

FORUM:	Advisory Panel
ISSUE:	Measures to Foster a Sustainable Recovery from the Consequences of the Tigray War in Ethiopia
STUDENT OFFICER:	Gio Kim
POSITION:	Deputy President of the Advisory Panel

Introduction

The sudden conflict in Tigray, one of the most prosperous civilized regions of Ethiopia, is shocking not only in political terms but also in humanitarian terms. Despite numerous foreign aids to civilians affected by this conflict, the lives of many remain devastated. The Tigray War, which began in November 2020, has claimed thousands of lives, and



Tigrayans waiting for food after 2 months of extreme starvation

left 350,000 people in famine. The main cause of this crisis is the power struggle triggered by an election and a push for political reform, especially between the Ethiopian central government, Abiy Ahmed (Prime Minister), and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

It is also predicted that the crisis will cause possible famine, genocide, and state collapse in the form of post-war consequences. In particular, the famine among civilians is becoming increasingly fatal as starvation is used as a weapon of the crisis, as the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, stated that the TPLF forces "are trying to deal with the Tigrayan population by starving them out." The fact that the military troops deliberately targeted civilians during the civil war marks this war in Tigray as the most horrific war experience for Tigrayans. According to a May 2021 CNN report, Eritrean forces (allied with the TPLF) deliberately blocked aid deliveries to Ethiopian government-controlled Tigray, suggesting that the forces sought to defeat the central Ethiopian government through starvation.

Background





A man voting during the regional election run by TPLF

Throughout Ethiopia's history, the political sides have been dominated by a coalition of four ethnic groups called the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which attempted to take control of the government from the 1970s to the 1980s. The TPLF coalition granted Ethiopia autonomy but kept a tight grip on central power; its policies were criticized for being too repressive and brutal. Because of this criticism, Prime Minister Abiy dissolved the

coalition and formed his party, the Prosperity Party. After Abiy offered the TPLF to join his newly formed party, it refused, increasing discontent between the two authorities (Abiy and TPLF).

Due to the delay of the long-announced elections and the extension of Prime Minister Abiy's term, the TPLF held its elections, which was seen as an act of rebellion against the central government. The main reason for holding the elections was that the TPLF believed that the central government had not been well elected through a proper election and that Abiy did not have the qualifications to be prime minister. The TPLF was also upset with Abiy's efforts to establish friendly relations with Eritrea, which had maintained an enmity with Tigray.

On November 4, 2020, the central government finally accused the TPLF of attacking the army outside Tigray's regional capital of Mekelle and attempting to steal weapons, prompting Abiy to send national troops to fight the TPLF, which received military support from Eritrea. After government forces captured the capital, Mekelle, Abiy was able to declare success. Although the conflict is still ongoing, the Ethiopian government declared a cease-fire, which took place in the capital, Mekelle. However, Tigrayan forces did not abide by the cease-fire, and fighting spread beyond the borders of Tigray into Amhara and Afar.



Peace treaty for Ethiopia's war being signed

Problems Raised

Lack of Children Education



TIANMUN

After two years of brutal war in Tigray, the social services sector, especially education, has been massively damaged. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) estimates that by 2021, approximately 2.8 million children in Afar and Amhara (secondary victims of the Tigray war) will be out of school. This lack of education for children becomes an even more severe problem when combined with the global pandemic (COVID-19), as many students will not be able to return to school to be educated even after the war ends.



A child standing in the destroyed classroom

In addition, school facilities have also been damaged. According to a study of damage in Tigray’s education sector, about 88.3 percent of classrooms were severely damaged in 2021 (e.g., due to theft; tear down; burning of desks, blackboards, and textbooks; damage to computers, laboratory equipment, and toilets). The cost to repair all

this damage is astronomical. The students are also directly affected, as they now must walk an average of 7 kilometers to school, which tripled after the war (prior to the war: 2 kilometers)

Mass displacement of civilians

The war led to a sustained flight from the country that continues today. According to statistics published by the Ethiopian government, about 5.1 million people were internally displaced within a year. Many of them also fled to neighboring countries, especially Sudan, which means Sudan is also affected. The main reason for the displacement is the lack of food and medical supplies in northern Ethiopia, especially in Tigray. At the international level, countries believe that the conflict in Tigray will have a huge implication on the entire African region, mainly because of the problem of ensuring the management of refugee flows.

