

**SCOTTISH HIGH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
MODEL UNITED NATIONS**

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHT COUNCIL**

**AGENDA: Deliberation on the human rights violation and accountability in the Tigray region (Ethiopia) with emphasis on international cooperation.**

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

It gives us incredible delight to invite you all to the academic simulation of the United Nations Human Rights Council at SHISMUN' 24.

Our only objective shall be to make you all speak and participate in the discussion, and we pledge to give every effort for the same. We trust this experience improves your public speaking abilities and that you find out about a squeezing world issue that convolutes the existence of numerous individuals in our nation just as abroad. Having said that, this background guide should be the first step towards your research and you are encouraged to by all means further expand your realm of knowledge by delving into the themes and sub themes mentioned in the guide and the reference provided for further research. We would be using the UNA-USA rules of procedure to facilitate this simulation.

(<https://unausa.org/model-un/>)

Please keep in mind that we are discussing a very crucial issue in our world today and it requires your utmost care and dedication. Remember that you are the leaders of tomorrow!

Before coming for the conference, it is very important to break the larger agenda into smaller subtopics and ask questions to yourself about the agenda. Making moderated caucus topics beforehand would give you an edge in committees like the UNHRC. It is also crucial to enhance your leadership skills and lobbying capacity since we would give equal importance to overall participation in the committee. Research as much as you can in order to be able to write the best possible resolution you can throughout the conference.

We believe that you are resilient delegates that will be able to make the most out of their own experience and, most importantly, have fun while doing just that!

Regards

Executive Board

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Note:- Information contained in this research brief does not possess any evidentiary value, nor does it qualify as proof of the occurrence/non-occurrence or existence/ non-existence of any fact. The brief is meant only to provide the participants with a modicum of information upon which further research can be built and does not in any manner whatsoever reflect the views or political leanings of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall maintain neutrality at all points in time and not having any political affiliations.

# Beginner's Guide to Model UN

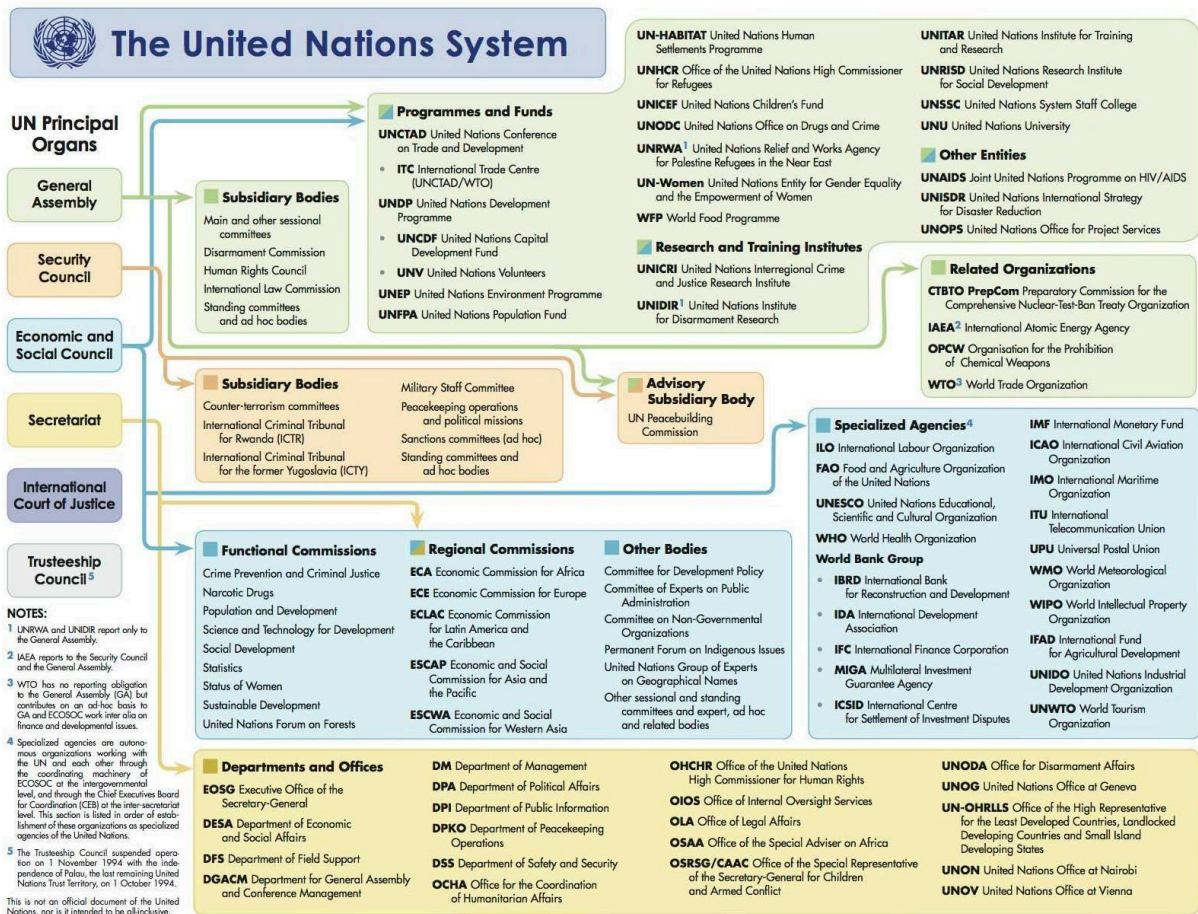
## Question 1) What is the United Nations?

