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The Tigray War / Northern Ethiopia War, 2020-2022

Prepared as a neutral reference text for conference participants

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Purpose of the note

This background note provides a concise but systematic overview of the Tigray War, also often described as the Northern Ethiopia War. It is intended as a factual reference for academic presentations and conference discussions. The aim is not to offer a political interpretation, to assign collective blame, or to reduce a complex war to a simplified moral narrative. The aim is to establish a shared analytical context: when the war began, who the principal parties were, why the conflict escalated, which regions and populations were most affected, and what sources can be used for further orientation.

For this conference, the war is relevant not only as a case of political violence, but also as a case of war-related disruption of food systems, soil and water management, health services, displacement, infectious disease risk, trauma, and the long-term reconstruction of civilian infrastructure.

How this conflict relates to the Ethiopia-Eritrea war

The Tigray War should be treated as a separate but historically connected conflict. It was not simply a continuation of the 1998-2000 interstate war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The 1998-2000 war was a border war between two sovereign states. The Tigray War was primarily an internal Ethiopian armed conflict between the federal government and the Tigray regional authorities, with major regional involvement, especially by Eritrea and by regional forces from Amhara and Afar.

The connection is nevertheless important. Tigrayan political forces, especially the Tigray People's Liberation Front, had been central to Ethiopia's federal government during the earlier Ethiopia-Eritrea war. Eritrea's government remained deeply hostile to the TPLF after that war. The 2018 rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea altered the regional balance and reduced the TPLF's position within Ethiopian national politics. When war broke out in Tigray in 2020, these older relationships shaped the conflict, but they did not make it the same war.

When the war began

The war began in early November 2020. The immediate trigger was the breakdown of relations between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray regional authorities. The federal government said that forces loyal to the TPLF attacked the Ethiopian National Defense Force's Northern Command in Tigray. Tigrayan leaders described their actions as defensive or pre-emptive in the face of an expected federal move against the region. The federal government then launched a military operation on 4 November 2020.

The immediate military confrontation came after a longer political crisis. In 2018, Abiy Ahmed became Prime Minister of Ethiopia and initiated a reorganization of the ruling political coalition.

The TPLF, which had previously been a dominant force in Ethiopian national politics through the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, lost influence and did not join the new Prosperity Party. In 2020, national elections were postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tigray's authorities held their own regional election in September 2020, which the federal government did not recognize. The dispute became a crisis of constitutional authority, political legitimacy, and control over armed forces.

Main actors

The principal actors were not static. Their role changed over the course of the war, and some forces were formally involved while others operated as allied or associated actors.

- The Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian National Defense Force, usually abbreviated as ENDF. The federal government presented the operation as an effort to restore constitutional order and federal authority in Tigray. The ENDF possessed air power, heavy weapons, national command structures, and links to federal institutions.
- The Tigray People's Liberation Front, usually abbreviated as TPLF, and the Tigray regional authorities. During the war, Tigrayan armed structures were often referred to as Tigray Defense Forces or Tigrayan forces. They drew on regional security forces, defectors, local mobilization, and a long history of military organization in the region.
- The Eritrean Defence Forces, usually abbreviated as EDF. Eritrean forces were widely reported to have fought in Tigray alongside the Ethiopian federal side. Eritrea was not a party to the 2022 Pretoria Agreement, which became one of the reasons implementation remained sensitive.
- Amhara regional forces, special forces, local militias, and later groups often described under the broad name Fano. Their involvement was especially significant in Western Tigray and in areas connected to long-running territorial claims and identity disputes.
- Afar regional forces and local actors. Fighting later expanded into Afar, a strategically important region because of transport routes linking Ethiopia to Djibouti and the Red Sea corridor.
- International and regional mediators and humanitarian actors, including the African Union, the United Nations, IGAD, the United States, the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and international humanitarian organizations.

The central problem

The central problem was the collapse of trust and constitutional authority between the federal government and the Tigray regional authorities. The conflict was about more than a single military incident. It concerned the balance between federal power and regional autonomy, the legitimacy of elections and state institutions, the restructuring of Ethiopia's ruling party system after 2018, the future of regional security forces, and the unresolved legacy of earlier conflicts in northern Ethiopia and along the Eritrean border.

