigray:

‘CSA1 noted that in Mekelle there are 19 IDP centres, with around 600,000 people but no official food aid has been distributed for the last 5 months but was not sure why this was. Suggested that it could be due to bureaucratic problem as the food is there or maybe due to a lack of resource or co-ordination, or due to political interference. There has been unofficial distribution of aid by NGOs but it wasn’t enough.

‘CSA4 noted that general distribution of aid has stopped. International NGOs (INGOs) suspected FG/TIRA were ‘repurposing’ aid. So, 4 or 5 months ago the INGOs piloted a new system for the distribution of aid.

‘CSA3 thought that a lot of people from international organisations were not able to go to the region but did not elaborate on this.<sup>201</sup>

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### 15.5 Food assistance

15.5.1 A 10 January 2024 OCHA situation report stated: ‘Currently, nearly 1.4 million people in Tigray need immediate emergency food because of the drought, starting January 2024.’<sup>202</sup> However, an 11 April 2024 report by the WHO (WHO report April 2024) noted that ‘the federal government assessed that 4.5 million people in Tigray were projected to need food assistance in 2024 and 2.1 million people require immediate food assistance.’<sup>203</sup>

15.5.2 The 10 January 2024 OCHA situation report stated:

‘The Ethiopian government and humanitarian partners are stepping up life-saving efforts in the most affected areas across the country despite severe resource constraints and operational challenges, including active hostilities in some areas ... Since mid-December, with the resumption of the USAID-funded food assistance, partners have provided food aid and cash support to approximately six million people in the Amhara, Tigray, Somali, and Afar regions.

‘The resumption of the USAID-funded food distribution in mid-December, after several months of a pause, is helping to meet some urgent food needs ... In Tigray, out of the planned in-kind food assistance caseload of 1.2 million people for the December 2023 cycle, more than 401,400 people have been assisted by food partners (non-government) since 21 December ...

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<sup>200</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with OWE), 2024

<sup>201</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>202</sup> OCHA ‘[Ethiopia: Situation report](#)’ (page 3), last updated 10 January 2024

<sup>203</sup> WHO, ‘[Ethiopia Public Health Situation Analysis \(PHSA\)](#)’ (page 4), 11 April 2024

'To provide urgent support to people in the areas experiencing drought conditions, complementing humanitarians' ongoing efforts, the Ethiopian Government has reached over seven million people affected by conflict and drought in Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions with close to 79,000 metric tons (MT) of food, and cash support of 1.4 billion Ethiopian Birr (approximately \$14.7 million).

'The Government has also recently allocated 7,700 MT of food ... for around 467,000 people in more than 30 districts in Tigray. The dispatch to the region started in the second week of December. Additionally, as of 3 December, over 131,000 people in Eastern, Central, and Northwestern zones and about a million people in the Central zone received cash assistance worth \$16 million. The cash support is expected to help families meet their most essential needs, including food.'<sup>204</sup>

15.5.3 The 25 March 2024 OCHA situation report noted:

'In Tigray, food aid continues despite limited resources, causing distribution delays due to caseload adjustment processes. But the ongoing response is not commensurate with the need. Cash response has only reached 37 per cent of the cash-based assistance caseload due to logistical challenges. In addition, difficult road access in some operational areas and varying organizational/resource capacity is limiting the progress towards meeting the target for relief food assistance within set timeframes.

'As of 10 March, 1.1 million people (out of a 2.34 million target) received 17,993.65 Metric Tons (MT) of food assistance across 56 districts in an ongoing monthly food distribution that started on 26 February. In January, an estimated 2.9 million people (86 per cent of the case load targeted for the same period) received food assistance (44,798MT) with the support of the Ethiopian government and food partners.'<sup>205</sup>

15.5.4 An April 2024 WHO report noted that 'WFP is targeting 2.13 million in Tigray with unconditional emergency food and nutrition assistance with the Government and partners assisting the rest'<sup>206</sup>.

15.5.5 An August 2024 report by the IOM based on household survey 817 IDPS households, 937 returning IDP households and 1,883 non-displaced resident households in Central, Eastern and North Western Tigray<sup>207</sup> found that food was the most commonly reported need across all groups - 92.4% of IDP households, 87.2% of returning IDP households and 88.4% of non-displaced resident households<sup>208</sup>.

15.5.6 In an August 2024 report, the USAID Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 'a leading global provider of timely, accurate, evidence-based, and transparent early warning information and analysis of current and future acute food insecurity'<sup>209</sup> observed:

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<sup>204</sup> OCHA '[Ethiopia: Situation report](#)', last updated 10 January 2024

<sup>205</sup> OCHA, '[Ethiopia situation report](#)', 25 March 2024

<sup>206</sup> WHO, '[Ethiopia Public Health Situation Analysis \(PHSA\)](#)' (page 4), 11 April 2024

<sup>207</sup> IOM, '[Ethiopia — Data for Sustainable Support to Persons Displaced...](#)' (page 9), 8 August 2024

<sup>208</sup> IOM, '[Ethiopia — Data for Sustainable Support to Persons Displaced...](#)' (page 15), 8 August 2024

<sup>209</sup> FEWS NET, '[About FEWS NET](#)', no date

‘Since late 2023 FEWS NET has warned that more severe outcomes would occur in areas of Tigray and northeastern Amhara if social support and humanitarian food assistance were not sustained at high levels during the June to August lean season. Now, due to the consistent delivery of humanitarian food assistance through August and the anticipated availability of a relatively favorable green meher harvest in September, FEWS NET can confidently state that the risk of more extreme outcomes in these areas of Ethiopia has become low. The start of the green meher harvest, coupled with a seasonal peak in the availability of foods mostly vegetables following a favorable rainy season, will most likely prevent a sharp increase in mortality over the medium-term

‘According to the Food Cluster, humanitarians reached 4.5 million people in July: nearly 15 percent less than in June, but 11 percent more than in May. The largest share of assistance deliveries in July were to Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and Somali regions. Distributions decreased from June to July across all regions, except for Afar and Tigray which continue to be prioritized.’<sup>210</sup>

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## 15.6 Access to health

15.6.1 The September 2023 WHO Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS) report on the operational status of health systems in Tigray highlighted that out of 853 health facilities assessed:

1. Damage
  - 28 (3%) are fully damaged
  - 736 (86%) partially damaged
  - 13 (2%) were undamaged
2. Equipment
  - 9 (1%) did not report equipment damage
  - 612 (72%) reported partial damage
  - 232 (27%) reported full equipment damage
3. Functioning
  - 757 (88 %) were partially functioning
  - 68 (8%) non-functioning
  - 28 (3%) were fully functioning
4. Accessibility
  - 118 (14%) were fully accessible
  - 732 (86%) were partially accessible
  - 3 (0.4%) were not accessible

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<sup>210</sup> FEWS NET, [‘Food assistance needs peak in August in advance of the meher ...’](#) August 2024

5. Operational -754 or 88% reported as being partially operational <sup>211</sup>.
- 15.6.2 The ICHREE report 13 October 2023 stated: ‘Despite some improvements, health workers and other interviewees explained that medical treatment and access to services remains inadequate’.<sup>212</sup>
- 15.6.3 The April 2024 WHO Ethiopia public health situation analysis report observed:  
‘Major access barriers to health services have been reported as including a lack of inclusive services for people with restricted mobility, lack of information on available services, lack of essential drugs, lack of medical equipment, and lack of skilled health care workers. Incidents of GBV against health workers are consistently being reported through regional health bureaus. The health workforce has also suffered greatly because of the conflict, with more than 10 000 health workers forced to flee their duty stations.’<sup>213</sup>
- 15.6.4 The OHCHR report June 2024 noted: ‘In Tigray, some notable improvements were observed regarding the availability and access to healthcare after the cessation of hostilities and resumption of social services. However, especially in non-TIRA controlled locations (more so, in areas under the control of the EDF) many health facilities were not functional, negatively affecting the right to health.’<sup>214</sup>

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## 15.7 Access to education

- 15.7.1 A November 2023 report by Heinrich Boll Stiftung, a Berlin-based non-profit organisation and part of the global Green Movement<sup>215</sup> (HBS report November 2023) noted: ‘... Regional government institutions in the areas of [among others] ... education are slowly coming back onto their feet ... For the first time in three years, universities recently administered Ethiopian entrance exams for grade 12 students, and all federal state universities have resumed teaching.’<sup>216</sup>
- 15.7.2 The UNICEF Education Cluster in its January – March 2024 quarterly newsletter stated that ‘huge gaps remain with returning over one million children to schools, some of which are still used as IDP shelters.’<sup>217</sup>
- 15.7.3 The EHRC report 28 February 2024 noted:  
‘Following the Peace Agreement, education in the Tigray region resumed in May 2023. The Regional Education Bureau stated that schools were cleared of mines and Improvised Explosive Device (IEDs) prior to the start of school.  
‘The Regional Education Bureau applied an accelerated teaching method to compensate for classes missed in the last three years ...