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 to maintain international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights by 51 countries. The United Nations has 6 principal organs.

- General Assembly
- Security Council
- Economic and Social Council
- Secretariat
- International court of Justice
- Trusteeship Council

The UN has 4 main purposes

- To keep peace throughout the world;
- To develop friendly relations among nations;
- To help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms;
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these goals



## Question 2: What is considered to be valid evidence in the Model United Nations?

### 1. News Sources:

- a. REUTERS – Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the factor is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council. <http://www.reuters.com/>
- b. State-operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency.

### 2. Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.

- a. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America ( <http://www.state.gov/index.htm> ) or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation ( <http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm> )
- b. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India ( <http://www.mea.gov.in/> ), People's Republic of China ( <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/> ), France ( <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/> ), Russian Federation ( [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/main\\_eng](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng) )
- c. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports <http://www.un.org/en/members/> (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative)
- d. Multilateral Organisations like the NATO ( <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm> ), ASEAN ( <http://www.aseansec.org/> ), OPEC ( [http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/) ), etc.

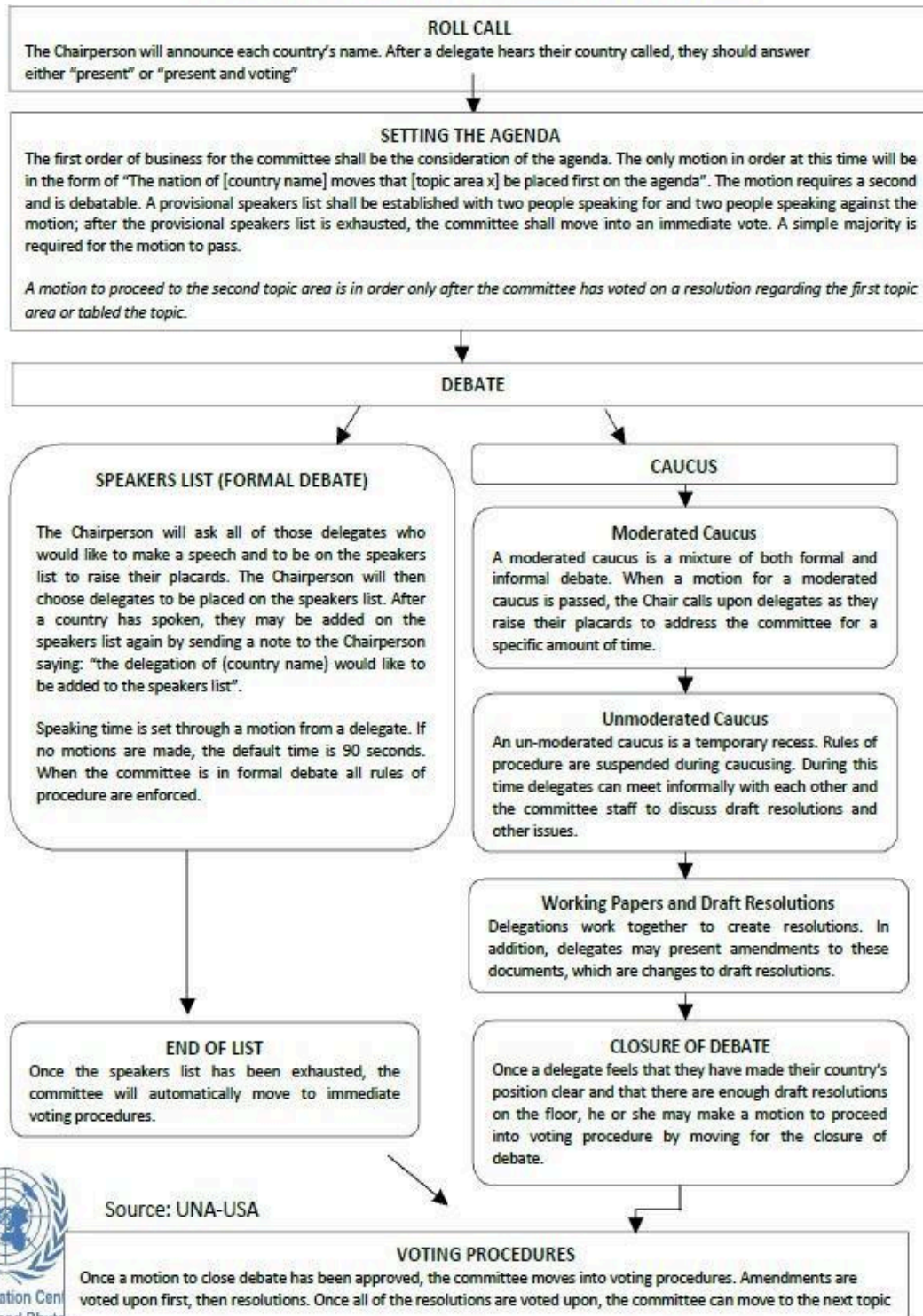
### 3. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council.

- a. UN Bodies: Like the SC ( <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/> ), GA ( <http://www.un.org/en/ga/> ), HRC ( <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx> ) etc.
- b. UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency ( <http://www.iaea.org/> ), World Bank ( <http://www.worldbank.org/> ), International Monetary Fund ( <http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm> ), International Committee of the Red Cross ( <http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp> ), etc.
- c. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System ( <http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm> ), the International Criminal Court ( <http://www.iccpi.int/Menus/ICC> )