The war also became a territorial and identity conflict. Western Tigray, also known in Amharic political discourse as Welkait, was especially contested. For Tigrayan communities, it was part of the Tigray regional state under Ethiopia's federal arrangement. For many Amhara actors, it was historically linked to Amhara territory and identity. This issue became one of the most difficult obstacles to return, reconciliation, and durable settlement.

The conflict therefore cannot be reduced to a personal rivalry between leaders. It reflected a broader crisis over federalism, state authority, party power, regional identity, security command, and the organization of political order in Ethiopia.

Short chronology

- Before 2018: The TPLF was a central component of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, the coalition that ruled Ethiopia for decades after 1991. Eritrea and the TPLF-led Ethiopian government remained enemies after the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war.
- 2018: Abiy Ahmed became Prime Minister of Ethiopia and moved to reform national politics. Ethiopia and Eritrea restored relations, ending the formal state of war. The TPLF became increasingly isolated from federal power.
- 2019-2020: The Prosperity Party was formed to replace the EPRDF structure. The TPLF did not join. National elections were postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic, while Tigray held a regional election in September 2020 that the federal government rejected.
- 3-4 November 2020: Fighting began after the confrontation around the ENDF Northern Command in Tigray. The federal government launched a military operation; communications and access to the region were heavily restricted.
- November 2020: Federal forces and allied forces advanced into Tigray. Mekelle, the regional capital, was taken by federal forces on 28 November. TPLF leaders and fighters withdrew and reorganized.
- Late 2020 and early 2021: Reports emerged of massacres, sexual violence, looting, displacement, attacks on refugees, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access. Eritrean and Amhara involvement became a major issue.
- June 2021: Tigrayan forces retook Mekelle. The federal government declared a unilateral ceasefire, but the conflict did not end. Tigray became subject to severe restrictions on banking, telecommunications, fuel, electricity, transport, and humanitarian access.
- Mid-to-late 2021: Fighting expanded into the Amhara and Afar regions. Tigrayan forces moved southwards and at one point threatened major routes toward Addis Ababa. Federal and allied forces later pushed them back.
- March 2022: A humanitarian truce was announced, allowing some aid movement, although access remained limited and contested.
- August-October 2022: Fighting resumed and escalated sharply. Federal, Eritrean, and allied forces launched major operations in northern Tigray, while Tigrayan forces resisted and withdrew from some towns.
- 2 November 2022: The Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF signed the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement under African Union mediation. A follow-up implementation declaration was signed in Nairobi on 12 November 2022.
- 2023-2026: Large-scale fighting was reduced, and some services resumed. However, implementation remained fragile because of unresolved territorial questions, displaced populations, disarmament, accountability, internal Tigrayan political divisions, continuing violence in other Ethiopian regions, and renewed tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Geographic development of the war

The war was centered in Tigray, Ethiopia's northernmost regional state. Tigray borders Eritrea to the north and Sudan to the west. Its geography includes highlands, dryland farming areas, river valleys, and historically important towns such as Mekelle, Axum, Adwa, Adigrat, Shire, and Humera. Because the region lies along Ethiopia's northern border, any war there has immediate cross-border implications.

The first phase of the war focused on Tigray itself. Federal and allied forces moved into major towns and transport corridors, while Tigrayan forces withdrew and later reorganized as an insurgent force. The second phase, after Tigrayan forces retook Mekelle in June 2021, expanded the conflict into Amhara and Afar. This expansion affected civilians outside Tigray and brought the war closer to strategic transport corridors.

Western Tigray became one of the most sensitive areas. It was militarily important because it connects Tigray to Sudan and politically important because of contested territorial claims.

Displacement, demographic change, and the question of safe return made this area central to post-war negotiations and humanitarian planning.