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<sup>211</sup> WHO, ‘[HeRAMS Tigray baseline report 2023- Operational ...](#)’ (pages 4 to 14), 5 September 2025

<sup>212</sup> HRC, ‘[Comprehensive investigative findings and legal and ...](#)’ (paragraph 236) 13 October 2023

<sup>213</sup> WHO, ‘[Ethiopia Public Health Situation Analysis \(PHSA\)](#)’ (page 18), 11 April 2024

<sup>214</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#)’ (paragraph 60), June 2024

<sup>215</sup> Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>216</sup> HBS ‘[The Pretoria Agreement for Tigray: One year after](#)’, 1 November 2023

<sup>217</sup> UNICEF Education Cluster, ‘[Ethiopia Education Cluster Quarterly Newsletter ...](#)’, 20 May 2024

‘At the time of monitoring governmental and non-governmental organizations were actively supporting the resumption of education...

‘According to information received from TIRA, salaries were paid to all government employees, including those in the education sector since December 2022.’<sup>218</sup>

15.7.4 However, the same source noted there were challenges to accessing education. It noted:

‘According to information obtained from the Regional Education Bureau, nearly 400 schools in the Western, Southern, and North-Western zones of the region remained inaccessible as the areas were not under the control of the TIRA. Of a total of 368 schools in Southern Tigray, classes resumed only in 174 schools in those parts of the Zone under the control of the TIRA. EHRC received information that in parts of Southern Zone under the control of Amhara forces, school had resumed since December 2022. However, the Commission is unable to confirm if education has resumed in 99 schools in Western Tigray as well as some schools in Irob Woreda.

‘In areas under TIRA control, extensive damage to school infrastructure and the lack of adequate educational supplies have challenged the full and effective resumption of education ...

‘The continued use of some of the educational facilities to shelter IDPs is also a challenge ...

‘... Regional authorities informed the Commission that there was a significant shortage of teachers and students reporting back to schools in comparison to pre-conflict numbers. Of a total of more than 230,000 students before the conflict in Southern Tigray Zone, only 70,000 returned to schools at the time of monitoring while only 3,152 of 7,351 teachers reported back to work. Administrators of the South-Eastern Zone reported a similar situation...

‘The regional school system also reported shortage of textbooks and teaching material ...

‘Security concerns, particularly in locations close to areas under the control of Eritrean forces reportedly prevented children from going to school. TIRA officials in Rama Woreda stated that insecurity and apprehensions about possible attacks have resulted in low student attendance.’<sup>219</sup>

15.7.5 The OHCHR report June 2024 observed:

‘Efforts by the TIRA, the Ministry of Education and other partners enabled some progress towards the resumption of education. While a considerable number of schools started functioning again, other schools were inaccessible due to the continued presence of ex-combatants, affecting the right to education for all school-age children in the region. Allegedly, out of 2,492 schools in Tigray, 22 percent (552) schools in the assessed districts are occupied by Eritrean Defence Force and Amhara forces while 4.2 percent (105) of the schools were still occupied by IDPs.’<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> EHRC, [‘Human rights monitoring report on Tigray’](#) (paragraphs 76 to 80), 28 February 2024

<sup>219</sup> EHRC, [‘Human rights monitoring report on Tigray’](#) (paragraphs 81 to 87), 28 February 2024

<sup>220</sup> OHCHR, [‘Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia’](#), (paragraph 60), June 2024

15.7.6 The July 2024 the Global Protection Cluster observed with respect to Southern zone: According to the Weredas (Raya Azebo, Chercher, Ofra, Endamokeni, and 20 Adi Wojerat) education sector data, in the assessed Weredas, 142 (71.72%) of the schools are partially damaged and 33 (16.67%) of them are completely damaged.’<sup>221</sup>

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## 15.8 Other services

15.8.1 On 20 April 2023 the New Humanitarian, an independent non-profit news agency focusing on humanitarian stories<sup>222</sup>, reported that after the appointment of TIRA, the federal government ‘unlocked an initial 25% of the approximately 12 billion birr ([US]\$222 million) [£174,977,210.42 pounds sterling as of 24 August 2023] annual budgetary allocation by Addis Ababa to the region, which was halted during the war...’<sup>223</sup>

15.8.2 The HBS report November 2023 noted:

‘Services including banking, communications and electricity, health, agricultural inputs, and transportation to and from Mekelle have resumed, although they remain limited due to the extensive damage caused by two years of war and the impact of a new armed conflict between “Fano” militia and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) in Amhara Regional State and adjacent areas. Regional government institutions in the areas of security, agriculture, health and education are slowly coming back onto their feet. The Tigray Police has been re-established.’<sup>224</sup>

15.8.3 The OHCHR report June 2024 noted:

‘In Tigray, particularly in the areas under the control of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA), and with the cessation of hostilities holding, there was ... continued restoration of services ... According to the Government, efforts to restore services and support long-term development in the Tigray region following the signing of the CoHA had been largely successful. It has been noted that billions of Ethiopian Birr had been spent in restoring air transport, telecommunication, electricity, banking, education, health services, and reopening factories with so far 217 factories having been reopened although resource constraints remained a challenge for further progress.’<sup>225</sup>

15.8.4 UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted ‘Tigray does not get its full budget allocation from the FG adding that this did not only apply to Tigray, but other regions also experience budget shortfalls.’<sup>226</sup>

15.8.5 The UKHO FFM expert 2024 noted:

The situation in Tigray had begun to look better in May 2024 than the previous year. Now the banks are open, there are flights to Tigray, schools are open (in the towns), and transport within Tigray is better. However, the

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<sup>221</sup> Cluster Protection ‘[Ethiopia: Monthly Protection Overview – July 2024](#)’, 31 July 2024

<sup>222</sup> The New Humanitarian, ‘[About us](#)’, no date

<sup>223</sup> The New Humanitarian, ‘[Tigray’s long road to recovery](#)’, 20 April 2023

<sup>224</sup> HBS ‘[The Pretoria Agreement for Tigray: One year after](#)’ 1 November 2023

<sup>225</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#)’, (paragraph 43), June 2024

<sup>226</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with REC), 2024

level of humiliation and destruction remained, and municipal services had not improved citing the example of Mekelle which appeared dirtier than the year before. The expert thought this was because of an internal political crisis in Tigray and a lack of resources. Tigrayans were also more frustrated than a year ago at the lack of progress and that people were leaving in all directions – no hope.’<sup>227</sup>

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## 15.9 Access to employment

- 15.9.1 UKHO FFM OWE 2024 explained that in Tigray ‘the economic situation is poor with unemployment estimated at 81%.<sup>228</sup>
- 15.9.2 The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted ‘They have seen more Tigrayans, especially women with children, begging on the streets [in Addis Ababa].’<sup>229</sup>
- 15.9.3 The UKHO FFM 2024 interviewed Kaibram Berhe (KB) the leader/chairman of Baytona (UKHO FFM KB 2024 who noted that ‘the Federal Government (FG) formally stopped hiring Tigrayans in government jobs. Though the war is over the FG has not reversed its policy of not hiring Tigrayans.’<sup>230</sup> A representative of Tigray Independent Party (RTIP) interviewed by the UKHO FFM 2024 (UKFFM RTIP 2024) noted that ‘Tigrayans were profiled in employment even to the smallest of jobs. There is discrimination in accessing services and often payment (a bribe) is sought in return for providing services.’<sup>231</sup>

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## 16. Situation of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa

### 16.1 Tigrayan population in Addis Ababa

- 16.1.1 UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted: ‘For the AA population, APAAU noted there was a range of estimates between 4 to 7 million, some sources even higher. APAAU also noted that there is no system of tracking internal movement within Ethiopia.’<sup>232</sup>
- 16.1.2 UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 ‘noted that there had not been a census for almost 20 years, but there were maybe 10 million people in AA. They had no number for the Tigrayan population. The RHRO thought Tigrayans lived in the areas of Hayahulet and others but since the end of the war had scattered across AA. These are also areas where Eritreans live which sometimes creates confusion as to who belongs to what groups (Due to similarity of language spoken).’<sup>233</sup>
- 16.1.3 On the Tigrayan population in Addis Ababa, the UKHO FFM expert 2024: ‘[R]eckoned between 500,000 and one million, this was based on estimates for previous elections. Tigrayans live dispersed throughout the city but are

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<sup>227</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>228</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEO), 2024

<sup>229</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>230</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>231</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>232</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with APAAU), October 2024

<sup>233</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with HRORs), October 2024



more visible mainly Haya Huleti (area '22'; business and residential area), Fiyel Bet and CMC (both in north-east AA, new areas developed by housing co-operatives over last 15 to 20 years). When asked why Tigrayans chose these areas, the expert noted that Tigrayans go to areas where they have connections and family. There are also a lot of Eritreans in these areas. But much has changed, many 1,000s of Tigrayans have left when the war broke out to Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda and the West.

'The FFM team asked about the overall population of AA.