# Rules of Procedure

(<https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/rules-procedure>)

## Flow of Debate: Traditional MUN Model





## POINT AND MOTIONS

<i>Motions</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Vote to Pass</i>
<i>Suspend the Meeting</i>	Suspending the meeting means calling for a moderated or unmoderated caucus. When moving to suspend the meeting, delegates should specify the purpose for and length of the suspension. This motion requires an immediate vote.	Simple majority
<i>Adjourn Meeting</i>	Adjourning the meeting ends the committee session until the next session, which may be held the following year. The motion is most commonly made to end a committee session for the purpose of lunch or dinner. It requires an immediate vote.	Simple majority
<i>Table Debate</i>	This motion must not be confused with the motion to adjourn the meeting. Tabling debate ends debate on the topic. Delegates can table debate, move on to another topic and return to the first topic at a later time. Two delegates must speak in favor of tabling debate and two speak against it.	Two-thirds majority
<i>Close Debate</i>	Closing debate allows the committee to move into voting procedure. Once a delegate feels that his or her country's position has been made clear, that there are enough draft resolutions on the floor and that all other delegates are ready, he or she can move for the closure of debate. Two delegates usually speak against the closure of debate, but none speak for it.	Two-thirds majority
<i>Appeal the Chair's Decision</i>	This motion is made when a delegate feels that the chairperson has made an incorrect decision. The appeal must first be made in writing.	No vote
<i>Point of Order</i>	Points of order are used when delegates believe the chair has made an error in the running of the committee. Delegates rising to points of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. They should only specify the errors they believe were made in the formal committee procedure.	No vote
<i>Point of Inquiry (or Point of Parliamentary Procedure)</i>	When the floor is open ( <i>i.e.</i> no other delegate is speaking), a delegate may rise to a point of inquiry in order to ask the chairperson a question regarding the rules of procedure.	No vote
<i>Point of Personal Privilege</i>	Points of personal privilege are used to inform the chairperson of a physical discomfort a delegate is experiencing, such as the inability to hear another delegate's speech.	No vote
<i>Point of Information</i>	After a delegate has given a speech in formal debate, he or she may yield time to points of information, or questions from other delegates concerning the speech.	No vote