Regions and populations most affected

- Tigray civilians, because of direct fighting, airstrikes, shelling, displacement, restrictions on services and aid, widespread hunger, destruction of health services, and mass trauma.
- Western Tigray communities, because of contested control, ethnic displacement, property loss, detention, and disputes over return and administration.
- Women and girls, because sexual violence was widely reported and has had long-term medical, psychological, social, and economic consequences.
- Children, because of malnutrition, interrupted vaccination, school closures, family separation, displacement, injury, and the loss of caregivers.
- Amhara and Afar civilians, because the war spread into these regions in 2021 and 2022, where Tigrayan forces were accused of killings, looting, sexual violence, and destruction of civilian property.
- Eritrean refugees inside Tigray, because refugee camps became inaccessible, damaged, or insecure, and refugees faced killing, abduction, forced return, or renewed displacement.
- Health workers, aid workers, teachers, local administrators, and civil servants, because the collapse of public services placed them at the center of survival, distribution, documentation, and reconstruction.
- Farmers and pastoralists, because the war disrupted planting, harvesting, market access, livestock systems, seed supply, land management, and access to water.

Humanitarian consequences

The humanitarian consequences were severe and multidimensional. The exact death toll remains uncertain and politically contested. Many deaths were not directly recorded because of communications blackouts, restricted access, displacement, destroyed institutions, and the collapse of routine health and civil registration systems. Analysts therefore distinguish between direct deaths from violence and indirect deaths caused by hunger, untreated disease, lack of maternal care, lack of medicines, and the destruction of livelihoods.

Displacement was one of the defining features of the war. Millions of people were displaced within northern Ethiopia, and tens of thousands fled into Sudan. Many civilians were displaced more than once, as front lines shifted and areas that initially seemed safe later became insecure. Displacement also affected patterns of disease, nutrition, shelter, education, and water access.

Food insecurity and hunger were central to the civilian experience of the war. The conflict disrupted agriculture, markets, transport, banking, income, humanitarian delivery, fuel supply, and the availability of seeds, fertilizers, and livestock support. In Tigray, restrictions on access and essential services created siege-like or blockade-like conditions for extended periods. In Amhara and Afar, fighting also disrupted livelihoods and food systems.

The health system in Tigray was devastated. Hospitals and clinics were damaged, looted, occupied, undersupplied, or cut off from fuel, electricity, and medicines. Vaccination, maternal health, emergency care, disease surveillance, mental health support, and care for chronic illness were severely disrupted. The effect of this collapse extended beyond the period of active fighting.

Sexual and gender-based violence was widely reported by survivors, medical personnel, human rights monitors, and humanitarian organizations. Such violence should not be treated as incidental. In many wars, sexual violence functions as a method of terror, humiliation, displacement, punishment, domination, and social destruction. In Tigray, it also created long-term public health consequences, including trauma, unwanted pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, stigma, family breakdown, and the need for specialized medical and psychosocial services.

The war also affected education, religious and cultural sites, markets, roads, electricity, telecommunications, banking, and administrative systems. The resulting damage was not only physical. It also reduced trust, weakened institutions, interrupted data collection, and made reconstruction more difficult.

Violence against civilians and allegations of violations

International and Ethiopian human rights bodies, humanitarian organizations, journalists, researchers, and civil society groups have documented or reported serious violations by multiple parties. Reports describe unlawful killings, massacres, torture, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, forced displacement, looting, destruction of civilian infrastructure, attacks on refugees, obstruction of aid, and abuse of detainees.

A neutral conference note should be careful with language. It is accurate to say that all major parties have been accused of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. It is also accurate to say that patterns of violence differed by actor, place, and phase of the war. Some reports emphasize the scale of abuses by Ethiopian federal forces, Eritrean forces, and Amhara forces in Tigray, especially during the earlier phases and in occupied areas. Other reports document abuses by Tigrayan forces in Amhara and Afar during the expansion of the war.

The term genocide has been used by some advocates, researchers, and Tigrayan institutions, while other international sources use terms such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, starvation as a method of warfare, and serious violations of international humanitarian law. Because no international court has issued a final judgment covering the entire war, the most neutral wording for academic use is to describe the documented allegations and the status of investigations, rather than to present contested legal labels as settled facts.