The expert noted that the government estimated between 7 to 8 million people but thought it was more likely to be 15 to 20 million – many people have moved to the city from all regions due to better opportunities and lately because of the insecurity in many regional states.'<sup>234</sup> Sources estimated the Tigrayan population in Addis Ababa to range from 500,000 to one million.'<sup>235</sup>

- 16.1.4 The UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted 'thought there were maybe 500,000 Tigrayans in AA, and less than 1,000 Irob. They live in Haya hulet (area '22'), Bole, Summit, Safari and CMC.'<sup>236</sup>

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## 16.2 Legal protections and social capital

### 16.2.1 UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted:

'Outside of Tigray, Tigrayans are subject to arbitrary acts, as other Ethiopians are, as there is a general decline in rule of law and due process. This particularly impacts on Tigrayans, following the conflict, as they cannot:

- 'take back properties confiscated during the war – there is no redress mechanism. Tigrayans lost businesses and property in Addis Ababa (AA) during the war, purely because they were Tigrayan - not necessarily combatants
- 'they have less social capital (the informal networks and "heft" that people use to survive in Ethiopia - these could be family support or relying on contacts with power or government jobs to intervene over arbitrary/unfair "asks" from government, or family and business networks in AA to navigate increasingly arbitrary rules, or pay bribes, due to the expulsion of Tigrayans from businesses, and jobs during the conflict
- 'AA has been affected by displacement and forced evictions affecting poor Ethiopians of all ethnicities. According to reports the "beautification project" has led to the displacement of around 50,000 people in the first wave of demolitions in 2024. This is still ongoing.
- there are now fewer legal protections in AA for all Ethiopians against government actions, but Tigrayans have fewer people to call on for assistance – as Tigrayans were expunged from the government and many kin returned to Tigray during the conflict. The BEOs thought that the issue is about legal protections per se (Government is entitled to demolish properties) but about means to find redress or alternatives

<sup>234</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>235</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>236</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

when your house is demolished. If you are poor (of any ethnicity) you will suffer as you have few options, if you are a less-poor Tigrayan, you may also suffer because you have fewer ways to try and navigate the problem than others in a similar position. Tigrayans have not received compensation for the confiscation of their properties during the war.

‘The states of emergency have been used against human rights groups which report on arrests. So, these organizations cannot speak out for individuals arrested. This is the case mostly now with respect to the conflicts with the Amhara and Oromo.’<sup>237</sup>

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### 16.3 Treatment by the security forces

16.3.1 Landinfo, the Norwegian COI unit, published a report in Norwegian on 29 March 2023: ‘Etiopia: Forhold for tigrayer i Addis Abeba’ (Ethiopia: Treatment of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa). This followed an FFM to Ethiopia in November 2022 and was supplemented with information from ‘academic and diplomatic’ sources. The report stated, using a translation provided by Google translate:

‘Landinfo’s sources (Ethiopian think tank; international organization A; international organization C; Professor of Ethiopian Studies; Ethiopian citizen with a background from Tigray) gives a clear and consistent picture [showing that] reactions against Tigrayans decreased significantly after the lifting of the state of emergency in February 2022 and after the conclusion of the ceasefire agreement in November 2022. The sources do know that mass arrests no longer occur, and the threshold for arrests seems high. The scope of police and ID checks has also decreased sharply in Addis Ababa (diplomatic source, email March 2023). None of the sources could, when asked by Landinfo, point to a given profile or group among Tigrayans who are subject to arrests today. International organization A however indicated that Ethiopian authorities would be able to respond with violent means against people who publicly express that the TPLF should take power in Ethiopia. After the ceasefire agreement was signed in November 2022, reports about reactions against Tigrayans outside Tigray subsided in the national and international press and in social media. This can be interpreted in several ways, but it is according to Landinfo’s opinion, it is nevertheless reasonable to conclude that a decline in reporting also reflects a real decline in the scale of reactions against Tigrayans.

‘According to a representative from an international organization D, which has very good knowledge of the justice sector in Ethiopia (meeting in Addis Ababa, November 2022), all Tigrayans who were arrested in Addis Ababa in connection with the state of emergency (November 2021 to February 2022) [are] now released or transferred to the justice system.’<sup>238</sup>

16.3.2 UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted that they ‘had not come across any reports of cases [of arrests of Tigrayans] since the end of the war’<sup>239</sup>. Similarly, the UKHO FFM OWE 2024 stated that ‘they were not aware of targeting of

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<sup>237</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), October 2024

<sup>238</sup> Landinfo, ‘[Etiopia: Forhold for tigrayer i Addis Abeba](#)’ (google translate) 29 March 2023:

<sup>239</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with APAAU), 2024

Tigrayans by the FG; there is no systematic targeting of Tigrayans. They added that targeted attacks have mostly shifted from Tigrayans (during the war) to Amharas.<sup>240</sup>

16.3.3 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 observed: 'There are fewer reports of arrests targeting Tigrayans although the majority of Tigrayans outside Tigray were in AA. This may be because there are few people speaking on behalf of Tigrayans whilst there are groups speaking on behalf of the Amhara.'<sup>241</sup>

16.3.4 UKHO FFM 2024 interviewed representatives of Tigrayan political parties on the question of arrests.

'RTIP 2024 noted that during the war all Tigrayans were arrested but currently they arrest based on the identity of specific Tigrayans - prominent political figures, powerful businesspeople, or both. The security apparatus knows that arresting a Tigrayan can gain incomes from their relatives in the form of bribes.

'KB noted that 'the degree of targeting differs; other ethnicities are also targeted but not as much as the Tigrayans. Tigrayans do not have rights to seek protection from police or judiciary. No Tigrayans are in the police force, judiciary or in the government. KB noted that many of those arrested during the war had been released.

'EMAP 2024 'did not identify a specific profile of those targeted but noted that Tigrayans are still targeted. Adding that vulnerable people, that is people without IDs, are targeted. Those arrested stay in detention until a bribe is paid. The bribe is negotiable but ranged from 10 to 20,000 birr [approximately £137 to £274<sup>242</sup>]. People get arrested multiple times.

'MBP noted that according to the law one cannot be detained for more than 48 hours, but that is not respected and people are detained until money is paid for release. There are no door-to-door arrests but police target the vulnerable, for example, people without ID. The number of arrests is not the same as during the war. BM said businessmen and politicians are targeted but could not provide further details for example which politicians are targeted.

'BMP added that if a Tigrayan is arrested, there is no set amount of time for detention or particular amount of money to release them, maybe 10 to 15,000 birr [approximately £137 to 206<sup>243</sup>] but it's open to negotiation. Police do not care how long people stay in detention as families are responsible for providing food for the detained.'<sup>244</sup>

16.3.5 UKHO FFM expert 2024 noted:

'[D]uring the war around 50 to 60,000 Tigrayans were arrested and detained, as a conservative estimate [in AA]. AA became a "concentration camp" – all the police stations were full as well as other public institutions. Since the end

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<sup>240</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with OWE), 2024

<sup>241</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with BEO), 2024

<sup>242</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to GBP](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>243</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to GBP](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>244</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

of the war, Tigrayans have been released although some remained detained outside of AA, for example in Afar, Oromia and Amhara.

'Arrests have reduced since the end of the war but the narrative against Tigrayans continues. The targets of arrests now are: 1) Amhara, then 2) Tigrayans. There may still be round-ups during certain holidays when the government panics about what might happen – people might be arrested for days before and after these events.

'The expert gave an example of a killing by an Amhara linked to the "Fano" (regional Amhara militia) 2 months previously which led to many Amhara being arrested. The government's actions are unpredictable.'<sup>245</sup>

#### 16.3.6 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted:

'Irob and Tigrayans were seen as the same. During the war – due to propaganda – Tigrayans were arrested based on their ethnicity. Other Ethiopians in AA – neighbours - ganged up against Tigrayans, informing on them. During the war, detention was for 3 months and then release. When the TPLF got within 250km of AA, all Tigrayans were arrested. When the TPLF retreated, many were released.

'Since the PA (and the end of the war) the situation has completely changed. Arrests may randomly happen. People are arrested, detained and then released after paying a bribe. RIAA was not aware of specific reasons for this. Arrests may occur also before major celebrations or public holidays and big events for example Assembly of [the] [African Union, based in Addis Ababa] AU, Adwa victory, "irreechaa" (the Oromo cultural festival). The reason may be out of security fears but the police officers use it as an income opportunity. The people are then released after 24 hours.