## RIGHT OF REPLY

Delegate, whose country's national integrity or sovereignty has been contested, may require Right of Reply. The Chairpersons may decide to give a certain time limit to the Delegate to respond and to rule whether the Right of Reply is in order. The decision of the Chairs is not subject to appeal.

## **Order Of Procedural Motions/Precedence**

The motions below shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the committee:

01. Point of Personal Privilege
02. Point of Order
03. Point of Inquiry
04. Point of Information
05. Introduction of a Draft Resolution
06. Motion to Suspend Debate
07. Motion to Table Debate
08. Motion for Closure of Debate
09. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

## **Yields**

A delegate who was granted the permission to speak by the Chairpersons shall have the right to yield his time (if remaining) to:

1. Yield to another delegate- the remaining time will be offered to another delegate as allotted by the former speaker. The delegate, if accepting the yield, cannot yield the floor to any other person with the exception of Chairpersons.
2. Yield to POINT OF INFORMATION- If the delegate is open to questions, it is at the discretion of the Chairpersons to grant this right to any delegate willing to pose an inquiry to the delegate within the remaining time allocated to the delegate. Inquiries are not counted into the remaining speaker's time, unlike the answers provided by the delegate. The delegate who yielded his time to questions can refuse to answer any of them at his discretion. Also, Chairpersons shall call to order any delegate whose inquiry by its character does not comply with the standards.
3. Yield back to the Chairs- if there is remaining time left, but the delegate is not wishing to answer any questions or give his allocated time to another delegate, he /she can yield his time back to the Chairpersons, who will proceed with another delegate on the Speaker's List/ wishing to speak afterwards.

## **Submission Of Working Papers, Draft Resolutions, and Amendments**

Working papers, draft resolutions, and amendments shall be submitted to the Director typed and with the proper number of signatures. The Chair may permit discussion and consideration of proposals and amendments once approved, even if the documents have not been circulated through the committee. Press release might also be submitted to the EB as part of the documentation that the committee has agreed to. (<https://research.un.org/en/docs/pressreleases>)

## **Introducing Draft Resolutions**

Once a draft resolution has been approved by the Director and has been copied and distributed, a delegate may raise a motion to introduce the draft resolution, which is automatically approved and does not require a vote. The content of the introduction shall be limited to summarizing the operative clauses of the draft resolution. Such an introduction shall be considered procedural in nature, hence

yields and comments are out of order. Additional questions and comments regarding the resolution are encouraged to be raised through the speakers list and yields.

## **Amendments**

Both friendly and unfriendly amendments require the approval of the Chair. An amendment is considered friendly if all of the sponsors of the initial draft resolution are signatories of the amendment. Such an amendment is adopted automatically. Unfriendly amendments are a decision of the Committee. An unfriendly amendment must have the approval of the Director and the signatures by 20% of the committee. Amendments to amendments are out of order.

## **Suggested Pattern for Researching**

- Understanding of the UN and the Committee/council which includes knowing the Mandate, historical work and decisions on the issue or related issues etc.
- Research on the allotted country, especially with respect to the agenda, past policies or actions taken, know the problems faced by the citizens and nearby troubles that have caused such issues.
- Understanding the Foreign Policy of the allotted country by studying past actions, their causes and consequences. Read for the friends and foes of your country and their actions for the agenda in the recent past.
- Researching further upon the agenda given in the guide, deliberating upon the questions to address.
- Prepare topics for moderated caucuses and their content.
- Assemble proof/evidence for any important allegations you are going to use in the committee.
- Suggest logical solutions towards the crisis that the committee is facing.