Soil, freshwater, and public health relevance

The Tigray War is highly relevant to a conference on war, soil, freshwater systems, pollution, and disease. Tigray is a region where many livelihoods depend on rain-fed agriculture, terracing, small-scale irrigation, livestock, watershed management, and seasonal labor. War disrupted the social and technical systems that normally maintain soil fertility, erosion control, seed supply, ploughing, harvesting, veterinary care, and market exchange.

Soil and agriculture. The war affected agriculture through direct destruction, insecurity, displacement, loss of labor, loss of oxen and livestock, looting, seed shortages, fertilizer disruption, fuel shortages, and reduced access to markets. However, the agricultural picture is not simple. Some remote-sensing work suggests that cultivated area in parts of Tigray remained more resilient than expected in 2020-2021, showing that farmers continued to cultivate under very difficult conditions. This does not mean that the food system was healthy. It means that production, access, nutrition, and distribution must be analyzed separately.

Freshwater and sanitation. Conflict affected water systems through damage to pumps, generators, pipes, water points, sanitation facilities, electricity supply, fuel availability, and maintenance capacity. Displacement increased pressure on limited water points and created higher risks of diarrheal disease, waterborne infection, poor hygiene, and gender-based risk around water collection. Health facilities also require reliable water and sanitation; when those systems fail, maternal care, surgery, infection control, and disease prevention become harder.

Public health. The collapse of health services turned treatable conditions into life-threatening events. Malnutrition, interruption of vaccination, maternal and newborn risk, untreated chronic disease, infectious disease surveillance gaps, disability, trauma, sexual violence, HIV/STI risk, and mental health needs all became part of the war's public health footprint. The public health effects did not end with the Pretoria Agreement because reconstruction of systems, trust, personnel, supply chains, and data takes years.

Pollution and remnants of war. Heavy fighting, shelling, damaged buildings, burned vehicles, destroyed clinics, damaged water systems, unexploded ordnance, fuel contamination, waste accumulation, and disrupted municipal services can create local environmental risks. These risks are often under-documented in active conflict settings because access is limited and immediate survival needs take priority.

Regional and international dimensions

Although the Tigray War was primarily an internal Ethiopian conflict, it had significant regional and international dimensions. Eritrea's involvement made the war a cross-border conflict in practice, even if the Pretoria Agreement was formally between the Ethiopian federal government and the TPLF. Sudan was affected by refugee flows and border instability. The wider Horn of Africa context mattered because Ethiopia is central to Red Sea security, migration routes, regional diplomacy, and trade corridors.

The African Union played the central mediating role in the Pretoria process. International actors, including the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and humanitarian organizations, focused on ceasefires, humanitarian access, accountability, sanctions debates, and support for negotiations. Diplomatic pressure interacted with battlefield developments: the agreement emerged after military escalation, humanitarian exhaustion, and growing international concern.

The Pretoria Agreement and post-war fragility

The Pretoria Agreement of 2 November 2022 established a permanent cessation of hostilities between the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF. It included commitments related to disarmament, restoration of federal authority, humanitarian access, protection of civilians, restoration of services, and the establishment of an interim regional administration. A Nairobi implementation declaration followed on 12 November 2022.

The agreement reduced large-scale fighting, allowed some humanitarian access to resume, and opened the way for partial restoration of services. However, it did not solve all underlying problems. Eritrea and Amhara regional forces were not parties to the agreement. Western Tigray remained contested. Many displaced people could not safely return. Accountability for alleged atrocities remained limited and contested. Demobilization and reintegration of fighters moved slowly. Trust between the federal government, Tigrayan authorities, Amhara actors, Eritrea, and local communities remained weak.

By 2025-2026, renewed tensions around Tigray's interim administration, divisions within the TPLF, insecurity in Amhara, and deteriorating Ethiopia-Eritrea relations showed that the peace process remained fragile. For conference purposes, it is therefore best to describe the war as formally ended by the 2022 cessation agreement, while noting that many political, humanitarian, territorial, and accountability issues remain unresolved.