'When asked about the number of arrests, RIAA did not know. However, they were not systematic, not organised, but RIAA added the security forces lack accountability. The FFM team asked if the random arrest and detention happens to other groups. RIPA thought Amhara were being targeted.'<sup>246</sup>

#### 16.3.7 UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted: 'If there were problems between the TPLF and the FG certain Tigrayans would be targeted. Arrests continue but not at the scale that occurred during the war. If problems arise, businesspeople and Tigrayan elite will be targeted. The consultant added that most of those arrested during the war have been released.'<sup>247</sup>

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## 16.4 Treatment of TPLF supporters/members

16.4.1 See section on [Political developments post CoHA](#) above.

16.4.2 There is no information in the sources consulted in this note to indicate that members of the TPLF have faced discrimination or other forms of human rights violations in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

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<sup>245</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with independent expert), 2024

<sup>246</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>247</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), 2024

## 17. Official documentation

### 17.1 Passports

- 17.1.1 The UKHO FFM in June 2024 interviewed Tigrayan civil society activists. CSA3 observed: 'It is difficult to obtain a passport and one needed money (to pay a bribe). ID (kebele) cards are not being issued or renewed in Tigray. There was a passport office in Mekelle before the war but was now closed so people must travel to AA for a passport.'<sup>248</sup>
- 17.1.2 UKHO FFM consultant 2024 noted that 'Getting a passport was difficult, but not impossible. During the war it was impossible. The elite might find it difficult – the FG would want to know why the person wanted to leave ... To get a kebele (ward) ID, a person needs evidence of their original kebele ID. This appears to discriminate against Tigrayans who migrate to other parts of Ethiopia.'<sup>249</sup>
- 17.1.3 The UKHO FFM EMAP 2024 noted that 'it is difficult to get a passport. Irob cannot get IDs and passports.'<sup>250</sup> Similarly, UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted, 'getting a passport is difficult for all people (not just Tigrayans) and that it used to take up to 11 days to obtain a passport but now it takes 3 months. The opening of a new immigration office in Mekelle ... will ease the process of getting passports.'<sup>251</sup>
- 17.1.4 UKHO FFM expert 2024 noted: 'To obtain a passport, a person just needs to prove they are Ethiopian and apply. But it is difficult to obtain a passport, there is backlog of applications. Asked if there were reasons for this, the expert did not know what is being checked on the passports or the reasons for the delay.'<sup>252</sup>
- 17.1.5 UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 explained that 'the government suspects Eritrean nationals of trying to access Ethiopian passports by posing as Tigrayans, so a Tigrayan registering for a passport for the first time needs to provide ID as well as provide one of their parents' ID.'<sup>253</sup>
- 17.1.6 UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted:
- 'It would be ok for a Tigrayan to renew their passport but getting a new passport (as for his wife and child) was a challenge.
- 'The FFM team asked if the delays in getting a passport were down to corruption rather than ethnically based discrimination.
- 'REC thought Tigrayans were targeted based on their identity but added that Amhara and Oromo may also find it difficult to get passports. REC considered that Tigrayans are often targeted for their identity, however Amhara and Oromos are targeted for political reasons.

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<sup>248</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>249</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>250</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>251</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>252</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with Expert), 2024

<sup>253</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with APAAU), 2024

'REC noted that there is no immigration office in Mekelle, so people come to AA for passports. REC added that there may be Tigrayans who get passports, it is easier for those with connections than those without.'<sup>254</sup>

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## 17.2 Kebele ID

17.2.1 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 noted 'there was no national ID card, but there was a kebele level card.'<sup>255</sup>

17.2.2 The World Bank (WB) in a paper from 2016 observed that the Kebele ID system is,

'... a highly developed and pervasive paper-based system for the personal identification of adult Ethiopians, defined as individuals aged 18 years and above. This system is administered on a decentralized basis by Ethiopia's 16,475 kebeles, the lowest-level units of the administration. The kebele card is accepted and required for virtually all identification purposes— to register a SIM, open a financial account, travel internally, stay in a hotel, obtain a passport, and to enrol to vote.'<sup>256</sup>

17.2.3 A WB study published in March 2024 on gender imbalances in accessing identify documents, estimated that 95% of men and 79% of women had a kebele ID card in 2022<sup>257</sup>.

17.2.4 UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted that 'A Kebele card allows access to services such as health, education and subsidized foods.'<sup>258</sup>

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## 17.3 Addis Ababa city ID: access to services

17.3.1 The UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 explained:

'... the government structure in Ethiopia consists of kebele (ward) – woreda (district) - regional government-federal government. However, Addis Ababa and Dire-Dawa city administrations have a parallel power/structure of regional government. So, in all other regions, there are kebele structures but in Addis Ababa the lowest structure is the woreda. Therefore, the [Addis Ababa] city ID can be taken from the woreda, unlike other regions where the ID is issued at the Kebele level. In regional governments, the kebele ID works for their respective regions without limitation to the kebele that issued it ...'<sup>259</sup>

17.3.2 The UKHO FFM RIAA also noted:

'... that people need a city ID to live in AA – [people are] always asked for city ID. Tigrayans cannot easily get a kebele ID in Tigray as the local authority offices are not always open and working. So, newcomers may have a problem, if security forces ask for their city ID and they do not have it, they may be detained. But Tigrayans already living in AA have city ID already, so

<sup>254</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>255</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>256</sup> WB, [ID40: Country Diagnostic: Ethiopia](#) (page 6), 1 June 2016

<sup>257</sup> WB, [Closing the gender gap in ID ownership in Ethiopia](#) ... (page 14), 20 March 2024

<sup>258</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>259</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), October 2024

no problem for them. People can use any ID to access hospitals or education facilities in AA but need AA city ID to rent a house, open a business, and to get employed in AA ...

'RIAA thought kebele / city IDs are used for: obtaining a birth certificate, a marriage certificate, a passport, opening or owning a business, buying a house and accessing hospital services amongst other things.'<sup>260</sup>

- 17.3.3 UKHO FFM KB 2024 and UKHO FFM expert 2024 thought that a person needed an AA city ID to live in the city and that 'people without a city ID risked arrest and detention.'<sup>261</sup>
- 17.3.4 UKHO FFM EMAP 2024 observed: 'since the war IDs [generally] are required to access services ... Without ID it is difficult to travel. Officials target Tigrayans, so that they can make money from bribes, it has become like a business for them. Also, one can't access government service and accessing a bank with a Tigray (kebele) ID requires an AA city ID.'<sup>262</sup>
- 17.3.5 UKHO FFM PAAU 2024 noted that the Addis Ababa city ID is used to access:
- '... work. For example, the city/kebele issues licenses giving a person a right to run a stall on a street corner. Some jobs, though, can be done without a license, for example collecting rubbish. The FG/city government aim to support people to move from the informal to formal sector. A license allows people to save money which they can then use to access a micro-loan to open a formal business. But for most this never happens.
  - 'schooling, although any ID can be used to access public schools. People with residence IDs of another location/ city can access schools in AA.
  - 'healthcare, depends on the level you need (primary, secondary, tertiary) which gets more expensive the higher the level of treatment required. For primary healthcare the city ID is not required but the person may need city ID to get medical treatment provided under medical insurance schemes. PAAU gave the example of neighbourhood insurance schemes. Often despite having ID, a person may not get quality medical treatment as some laboratory tests or medications are simply not available.
  - 'assisting getting a passport ...'<sup>263</sup>
- 17.3.6 UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted, 'a city ID is needed to open a bank account adding that Tigrayan kebele ID cannot be used in AA and gave the example of his sister who was unable to access her bank account in AA for lack of city ID. REC added that if a person is stopped by the police, not having a city ID makes them more vulnerable to being detained. If the person has a genuine ID, they are more likely to be released.'<sup>264</sup>
- 17.3.7 With respect to housing, the UKHO FFM CSA3 2024 stated that 'Specific ID is not always needed to access services in AA as long as there is some sort

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<sup>260</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), October 2024

<sup>261</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with an expert), 2024

<sup>262</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>263</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with PAAU), 2024

<sup>264</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

of ID'<sup>265</sup>. UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted that 'A person can rent accommodation using any identification, not necessarily a kebele or city ID card.'<sup>266</sup> APAAU noted that 'anyone can rent a house without ID' and that 'people with residence IDs of another location/ city can access schools and primary health care in AA.'<sup>267</sup>

17.3.8 UKHO FFM REC 2024 observed 'there is no problem for a Tigrayan to rent a house [in Addis Ababa]. A person needs a kebele ID [not necessarily a city ID] and the landlord and tenant have to go to a community / local police office to authorize the rental agreement. Before the conflict it was easy to rent a house without ID, now you need ID. REC noted that the ID laws are not always enforced in practice. Also noted that many people live with family and do not need a rental agreement (or city ID).'<sup>268</sup>

17.3.9 UKHO FFM consultant 2024 'explained that it is not mandatory to have a kebele ID to register with a school in Tigray or AA. On accessing health, it depends on whether it is private or public but one need to be resident [in Addis Ababa] to access health. In AA a person needs a kebele [city] ID to access government health services'<sup>269</sup>.

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## 17.4 Obtaining an Addis Ababa city ID

17.4.1 Regarding the requirements for obtaining the AA city ID, UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted:

'Formal housing is used to access ID. To get a (kebele or AA city) ID you need a formal address. Anyone can rent a house without ID, but to obtain an AA city ID a person must go back to their home area, give back their old kebele ID and get a letter confirming that they no longer live there and give the new address details.

'In AA, people often rent informal housing, for example multiple people live in the same house to be able to afford rent. And usually, people do not disclose such living arrangements, so they are unable to get an ID. If the person cannot go back to their home area or official documents were destroyed because of the war it is difficult to get a city ID in AA.'<sup>270</sup>

17.4.2 UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted:

'Getting a kebele ID [this appears to be reference to the city ID card] (also referred to as a resident ID card) was a problem, but on an individual basis because of corruption and bureaucracy – it was not systematic discrimination against a particular group. Everyone – all ethnic groups - complain about getting these.