## About the Committee

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental organization within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world, addressing and advocating for human rights abuses. Discuss thematic human rights issues and situations that require attention throughout the year. Meet at the UN office in Geneva.

The council consists of 47 member states of the United Nations elected by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Human Rights Council has replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights. (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/home>)

The Council consists of 47 member states elected by direct and secret ballot by a majority of members of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The General Assembly takes into account the contributions of candidate countries to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as voluntary commitments and commitments in this regard.

Council membership is based on a fair geographical distribution. Seats are allocated as follows: African countries: 13 seats

Asia Pacific: 13 seats

Latin America and Caribbean: 8 seats Western

Europe and other countries: 7 seats Eastern

European countries: 6 seats

### What does the Human Rights Council do?

The Human Rights Council does different things:

- It makes sure that all people understand their rights.
- It makes sure that all people have the same rights.
- It checks if all people can use their rights.
- It checks what governments do to protect the rights of people in their countries.
- It checks if governments do what they agreed on at the United Nations.
- It helps people whose rights were taken away.

To do all the work, the Human Rights Council gets help from groups of experts. They are called 'Advisory Committees'. Sometimes, the Human Rights Council also works with other experts who know a lot about 1 right or 1 country. When this happens, we call it 'Special Procedures'.

## About the Agenda :

### Where is Ethiopia?

- It is a landlocked country located in the Horn of Africa, officially known as the Federal **Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**.
- The country lies completely **within the tropical latitudes and is relatively compact**, with similar **north-south and east-west dimensions**.
- The capital is Addis Ababa.
- Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest countries, its territorial **extent having varied over the millennia of its existence**.
- It is the tenth-largest country in Africa in terms of area.
- Ethiopia is located from Sudan in the southeast, Eritrea to the south, Djibouti and Somalia to the west, Kenya to the north, and South Sudan to the east.
- It is the most **populous landlocked country in the world**.

### What is the Conflict in Ethiopia?

- **Background:**
  - Ethiopia was an imperial state that gradually weakened with the **emergence of regional and religious rivalries**.
  - Currently Ethiopia has more than 70 ethnic groups. It has Oromo 34.5%, Amhara 26.91%, Somali 6.20%, Tigre 6.07%.
  - A major insurgency followed in the 1970s — in Tigray, where the Meles Zenawi-led **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)**, rebelled against the military government and its policies.
  - It was the backing of the then Soviet Union and allies that propped up both the armed forces and the Mengistu government, but this support began to dissipate in the **1980s, influencing the course of conflicts with the Eritreans and Tigray**.
- **Separation of Eritrea:**

- Eritrea, formerly part of Ethiopia, **separated from Ethiopia in 1991** and a majority of Eritrea was in the hands of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), while in Ethiopia it was the TPLF.
- The war between 1998 and 2000 and the border in Eritrea and **Ethiopia remained tense until 2018.**
- **Ethnic Rivalries:**
  - Abi Ahmed was elected to the post of Prime Minister in **2018 and signed a peace deal to end the border dispute with Eritrea.**
  - After the implementation of this peace agreement, Abi Ahmad was **awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.**
  - But then the conflict started after Ahmed, who belongs to the Oroma community, was accused **by local leaders of the Tigray community** that the community was being harassed by **military officials and bureaucrats.**
  - The original inhabitants of Tigray are considered to be the fighting community of Ethiopia and 60% of senior military positions are **dominated by the Tigray community.**
- Human rights violations
- Since the November 2022 cessation of hostilities agreement, human rights abuses have continued in Tigray.
- Months after the truce, Eritrean forces in Tigray committed [rape and sexual violence](#), including [sexual slavery](#), against Tigrayan women and girls, [extrajudicial executions](#), [abductions](#), and pillaged civilian property in areas they occupied. In May, Eritrean forces [blocked](#) a humanitarian mission from entering two villages where [reports of rape, looting, and destruction of property continued](#). That same month, Eritrean forces [reportedly hindered the work of the African Union](#) Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mechanism (AU-MVCM), established to oversee the implementation of the truce.
- 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.