Why the war matters for academic discussion

For academic and conference purposes, the Tigray War matters because it shows how modern armed conflict creates layered forms of harm that extend beyond the battlefield. It is relevant to the study of:

- federalism, regional autonomy, and state authority;
- cross-border intervention and the legacy of earlier wars;
- humanitarian access, siege-like conditions, and service denial;
- food systems, famine risk, and agricultural resilience under war;
- sexual violence, trauma, and long-term public health consequences;
- collapse and reconstruction of health systems;
- water, sanitation, displacement, and disease risk;

- documentation problems during communications blackouts;
- post-war return, land claims, identity, and transitional justice;
- the limits of peace agreements when key armed actors are not signatories.

The war should therefore not be described only as a political dispute or as a local security operation. It was a complex armed conflict with military, humanitarian, legal, social, environmental, public health, and regional dimensions.

Neutral formulation for use in presentations

The Tigray War, also known as the Northern Ethiopia War, began in early November 2020 after relations between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray regional authorities collapsed. The immediate trigger was the confrontation around the Ethiopian National Defense Force's Northern Command in Tigray, followed by a federal military operation. The war developed from a crisis over constitutional authority, federal-regional relations, party restructuring, regional security forces, and disputed legitimacy after Ethiopia's postponed 2020 national elections and Tigray's separate regional election.

The conflict was primarily an internal Ethiopian war between the federal government and the TPLF/Tigrayan forces, but it had major regional involvement, including Eritrean forces and Amhara and Afar regional actors. It produced severe civilian harm, including displacement, hunger, destruction of health services, sexual violence, disruption of water and sanitation systems, and damage to livelihoods. The Pretoria Agreement of 2 November 2022 formally ended large-scale hostilities between the federal government and the TPLF, but issues such as Western Tigray, returns of displaced people, accountability, demobilization, Eritrean involvement, and regional insecurity remain unresolved. The war is best understood as a separate conflict from the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war, but one shaped by that war's legacy and by the post-2018 Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement.

Key terms

- Tigray - Ethiopia's northernmost regional state, bordering Eritrea and Sudan.
- TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front, the political organization that governed Tigray and had been a dominant force in Ethiopia's former ruling coalition.
- TDF / Tigrayan forces - Armed forces associated with the Tigray regional authorities and the TPLF during the war.
- ENDF - Ethiopian National Defense Force, Ethiopia's federal military.
- EDF - Eritrean Defence Forces, Eritrea's national military, widely reported to have fought in Tigray.
- Prosperity Party - The ruling party created under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed after the reorganization of the former EPRDF coalition.
- Northern Command - ENDF command structure in Tigray whose confrontation with Tigrayan forces became the immediate trigger of the war.
- Western Tigray / Welkait - A contested area central to displacement, return, identity, and territorial claims.
- Pretoria Agreement - The 2 November 2022 agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF establishing a permanent cessation of hostilities.
- Nairobi Declaration - The 12 November 2022 implementation document linked to the Pretoria Agreement.
- DDR - Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of fighters after conflict.
- Humanitarian access - The ability of aid organizations to reach populations in need with food, medical supplies, water, fuel, and protection services.

Selected bibliography and sources for further orientation

General background and chronology

- Reuters and Associated Press reporting on the Tigray War, the Pretoria Agreement, Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions, post-war Tigray politics, and Ethiopia's security situation.
- The Guardian, BBC, Al Jazeera, France 24, Le Monde, and Deutsche Welle reporting on major phases of the war, humanitarian access, sexual violence, and peace negotiations.
- International Crisis Group. Ethiopia and Horn of Africa conflict analysis.
- Council on Foreign Relations. Ethiopia conflict background materials.
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. Ethiopia conflict data, event mapping, and analysis.

Peace process and diplomacy

- African Union. Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, 2 November 2022.
- Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, 12 November 2022.
- United Nations statements on the Pretoria Agreement and humanitarian access.
- IGAD, United States, European Union, and African Union materials on mediation and implementation.