'The RHRO said that to get a Kebele ID card, a person needs:

- to be resident for 6 months or more in AA

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<sup>265</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>266</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>267</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with APAAU), 2024

<sup>268</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>269</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant ), 2024

<sup>270</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with APAAU), 2024



- accommodation a sponsor
- 3 witnesses
- If moving from another part of Ethiopia to AA, a person needs a letter of authority from the kebele where they were previously resident.<sup>271</sup>

17.4.3 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted that, ‘Even when a person has all the correct information and documents, the process can take a long time and they may be refused.’<sup>272</sup> UKHO FFM CSA3 2024 noted: ‘It can be difficult to obtain [an] AA city ID.’<sup>273</sup> UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 stated: ‘Hard to get these cards without being vouched for. This is a general problem – but the way to get a Kebele card is to have an existing resident vouch for you. With many Tigrayans leaving AA, due to the hostile environment, there are fewer left to vouch for newcomers. Tigrayans and others are still coming to Addis seeking work or fleeing hunger.’<sup>274</sup>

17.4.4 UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted: ‘People pay a bribe to get fake or genuine [city] ID. A fake ID may cost between 2 and 5,000 Birr [around £27 and £68<sup>275</sup>]; a real ID may cost between 10 to 20,000 Birr [around £137 to £264<sup>276</sup>]. Many other ethnic groups from regions outside of AA also experience problems obtaining city IDs, but REC thought it was especially difficult for Tigrayans.’<sup>277</sup>

17.4.5 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted that people mostly ‘buy’ (pay a bribe) to get AA city IDs. It used to cost about 10,000 Birr [around £137], now 20,000 Birr (around £274<sup>278</sup>). UKHO FFM EMAP 2024 noted that: ‘A person needs to pay between 10 to 20,000 birr [approximately £137 and £274<sup>279</sup>] bribe to get the ID. Corruption affects everyone. Tigrayans buy fake city IDs. There are high levels of corruption so one can buy documents.’<sup>280</sup> UKHO FFM KB 2024 ‘gave an example of 2 Tigrayans who returned from Saudia Arabia and had to pay 10,000 birr to get a city ID. The ID is from the local district (kebele) authority not a national/FG requirement.’<sup>281</sup>

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## 18. Freedom of movement

### 18.1 Legal basis

18.1.1 The USSD HR report 2023 noted: ‘The law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, migration, and repatriation, basis and the government generally respected these rights.’<sup>282</sup>

<sup>271</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>272</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>273</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>274</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>275</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to British Pounds](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>276</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to British Pounds](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>277</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>278</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to GBP](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>279</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to GBP](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>280</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>281</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>282</sup> USSD, ‘[Report on human rights practices, 2023](#)’, 23 April 2024

- 18.1.2 Freedom House in their report on Ethiopia covering events in 2023 similarly noted: ‘While the constitution establishes freedom of movement, local conflicts impede people’s ability to travel freely.’<sup>283</sup>

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## 18.2 Road travel between Tigray and Addis Ababa

- 18.2.1 On 27 April 2023, the privately owned pro-government Fana Broadcasting Corporation<sup>284</sup> reported the official resumption of land transportation between Tigray and Addis Ababa<sup>285</sup>.

- 18.2.2 The FH report covering events in 2023 noted: ‘The intentional destruction of infrastructure such as roads and bridges by armed actors has also undermined civilian and humanitarian movement.’<sup>286</sup>

- 18.2.3 The USSD HR report covering events in 2023 noted:

‘... The government restricted movement in some areas, especially into and out of regions experiencing violence, including parts of Tigray ... Federal and regional authorities erected an extensive system of checkpoints on the road connecting regions to the center, which at times impeded travel for those seeking to deliver humanitarian assistance.

‘Throughout the year, the Oromia Region and Federal Police frequently restricted movement into the capital Addis Ababa during public holidays and similar events, citing security concerns.’<sup>287</sup>

- 18.2.4 Citing various sources, the Cedoca COI report May 2024 noted:

‘In April 2023, public transportation connecting Tigray with the Ethiopian capital restarted, although only the 1083-kilometer route via the Afar region was open at the time. Public transport on the shorter route via the Amhara region, which had been closed off following rising tensions between the Amhara and Tigray regions before the start of the war in November 2020, had not resumed. The only available land road to Tigray, via the Afar region, is convenient for goods but long, hot and unsafe for public transportation, one source reported ...

‘After the first strategic review on the Implementation of the CoHA in March 2024, the TPLF underscored that the complete reopening of all roads and an effective cessation of the siege had not yet materialized.’<sup>288</sup>

- 18.2.5 Sources interviewed by the UKHO on the June 2024 FFM were consistent in stating that road travel between Tigray and Addis Ababa through the Oromia/Amhara corridor is not possible due to insecurity. The UKHO BEOs 2024 stated ‘... land movement into Tigray is difficult. Land travel is not possible from AA to Tigray through the Oromia/Amhara corridor because of insecurity: to travel on this route humanitarian organizations need a military escort. It is possible to travel by land along the Afar corridor, but it is a long

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<sup>283</sup> FH, [Freedom in the World 2024](#) (Ethiopia), February 2024

<sup>284</sup> FBC ‘[About us](#)’ no date

<sup>285</sup> FBC, ‘[Land transportation to and from Tigray region officially resumes](#)’, 27 April 2023

<sup>286</sup> FH, [Freedom in the World 2024](#) (Ethiopia), February 2024

<sup>287</sup> USSD, ‘[Report on human rights practices, 2023](#)’, 23 April 2024

<sup>288</sup> Cedoca, ‘[Ethiopia: Security situation in Tigray](#)’ (page 44 to 45), 16 May 2024

way'.<sup>289</sup> The UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted 'land movement is difficult mainly because of what is going on in Amhara. There are a lot of armed threats surrounding [Addis Ababa] AA, such as the Oromo Liberation Front. Movement to Tigray is intermittent because of insecurity.'<sup>290</sup>

- 18.2.6 The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted: 'Land transport is being ruled out as unsafe for most places in Ethiopia and to travel to Tigray by land one might need to go through conflict zones.'<sup>291</sup> UKHO consultant 2024 noted: '... travel is difficult. There are 2 routes: through Amhara/Oromia or Afar. Amhara/Oromia is now a war zone, lots of checkpoints and not safe. Afar is open but the road is long. Tigray remains an island.'<sup>292</sup> UKHO expert 2024 observed: 'As to land travel, the Afar route was possible but there were risks and it was expensive (because of the distance). Road travel through parts of Oromia and Amhara was almost non-existent because of insecurity and war in Amhara.'<sup>293</sup>
- 18.2.7 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted: 'the road from Tigray via Amhara to AA is blocked and is not safe. The Afar land route is possible but there are security issues. For example, 37 people were detained and released a day later recently when travelling on this route. That's why people who want to travel to Addis prefer air transportation. UKHO CSA2 2024 noted: 'road transport is not safe. In the previous week 33 Tigrayans travelling from Mekelle to AA were captured by gangs in Afar and were still missing at the time of the interview.'<sup>294</sup> UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted that '37 people who were detained and released a day later when travelling through Afar.'<sup>295</sup> UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted that 'road transport is risky. The Amhara route is completely shut for everyone, not just for Tigrayans. The Afar route is ok, but there are problems. For example, recently 30 to 40 Tigrayans travelling on this route were kidnapped and 7 killed.'<sup>296</sup>

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### 18.3 Air travel between Tigray and Addis Ababa

- 18.3.1 In December 2023 Ethiopian Airlines resumed daily flights between Addis Ababa and Makelle<sup>297</sup> and January 2023, the airline announced that it would increase the number of flights to 3 a day and denied allegations of travel restrictions based on age<sup>298</sup>. In June 2024, Ethiopian Airlines resumed its daily passenger flight to Axum<sup>299</sup>.
- 18.3.2 The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted that travel from Tigray to Addis Ababa 'was smooth by plane. Many people come to get passports; many want to leave as they are not sure what will happen. Asked if those travelling by

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<sup>289</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>290</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with APAAU), 2024

<sup>291</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>292</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with consultant), October 2024

<sup>293</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>294</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>295</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>296</sup> UKHO 'FFM report on situation of Tigrayan' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>297</sup> Ethiopian Airlines, 'Ethiopian Airlines to resume flights to Mekelle', 27 December 2022

<sup>298</sup> Addis Insight, 'Ethiopian Airlines triples frequency of flights to Mekelle...', 14 January 2023

<sup>299</sup> Ethiopian Monitor, 'Ethiopian Airlines Resumes Flights Service to Axum City' 9 June 2024

plane were wealthy Tigrayans, the RHRO said that air fare is not cheap, so people will be expected to pay the price to travel by plane.<sup>300</sup>