- In March, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the United States Agency for *International* Development (*USAID*) [suspended food aid](#) to Tigray after reports emerged that food aid was being “diverted and sold in the local markets.” The agencies extended the suspension to all of Ethiopia in June after an [investigation](#) uncovered “[a widespread and coordinated](#) scheme” by federal and regional government actors to divert food assistance.
- Reports of [hunger-related deaths increased in June](#), as the pause severely restricted access to food for an estimated [20 million people requiring food assistance](#), with people in displacement and refugee camps particularly impacted. In October, WFP and USAID resumed food aid to refugees while maintaining the suspension of assistance to other food-insecure populations.



## Abuses by Security Forces and Attacks by Armed Groups

- In April, the security situation in the Amhara region deteriorated following the federal government's decision to integrate regional police forces into the federal military. On April 9, [two Catholic Relief Services staff members were shot and killed](#).
- In August and September, heavy fighting was reported in and around cities and towns throughout the Amhara region, resulting in hundreds killed and injured, including children and refugees, and damage to [civilian property and infrastructure](#) such as hospitals. On August 29, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [found](#) that at least 183 people had been killed in fighting since July. Government security forces also arrested individuals during house-to-house searches in the Amhara region.
- On August 5, Ethiopia's parliament declared a sweeping state of emergency in the Amhara region that could be extended to any part of the country as deemed necessary. The emergency declaration grants the government [far-reaching](#)

[powers](#) to arrest criminal suspects without a court order, impose curfews, ban public gatherings, and carry out searches without a warrant.

- In February, government security forces responded to unrest [following a split within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewohedo church](#), resulting in [killings and arrests](#) as protesters gathered in Shashemene, Oromia.
- The government relaunched its counterinsurgency campaign against the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in May after the collapse of peace talks in April. Reports of attacks against the population in Oromia, including Oromo and Amhara communities, [continued through August](#). In June, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) [said the fighting](#) damaged critical infrastructure, including healthcare centers and water systems.
- In March, Oromia authorities [demolished homes and businesses in Shegar city](#), a newly formed area near Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, rendering scores of residents in the area homeless. Security forces [reportedly beat and shot](#) individuals that protested the demolitions.
- In September, Somali [civilians in Qoloji displaced persons camp](#) in Ethiopia's Somali region died as a result of clashes involving security forces from the Oromia and Somali region.

## **Freedoms of Expression, Media, and Association**

- Civic space continued to erode in the country, with the federal government tightly controlling the environment for reporting on critical issues.
- Authorities harassed and detained critical voices, forcing journalists, opposition members, and [civil society activists](#) into silence or [exile](#).
- On January 5, Ethiopian police [arrested](#) and [forcibly disappeared](#) for several hours four Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) staff members—three human rights staff members, Daniel Tesfaye, Bezuayehu Wondimu, and Bereket Daniel, and their driver Nahom Husen—who were investigating cases of forced evictions outside Addis Ababa. On January 12, an Oromia court [released](#) the four staff on bail.

- Since the August state of emergency declaration, [mass arrests of ethnic Amharas have been reported](#) in the Amhara region and in Addis Ababa. In early August, federal police arrested Christian Tadele, an opposition member of parliament and outspoken critic of the ruling party and the government's actions in the Amhara region; Yohannes Buayelew, a member of the Amhara regional council; and Kassa Teshager, a member of Addis Ababa city council. Christian Tadele and Kassa Teshager were initially held [incommunicado](#).
- Between April 3 and 18, Ethiopian authorities [arrested eight journalists](#) who had reported on the deteriorating situation in the Amhara region. In August, authorities [arrested](#) three more journalists following the state of emergency declaration. In early September, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission [visited detainees held at Awash Arba military camp](#) in the Afar region. Detainees included political figures, such as Christian Tadele, Kassa Teshager, and Sentayehu Chekol, and journalists, such as Abay Zewdu.
- In September, police in Tigray region [beat and arrested](#) opposition leaders and supporters calling for demonstrations against the interim administrations led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) after authorities refused to authorize the demonstrations.
- The federal government repeatedly restricted access to the internet and social media. In Tigray, after years of a prolonged internet shutdown in the region, phone and internet access slowly resumed.
- In early February, authorities [restricted access to social media platforms](#) after protests broke out in the Oromia region following tensions in the Ethiopian Orthodox church. Authorities [disrupted mobile internet](#) at least twice as fighting intensified in the Amhara region.
- International cooperation
- In January, the French and German foreign ministers traveled to Ethiopia and [pressed](#) for accountability for widespread abuses committed during the two-year armed conflict as a condition for the European Union to normalize its relations with the government. In March, the US and EU member states folded to