Humanitarian situation, food systems, and displacement

- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Ethiopia and Northern Ethiopia humanitarian updates and response plans.
- World Food Programme. Ethiopia emergency and food security updates.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Ethiopia agricultural and food security updates.
- Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and FEWS NET materials on food insecurity in northern Ethiopia.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Ethiopia and Sudan refugee situation updates.
- International Organization for Migration. Displacement Tracking Matrix materials for Ethiopia.

Human rights, international law, and accountability

- OHCHR and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by All Parties to the Conflict in Tigray, 2021.
- International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia. Reports and statements to the UN Human Rights Council, 2022-2023.
- Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Reports on Western Tigray, abuses against civilians, detention, sexual violence, and conflict-related violations.
- Physicians for Human Rights and the Organization for Justice and Accountability in the Horn of Africa. Documentation of conflict-related sexual violence in Tigray.
- Ethiopian Human Rights Commission reports on violations in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar.

Health, water, soil, and environmental relevance

- World Health Organization. Ethiopia health emergency updates and materials on health service disruption.
- Medecins Sans Frontieres. Ethiopia/Tigray medical reports and operational updates.
- UNICEF. Child protection, nutrition, vaccination, water, sanitation, and hygiene updates.

- FAO and WFP materials on agriculture, livestock, food access, and livelihoods in northern Ethiopia.
- Remote-sensing and public-health research on crop cultivation, mortality, malnutrition, maternal health, and health system collapse in Tigray.

Maps and data sources

- ACLED - conflict events, violence patterns, territorial dynamics, and maps.
- OCHA - humanitarian access, people in need, affected areas, and operational constraints.
- UNHCR - refugee flows and cross-border displacement.
- IOM DTM - internal displacement and mobility tracking.
- IPC, FEWS NET, WFP, and FAO - food insecurity, markets, agriculture, and hunger.

Minimum recommended reading set

For a participant with limited time, the following sources are sufficient for a basic but reliable understanding of the war:

- a Reuters or Associated Press explainer or chronology on the Tigray War and the Pretoria Agreement;
- the Pretoria Agreement and Nairobi implementation declaration;
- OCHA or WFP materials on the humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia;
- the OHCHR/EHRC Joint Investigation report of 2021;
- one International Crisis Group or ACLED analysis of the conflict and post-war risks.

For a participant preparing an academic paper or presentation, the following should be added:

- UN Human Rights Council materials from the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia;
- Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reports on Western Tigray and abuses by multiple parties;
- WHO, MSF, UNICEF, and public-health research on health system collapse, sexual violence, nutrition, vaccination, and maternal health;
- FAO, WFP, IPC, FEWS NET, and remote-sensing studies on agriculture, food security, and livelihoods;
- ACLED data for spatial and temporal analysis of violence patterns.

Concluding summary

The Tigray War began in early November 2020 when the political and constitutional crisis between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray regional authorities became an armed conflict. It was primarily an internal Ethiopian war, but it had major regional involvement, especially by Eritrea and by Amhara and Afar regional forces. It was separate from the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war, but strongly shaped by that war's legacy, by the role of the TPLF in Ethiopia's earlier political order, and by the 2018 Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement.

The war devastated civilians through direct violence, displacement, hunger, sexual violence, health system collapse, disrupted water and sanitation, interrupted agriculture, damaged livelihoods, and deep institutional trauma. The Pretoria Agreement of 2 November 2022 formally ended large-scale hostilities between the federal government and the TPLF, but it did not fully resolve the conflict's underlying issues. Western Tigray, return of displaced people, accountability, disarmament and reintegration, Eritrean involvement, regional armed actors, and the reconstruction of civilian systems remain central to understanding the post-war period.

For conference discussion, the most neutral and analytically useful framing is this: the Tigray War was a distinct internal Ethiopian armed conflict with major regional involvement, rooted in a collapse of federal-regional trust and shaped by the legacy of earlier Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Its consequences are humanitarian, legal, public health, environmental, social, economic, and

regional. It should be analyzed not only as a political crisis, but as a war that transformed civilian life, food systems, water systems, health systems, and post-war recovery across northern Ethiopia.