- 18.3.3 The UKHO FFM expert 2024 noted that ‘travel between Addis Ababa and Tigray was ‘possible by plane with 8 to 9 flights daily from AA. There are also 3 flights to Shire and 2 or 3 to Axum. The FFM team suggested this might include many Tigrayans, the expert observed that the flights include international NGO workers. The expert also noted that Tigrayans on the flights were trying to get passports or other basic administration processes such as renewing driving license, short term business opportunities, medical checkups, paying federal taxes.’<sup>301</sup>
- 18.3.4 The UKHO FFM BEO 2024 noted that ‘there are 8 to 9 flights a day between Addis Ababa and Mekelle. This might be a reflection of the difficulties encountered with movement by road. It has got easier for Tigrayans to move by plane.’<sup>302</sup>
- 18.3.5 The UKHO FFM CSA3 2024 noted that ‘for internal travel a person could use a passport (or an expired passport), driving licence, an organisation (NGO) ID but very few [people] have a passport or driving licence.’<sup>303</sup>

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## 18.4 Travel within Tigray

- 18.4.1 The August 2023 UNHCR protection monitoring report based on 501 interviews with key informants across five zones in Tigray (UNHCR protection report August 2023) noted:

‘1 respondent out of 2 reported that men, boys, women, and girls are not able to move freely in their communities. The main reasons limiting freedom of movement for women and girls are:

- Fear of rape and harassment: reported by 35% of total respondents, 68% of respondents in Endabaguna Town (North-Western), and 59% of respondents in Gulo Mekeda (Eastern zone),
- Fear of robbery and
- Insecurity or general violence and fighting in the area.’<sup>304</sup>

- 18.4.2 The January 2024 OCHA humanitarian access map classified areas in South and Western Tigray as having some movement restrictions and some areas along the northern borders of Tigray as ‘hard to reach’<sup>305</sup>.

- 18.4.3 The Cedoca COI report May 2024 observed:

‘Multiple sources that Cedoca spoke to in November 2023 and April 2024 mentioned that there were no travel restrictions in the non-occupied areas of the region. However, security concerns limit the mobility of civilians throughout the region, particularly at night.

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<sup>300</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>301</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>302</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), 2024

<sup>303</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>304</sup> UNHCR, ‘[Protection monitoring report and solutions ...Tigray region](#)’ (page 3), 20 October 2023

<sup>305</sup> OCHA, ‘[Ethiopia - National access map 18 March 2024](#)’, 21 March 2024

'In the areas occupied by Amhara or Eritrean forces, residents face constraints when moving to other districts, including accessing markets. Addis Standard reported in September 2023 that the main road connecting the Irob woreda to Adigrat was completely blocked by Eritrean forces. The lack of mobility and intimidation prevented the Irob people from receiving humanitarian and medical aid. A representative of an international organization present in Tigray stated that Eritrean troops are manning check posts in the areas towards the border with Eritrea and people can be subject to abuses. The same source added that there is no public transport connecting Mekelle to places west of the Tekeze river. In May Tsberri (North Western Tigray zone), there is no public transport but passage may be possible via local informal transport with motorcycles. The EHRC found in July 2023 that 75 residents of Korem woreda (Southern Tigray zone) were reportedly arrested by authorities for travelling into TIRA-controlled Maichew town to procure fertilizers and seeds. At the time research for this report was concluded, the situation in the southern parts of Southern Tigray zone remained unclear.'<sup>306</sup>

- 18.4.4 The UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted 'areas under TIRA control are affected by lawlessness and high levels of crime, there is no free movement. By 6 pm everyone goes home for fear of being attacked. Travel from Adigrat to Ambasit in the Irob areas is blocked by the Eritrean forces, so a journey of 1.5 hours now takes 6 hours.'<sup>307</sup>
- 18.4.5 UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted with respect to the Irob: 'the Irob were previously allowed to go to a market at Senafe in Eritrea but after Eritrean forces took control of Irob areas access to this town has been stopped.'<sup>308</sup>
- 18.4.6 In October 2024 DIS published a report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray, and on return based on a FFM and various sources (DIS report October 2024). It noted: 'Freedom of movement is restricted for Tigrayans who were working with the federal government. They are currently still subject to surveillance and targeting by the TPLF. One of the interviewed organisations shared the case of a regional TV journalist, who had escaped to Addis Ababa out of fear for the TPLF, this person did not dare to move outside of Addis Ababa due to fear of being targeted by the TPLF.'<sup>309</sup>

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## 18.5 Migration to other regions of Ethiopia (except Addis Ababa)

- 18.5.1 FH in their report of events in 2023 observed 'Most Ethiopians feel safer in their home region than elsewhere.'<sup>310</sup>
- 18.5.2 The UK HO FFM in June 2024 asked sources whether Tigrayans can move to other parts of Ethiopia. UKHO CSA2 2024 'did not think it is possible because it's not safe. CSA1 gave an example of the risks. CSA1's organisation was working on a peacebuilding project with 20 Tigray and 20 Afar elders. After the training, 7 of the 20 Tigrayans were killed by the

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<sup>306</sup> Cedoca, '[Ethiopia: Security situation in Tigray](#)' (page 44), 16 May 2024

<sup>307</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>308</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>309</sup> DIS, '[Report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray ...](#)' (page 48), 22 October 2024

<sup>310</sup> FH, '[Freedom in the World 2024](#)' (Ethiopia), February 2024

Afar.<sup>311</sup> UKHO FFM REC 2024 'thought it difficult. Also, difficult for people who are mixed Tigrayan/other ethnic groups to move to other regions of the country.'<sup>312</sup>

18.5.3 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 stated that 'Tigrayans can only go to AA not Afar or Amhara. The Tigrayans do not trust the people in these areas.'<sup>313</sup>

18.5.4 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 observed that there were barriers for Tigrayans moving elsewhere in Ethiopia including:

- 'a misunderstanding of the constitution – Oromo and Amhara believe only people who are ethnic Oromo or Amhara can live in those regions
- 'Tigrayans cannot move to Oromia or Amhara because their property rights will not be respected although there is no law that Tigrayans cannot buy property or set up a business. But in practice no-one buys property because of insecurity. However comparatively AA is better for Tigrayans
- 'practical problems for road transport, travel is difficult.'<sup>314</sup>

18.5.5 The UKHO consultant 2024 detailed the numerous risks faced by the Tigrayan people noting that:

'With the rise of the new Prime Minister in 2018, Tigrayans were increasingly marginalized and blamed for the country's problems, despite the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) having led the government in coalition with other parties. The Prime Minister's derogatory characterization of the group as 'daylight hyenas' and the state media's targeted documentaries blurred the distinction between the TPLF and the Tigrayan people. The official narrative portrayed the people and the party as one, resulting in collective punishment for the entire ethnic group.

'... the trauma and distrust they instilled remain deeply embedded in the Tigrayan community.

'Currently, the lingering fear and distrust prevent Tigrayans from feeling safe in Ethiopia. The collective trauma from the past atrocities makes them wary of the possibility of history repeating itself, especially if any disagreements with the TPLF arise. This sense of insecurity is compounded by the lack of guarantees that such ethnic persecution will not happen again ...

'Under these circumstances, many Tigrayans believe that Ethiopia does not offer a durable solution for their safety and well-being. The pervasive sense of insecurity and the trauma from past events make them doubt the country's ability to protect them from future persecution. Consequently, if given the opportunity, many Tigrayans would choose to flee the country, seeking refuge elsewhere where they might find lasting safety and stability ...<sup>315</sup>

18.5.6 UKHO FFM consultant 2024 asked how other ethnic groups viewed Tigrayans, noted:

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<sup>311</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>312</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>313</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>314</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>315</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), 2024

‘Some were sympathetic. But the majority have some problems: the Tigrayans are perceived to have betrayed the country ...

The consultant emphasized the collapse of social relationships with other ethnic groups and neighbours due to government propaganda during the war. This makes it extremely difficult for Tigrayans to reintegrate safely...

‘The consultant noted that resettling in other regions of Ethiopia is equally unthinkable due to ethnic tensions and misconceptions held by the local populations. This ethnic polarization exacerbates the risks for Tigrayans and Irobs, making it difficult for them to find safe and accepting communities within Ethiopia ...’<sup>316</sup>

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## 18.6 Migration to Addis Ababa (AA)

18.6.1 For information of the population of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa, see [Tigrayan population in Addis Ababa](#).

18.6.2 The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 noted: ‘Many Tigrayans moved to AA because of the war and are still there. They have seen more Tigrayans, especially women with children, begging on the streets. Many people come to get passports; many want to leave as they are not sure what will happen.’<sup>317</sup>

18.6.3 The UKHO FFM REC noted:

‘Thousands of people had moved to Addis Ababa, especially those with relatives there. For example, REC’s brother in-law had moved and was living with him. There are a lot of Tigrayans in AA, more than before the war started – there also Eritreans. As well as from Tigray, Tigrayans have come from other regions of Ethiopia and those that returned from Saudi Arabia...

‘There had not been a census but estimated there were 800,000 Tigrayans in AA before the war and around one million currently ...

‘REC considered AA to be better than other regions [for Tigrayans]: better security and facilities, and it is huge – people can “hide” in the city. People can go to a coffee house, go to the bank, and speak Tigrinya. But there can be problems in getting government services, renting a house, getting (city) ID.