Starvation

According to the World Food Program, this severe humanitarian crisis has brought more than 5 million people to the brink of starvation. The Tigray region is isolated from the rest of the world, cut off

from supplies of essential goods such as food, clothing, medicine, banking, etc. Ethiopian and Eritrean troops mainly carry out the blockade of Tigray to target civilians and break the spirit of resistance. This famine deserves special attention because humanitarian agencies argue that the famine in Tigray is man-made. The agencies agree that the lack of food and basic services is caused by the blockade, and people will continue to suffer.



A baby crying/suffering due to starvation

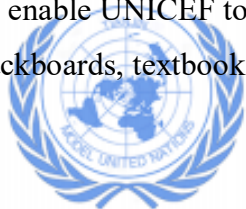
International Actions

Aid from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC delegates are working with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) to rebuild war-ravaged conflict zones. Together with the ICRC, the ERCS has set up several ambulances in the Afar region of Tigray and provided transportation delivering essential supplies (e.g., drinking water, food, clothing). These two organizations successfully supplied adequate water and established emergency evacuation nets for patients. By providing first aid and surgical equipment, the ICRC and ERCS improved the quality of medical care in Tigray, which is essential for the immediate care of the war wounded. To prevent further casualties from war injuries, these organizations have provided thorough training to deal with these wounded.

Recovery in Education by The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF 125,000 dollars to the Tigrayan region to support emergency education. In collaboration with the Regional Educational Bureau, UNICEF carried out several activities, including providing guidelines for education administrators and planners for future education and distributing basic educational materials for 16,000 children. With additional funding from the Dutch government, UNICEF will be able to provide approximately \$146,000 in further assistance to Tigrayan civilians. These additional funds will enable UNICEF to build schools and equip the schools with essential educational materials such as blackboards, textbooks, and additional furniture.



Key Players

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Through its overarching influence on various sectors, including health, sanitation, education, and shelter, UNICEF has developed a favorable attitude toward Tigrayan civilians. Specifically in the health sector, UNICEF provided essential medicines, basic health kits, and vaccinations to prevent further health problems. A total of \$190,000 was deployed, and it is even predicted that further assistance can be provided through the additional fee granted by the Dutch government. In addition, UNICEF focused on providing civilians with plastic sheeting, poles and ropes, and other essential equipment needed for families to build their own temporary homes.

Netherlands Government



Campaigns in Netherlands against the war in Tigray

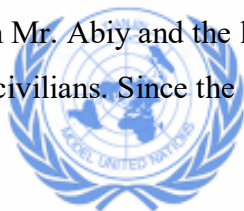
Along with other UN institutions, the Netherlands has given Ethiopia great financial aid. One million three hundred thousand dollars, the total amount of funds donated by the Netherlands for the war-affected civilians in Tigray, will be used by the UN to ensure water supply, sanitation, health care, education, shelter, etc. In addition to these substantial funds provided to the organizations by the UN, the Dutch government has also made smaller

donations to the Ethiopian Church and some NGOs. Due to these additional funds provided by the Netherlands, the organizations of the UN (such as UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNDP) can continue to support the civilian population of Tigray.

Possible Solutions

Negotiated settlements

To end a war requires a peace treaty or a negotiated settlement. Although there was a signed peace treaty between Mr. Abiy and the leader of the TPLF, the TPLF eventually broke that treaty by attacking Ethiopian civilians. Since the security of the civilians and the region is not guaranteed, a firm



TIANMUN

peace treaty between these two parties is necessary to guarantee at least the security of the civilians. Since basic infrastructures have been severely damaged, making it much more difficult to provide and maintain public services, a negotiated settlement is needed to repair the damage that has destroyed almost all major infrastructures. Furthermore, the Ethiopian government needs to pay extra attention to the civilian population to check the mental health status of civilians, as it is very likely that they are suffering from severe stress and even post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) due to their war experiences.