‘REC added that legally there is no discrimination but in practice Tigrayans are treated differently by officials. REC considered that it would be ok for a Tigrayan to renew their passport but getting a new passport (as for his wife and child) was a challenge.’<sup>318</sup>

18.6.4 The UKHO FFM BEOs 2024 mentioned that ‘the majority of Tigrayans outside Tigray were in AA.’<sup>319</sup>

18.6.5 UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted:

‘[A] person’s experience in AA did not only revolve around ethnicity, but a lot also depends on class and the work they do. Before the war there was mass

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<sup>316</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>317</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>318</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>319</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with BEOs), 2024

movement from AA to Tigray but during the war, this was somewhat reversed, eventually becoming difficult due to insecurity.

‘The experience of someone who has access to housing and a job is different from those without. Difficulties in accessing housing has more to do with the economic situation and high living standards rather than the war per se. Those without resources are only able to access informal housing, and this is the same for all ethnicities.

‘The ability to migrate is affected by a person’s socio-economic status. If a person does not need to rely on government assistance or community support, then moving to AA is possible and the FG has no way of tracking the person. But if people need aid, then people become visible as migrants.’<sup>320</sup>

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## 18.7 Leaving Ethiopia

18.7.1 For information on ability of Tigrayans to passports see [Access to ID documents](#).

18.7.2 Two of the Tigrayan political party representatives interviewed by the UKHO FFM in June 2024 noted that migration from Tigray is high, comprising mainly of young people due to lack of work and safety. They noted that many young Tigrayans travelled out of Ethiopia to other African countries and Saudi Arabia<sup>321</sup>. KB told the UKHO FFM ‘99% of Tigrayans leave illegally. Smuggling routes are common.’<sup>322</sup>

18.7.3 Similarly, UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted:

‘Large numbers of young people have migrated because of the trauma of war / lack of security, and the fear of war again. This includes many young Irob. RIAA was aware of 600 Irob in Libya waiting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Others had emigrated to Yemen. Those wanting to emigrate pay up to 1.4 million Birr [around £19,000<sup>323</sup>] to smugglers to leave.’ RIAA noted that ‘smugglers targeted people with relatives abroad and they ask payments in instalments as they cross borders.’<sup>324</sup>

18.7.4 The UKHO FFM RHRO 2024 considered that ‘generally it was easy to leave Ethiopia but some journalists and [human rights defenders] HRDs struggle to leave. The RHRO noted that when trying to leave the country, some journalists and HRDs have faced intimidation and verbal assaults at the airport by immigration or other staff. This, however, was not specific to Tigrayans. The RHRO were not aware of barriers preventing Tigrayans from leaving.’<sup>325</sup> The UKHO FFM APAAU 2024 noted ‘Tigrayans can leave the country legally if they have a passport.’<sup>326</sup> The UKHO FFM expert 2024

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<sup>320</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with APAAU), 2024

<sup>321</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>322</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>323</sup> Xe.com, [Convert Ethiopian Birr to GBP](#) (100 Birr = £1.37), 28 June 2024

<sup>324</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RIA), 2024

<sup>325</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with RHRO), 2024

<sup>326</sup> UKHO ‘[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)’ (Interview with expert), 2024



'knew of [Tigrayan] students travelling to China and the USA, for example, using their passports, so it is getting better.'<sup>327</sup>

18.7.5 However, the UKHO FFM EMAP 2024 noted that 'it is difficult to get a passport and one has to pay a bribe to the security service to leave the country legally. The amount of bribe depends on the profile and class of the person. Rich people pay more.'<sup>328</sup> UKHO FFM KB 2024 observed:

'There are 2 payments associated with travelling out of Ethiopia: one is for a visa, the other is a form of bribe to an airport/immigration official. If the bribe is not paid no one can leave the country, especially Tigrayans, even if they have the correct visa/ documentation. KB explained that the Amhara and Oromo control the (immigration) bureaucracy and if a Tigrayan wants to leave they must first contact a security person at the airport ... The FG decision-making culture (which discriminated against Tigrayans) from the war has not been reversed.'<sup>329</sup>

18.7.6 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted:

'Free movement is difficult, even if a person fulfilled all the requirements to leave. If a person is involved in a court case, they cannot leave. Normally, an exit permit can be suspended by a court or judge if the traveller is involved in a potential criminal case. However, a newly passed law gives power to the executive body (immigration and citizenship authority) to stop a person from leaving which means anyone who is not in favour of the government can be targeted without a judicial order.

'RIAA observed that there is a [new amendment to the immigration proclamation](#) that gives the Director General of the Office of Immigration and Citizenship Service the power to prevent anyone leaving the country. RIAA added that immigration can stop a person at the airport leaving the country, this is the case for everyone. But Tigrayans are recognisable by their names and may face difficulties. However, RIAA did not have recent examples of Tigrayans leaving and facing problems.'<sup>330</sup>

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## 19. Returns

### 19.1 Numbers

19.1.1 UK Home Office data for voluntary and forced returns, but not segregated by asylum and non-asylum cases, to Ethiopia between October 2022 and June 2024<sup>331</sup> is set out below:

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<sup>327</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>328</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

<sup>329</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

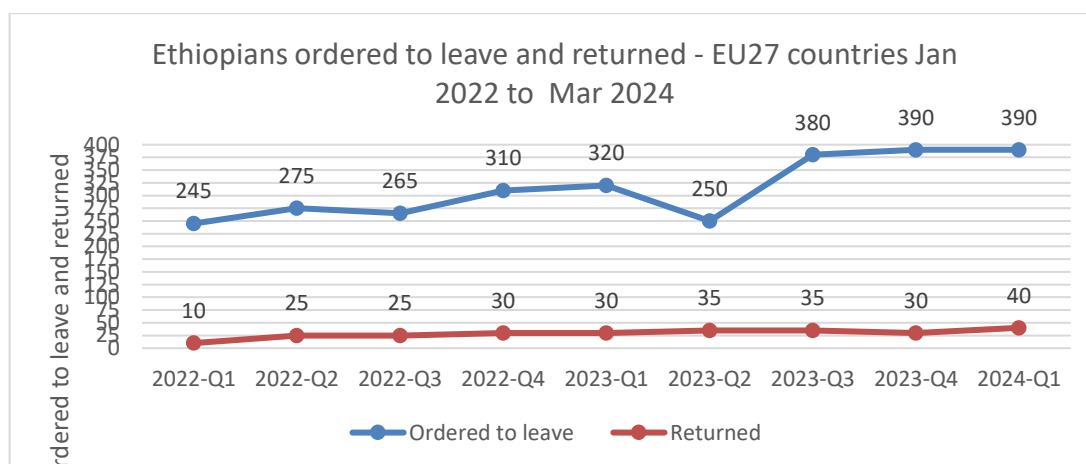
<sup>330</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), October 2024

<sup>331</sup> UK Home Office, [Immigration system statistics data tables](#) (Returns ...), 22 August 2024

	From October 2022	2023	To June 2024	Total
<b>Enforced return</b>	0	3	1	4
<b>Voluntary return</b>	20	24	10	54
<b>Refused entry at port and subsequently departed</b>	13	17	43	73
<b>Grand Total</b>	33	44	54	131

19.1.2 Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union<sup>332</sup>, has provided data on Ethiopians ordered to leave the EU-27 countries and those that returned following an order to leave. The data on returned include forced and assisted voluntary returned and where reliably recorded unassisted voluntary returns<sup>333</sup> but is not disaggregated by ethnicity or by asylum or non-asylum case. The Eurostat data shows that from January 2022 to March 2024 a total of 2,825 Ethiopians were ordered to leave the EU<sup>334</sup>, of these 260 (or 9%) returned<sup>335</sup>. Of the 260 that returned, 170 (65% of total returned) were returned between January 2023 and March 2024.

19.1.3 The graph below based on the Eurostat data shows the number of Ethiopians ordered to leave<sup>336</sup> and returned<sup>337</sup> between October 2022 and March 2024:



19.1.4 Eurostat data also shows returns by category – voluntary (assisted and non-assisted) and assisted forced returns but not if the individuals had claimed asylum. The data shows that assisted voluntary returns contributed the highest number of returns to Ethiopia (140 or 54%) followed by assisted voluntary returns (65 or 25%) and then unassisted voluntary return (55 or

<sup>332</sup> Eurostat, '[Who we are](#)' no date

<sup>333</sup> Eurostat, '[Explanatory notes](#)' (statistical concepts and definitions), no date