Peace agreement that had been signed between Mr. Abiy and TPLF's leader

Guaranteed Humanitarian Aids



UN truck carrying food

With large numbers of civilians still suffering from severe famine, the continuation of United Nations humanitarian assistance is essential. The United Nations and UN sub-agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, etc.) must provide direct humanitarian assistance to civilians in Tigray. Along with UN funds to rebuild destroyed infrastructure, other

assistance in various areas such as education, sanitation, and health care will ensure that civilians can meet their basic needs. Most of the humanitarian assistance will focus on improving the current hunger situation, as the famine among the civilian population is increasingly complicated by the political issue of blockade. The United Nations' involvement must, therefore, always be aimed at restoring the lives of civilians, not at improving the economic situation or reducing political tensions.

Glossary

Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)



TIANMUN

The TPLF was founded in the 1970s by a small group. This group fights for the right of Tigrayans, which is a relatively small ethnic group that consists only 5 percent of Ethiopia's entire population. It had a political conflict with Ethiopia's central government, which caused Tigray crisis.



Flag of TPLF

Truce

Truce refers to an agreement between enemies to stop fighting for a certain time. Ethiopian government and TPLF have signed on this truce to temporarily end the war.

Refugee

This term refers to a person who has been forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. Tigrayan civilians were forced by Mr. Abiy to flee to Sudan. s

Sources

“Conflict in Ethiopia | Global Conflict Tracker.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia. Accessed 11 July 2023.

“The Conflict in Ethiopia-Who’s Fighting Who, and Why? | Start Here.” *YouTube*, 14 Dec. 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ3aUGceKA8.

Conte, David Del. “7 Facts You Need to Know about the Famine in Tigray.” *Refugees International*, 19 May 2023, www.refugeesinternational.org/7-facts-you-need-to-know-about-the-famine-in-tigray/.

“Ethiopia’s Tigray War and Its Devastating Impact on Tigrayan Children’s Education.” *Africa Up Close*, africaupclose.wilsoncenter.org/tigray-war-and-education/. Accessed 11 July 2023.

“Famine as Weapon of War - a Timeline of the Tigray Conflict.” *IPIS*, 21 Oct. 2022, ipisresearch.be/publication/famine-as-weapon-of-war-a-timeline-of-the-tigray-conflict/.

Gridneff, Ilya. “The Threat of Humanitarian Crisis Grows as Ethiopia Ramps up Tigray War.” *Foreign Policy*, 19 Oct. 2022, foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/19/ethiopia-tigray-war-humanitarian-crisis/.

Gridneff, Ilya. “The Threat of Humanitarian Crisis Grows as Ethiopia Ramps up Tigray War.” *Foreign Policy*, 19 Oct. 2022, foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/19/ethiopia-tigray-war-humanitarian-crisis/.

Mwai, Peter. “Ethiopia Conflict: How Is Aid Flowing to Tigray?” *BBC News*, 6 Jan. 2023, www.bbc.com/news/57929853.

Mwai, Peter. “Ethiopia Conflict: How Is Aid Flowing to Tigray?” *BBC News*, 6 Jan. 2023, www.bbc.com/news/57929853.

“Report: The War in Tigray Is Undermining Its Environmental Recovery.” *CEObs*, 27 Apr. 2022, ceobs.org/the-war-in-tigray-is-undermining-its-environmental-recovery/#3.

Support, Tech. “Foreign Involvement in the War on Tigray.” *Omna Tigray*, 23 Jan. 2022, omnatigray.org/foreign-involvement-in-the-war-on-tigray/.

“UN.” *EUE: List Of International Contributions for the War-Affected in Tigray and Afar Regions*, 03/99, www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/update299.html. Accessed 11 July 2023.