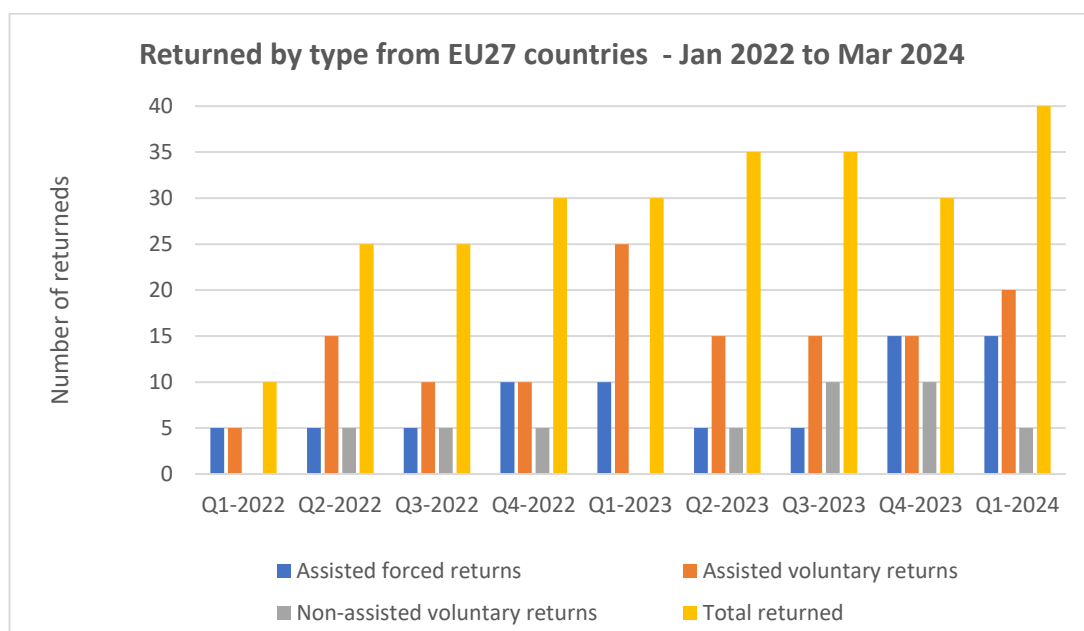
<sup>334</sup> Eurostat, '[Third country nationals ordered to leave by...](#)', last updated 4 September 2024

<sup>335</sup> Eurostat, '[Third-country nationals returned following an order ...](#)', last updated 4 September 2024

<sup>336</sup> Eurostat, '[Third country nationals ordered to leave by...](#)', last updated 4 September 2024

<sup>337</sup> Eurostat, '[Third-country nationals returned following an order to ...](#)', last updated 4 September 2024

21%)<sup>338</sup>. The chart below based on the Eurostat data shows returns from the EU to Ethiopia by category from January 2022 to March 2024:



19.1.5 Six countries – Austria, Germany, Poland, Romania, Sweden, and Norway - contributed 235 or 92% of all returns from the EU 27 countries. Sweden carried out the highest number of returns (175 or 69%) followed by Austria and Norway (each 20 or 8%), Germany (10 or 4%) and Poland and Romania (5 or 2% each)<sup>339</sup>.

19.1.6 The table below based on Eurostat data<sup>340</sup> shows Ethiopians returned by country from the EU 27 countries between October 2022 and March 2024:

Region	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024	TOTAL
EU	15	25	25	25	30	35	30	30	40	255
Germany	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	10
Austria	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	5	5	20
Poland	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Sweden	10	20	10	20	25	30	20	10	30	175
Norway	0	5	0	10	0	0	5	0	0	20

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## 19.2 Treatment on return

19.2.1 The UKHO FFM consultant 2024 did not consider returns would be safe, observing: ‘... the same government responsible for imprisoning many Tigrayans during the conflict is still in power. This continuity of power

<sup>338</sup> Eurostat, [Third-country nationals returned following an order to ...](#), last updated 4 September 2024

<sup>339</sup> Eurostat, [Third-country nationals returned following an order to ...](#), last updated 4 September 2024

<sup>340</sup> Eurostat, [Third-country nationals returned following an order to ...](#), last updated 4 September 2024

presents a significant risk for returnees, as they may face renewed persecution or imprisonment. Additionally, those who left the country illegally risk arrest upon their return, further compounding their insecurity.<sup>341</sup>

- 19.2.2 With respect to treatment of returnees, the UKHO FFM expert 2024 'had no experience of this' but noted: 'An ordinary person might be ok, but someone who had a profile, for example someone who had been involved in demonstrations against the government in another country might face problems. Asked if the Ethiopian government monitors the diaspora, the expert noted Ethiopia was a high security state, everything is monitored – and demonstrations in other countries might be monitored too.'<sup>342</sup>
- 19.2.3 UKHO FFM CSA1 2024 observed that 'returnees would face many problems. They do not have a home and the FG does not accept them properly. Returnees also face the challenge of making a life in Tigray. Asked if they knew of people returning to Addis Ababa, the CSA responded from social media mostly. The CSO activists claimed that many Tigrayans who returned faced arrest and harassment, documents were taken at the airport, some women were raped and their possessions taken away. However, the CSOs did not provide details including specific examples of when this happened.'<sup>343</sup>
- 19.2.4 UKHO FFM RIAA 2024 noted:  
'Many thousands had come back from Saudi Arabia (KSA) during the war. They were sent out of AA and detained. Asked about the situation since the [Pretoria Agreement] PA, RIAA thought the FG had no facilities to receive people back. RIAA had no experience of Tigrayans returning with a political profile. Of those people returning from KSA, they face psychological problems – no money and families may not be happy they are coming back empty-handed – and the Tigray local government is not prepared for them in their home areas. There is no effective administration in Tigray. However, RIAA was not aware of recent examples of treatment of returns by the FG.'<sup>344</sup>
- 19.2.5 The UKHO FFM KB 2024 'knew of one example of a person deported from an EU country who was given 2 options: forced military service or prison sentence. KB did not know of other examples. There may be situation where people may return, most returnees so far are from Saudi Arabia. A number who returned from Saudi Arabia during the war were arrested. During the conflict returnees from Saudi Arabia were detained because they were seen as dangerous but those who returned as part of the agreement between the government and Saudi Arabia were not detained. UKHO FFM EMAP noted that returnees are seen as dangerous and threat to society. Unless its forced return, no one comes back willingly.'<sup>345</sup>
- 19.2.6 UKHO FFM REC 2024 noted:

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<sup>341</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with consultant), 2024

<sup>342</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with expert), 2024

<sup>343</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with CSAs), 2024

<sup>344</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with RIAA), 2024

<sup>345</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with TPPs), 2024

'REC observed that Tigrayans do not want to return to Ethiopia, they are afraid of the insecurity.

'REC added that Tigrayans in Saudi Arabia do not want to return to Ethiopia, even those in prison. Asked how REC knows, he explained that people in Saudi Arabian prisons pass messages on to visitors about their circumstances. Many do not want to return because they do not have money.

'REC gave an example of returnee he knew about: 'about 7 months ago REC's wife's cousin had been returned from Saudi Arabia to AA, was held for 2 weeks, released and then assisted by the Red Cross. The cousin came and stayed with REC and after a month left for the Irob areas in Tigray, has now left Ethiopia again and is now in Libya.'<sup>346</sup>

19.2.7 UKHO FFM OWE 2024 were not 'aware of problems faced by Tigrayans leaving or returning to Ethiopia generally.'<sup>347</sup>

19.2.8 DIS report 2024 noted:

'Information about the treatment of failed asylum seekers upon their return from Europe was scarce among the sources consulted in Addis Ababa, as the majority of those Ethiopians who return from Europe are migrants, not rejected asylum seekers. A large number of Ethiopian migrants have returned from the Middle East region.

'... Bole Airport has the capacity, including staff, to maintain and operate an electronic system in place to collect data about passengers who enter Ethiopia via the airport.

'The degree to which the Ethiopian federal authorities monitor arrivals to Ethiopia varies.

'According to one source, a person who has been denied asylum in a foreign country would not automatically be of interest to the Ethiopian government upon their return. It is a general perception that seeking the opportunity abroad via migration is beneficial for the migrant, their family and the sending country. However, one academic researcher opined that there still might be fear of maltreatment and negative attention among those who return. If the authorities perceive a person as affiliated with any opposition group, the authorities will not detain the person on arrival at Bole Airport unless it is a 'clearly known person'. However, the authorities will 'follow-up' at a later point. The follow-up will include questions about the person's identity, place of residence and cohabitants. This follow-up may be undertaken in an informal way by a uniformed police officer, rather than officially ...

Authorities used to have a list of Ethiopians, in particular of Tigrayans abroad who are under suspicion or government surveillance. However, most of those who fled to neighboring countries have returned. Previously, the

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<sup>346</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with REC), 2024

<sup>347</sup> UKHO '[FFM report on situation of Tigrayan](#)' (Interview with OWE), 2024

EHRC used to receive complaints about Ethiopians/Tigrayans who the authorities denied leaving the country.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> DIS, [Report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray ...](#) (page 48), 22 October 2024

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Overview
  - Demography and language
- Political context
  - Tigray conflict
  - Conflict related human rights abuses
  - Cessation of Hostilities Agreements (CoHA)
- Political developments post CoHA
  - Formation of Tigray Regional Interim Authority (TIRA)
  - Relations between TPLF and Federal government
- Security situation
  - Political violence
  - Civilian targeting
  - Fatalities
  - Criminality
- Human rights situation
  - arbitrary arrest and detention
  - sexual violence
  - extra-judicial killing
- Humanitarian situation
  - People in need
  - Humanitarian access including access to food
  - Provision of services including health and education
- Situation of Tigrayans outside Tigray including Addis Ababa Internal relocation including freedom of movement.
- Returns including numbers and treatment

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **12 December 2024**

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### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section**

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## Changes from last version of this note

New CPIN

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## Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

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The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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