Ethiopia's threats to prematurely end the ICHREE mandate, agreeing to refer to ICHREE's forthcoming September report as its "final" one. In October, the EU, which previously led the resolution establishing the commission in December 2021, failed to introduce any draft resolution at the UN Human Rights Council session that would either renew ICHREE's mandate or maintain international scrutiny of the human rights situation in Ethiopia.

- The EU's Foreign Affairs Council adopted [conclusions in April](#) reaffirming the importance of accountability; however, it set the [bar for EU's future engagement with Ethiopia low](#), including by failing to call for Ethiopia's cooperation with ICHREE, and overlooked the lack of progress on key requests, including on justice, that the EU made early in the conflict. In October, the [EU announced](#) a €650 million aid package for Ethiopia [that had been suspended in late 2020 due to the outbreak of conflict in Tigray](#) as a step toward normalizing relations.
- In March, the US government [formally recognized that atrocity crimes](#), including war crimes and crimes against humanity, were committed during the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Three months later, President Joe Biden's administration [notified Congress](#) in June that it believed the Ethiopian government was no longer engaging in a "pattern of gross violations of human rights," allowing the country to qualify again for US and international loans and other financial assistance.
- In September, the US [renewed](#) a 2021 executive order that established a sanctions regime on individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses in northern Ethiopia. To date, it has [only sanctioned Eritrean entities and individuals](#).
- During the Tigray war many of Ethiopia's Western partners – notably the US and the EU – upheld a critical line that maintained principles of international humanitarian law and the responsibility to protect, while also treading carefully in the face of Ethiopia's sensitivities over its sovereignty. This was not well received by either party to the conflict. Western calls for de-escalation,



negotiation and humanitarian access elicited an aggressive response from the GFDRE, which framed calls for peace and humanitarian access by the West as neo-colonial and as tacitly supporting the TPLF. Conversely, Tigrayan and Oromo activists accused the international community of being overly accommodating of the GFDRE, substantive evidence of war crimes notwithstanding. Much of the polarized campaign between the two camps was waged on social media platforms, with substantial criticism focused on the inaction of the UN secretary-general and the UNSC on stopping the violence.

- The GFDRE's approach in responding to international condemnation over the Tigray war was constrained by the dependence of the Ethiopian economy on Western support. Growing Ethiopian diplomatic and developmental isolation during the war had clear economic consequences, including an increase in the rate of inflation to the highest level for almost a decade, which affected much of the population. The violence in Amhara from the beginning of August 2023 could lead to further economic decline. None of the allegations of Western support for the TPLF or the OLA were borne out with concrete evidence, though the sentiment of a politically biased 'West' remains, and this served to shore up support for the federal government both domestically and within influential diaspora communities. Economic pressures and the desperate need to unlock external funding ultimately hastened Prime Minister Abiy's decision to mend relations with Ethiopia's donors – a dynamic which created the conditions for the CoHA. The Tigray war and conflict across the country have exerted a huge toll on Ethiopia's economy and societal well-being. Major infrastructure projects, including those built with finance provided by external loans, have been destroyed or incapacitated.

War crimes-

During the initial offensives, Ethiopian federal and allied forces carried out war crimes against Tigrayan communities, including indiscriminate shelling of towns and extrajudicial executions, forcing tens of thousands to flee to neighbouring Sudan and to other parts of Tigray. Tigrayan militias and local residents also carried out war crimes against Amhara residents and visiting labourers during a massacre in Mai Kadra town on November 9, the first publicly reported large-scale massacre of this conflict.

In the ensuing months, newly-appointed administrators in Western Tigray and Amhara Special Forces – a regional paramilitary force – undertook a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Tigrayan residents of the area.

Over 15 months, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch researchers interviewed more than 400 people, including in-person interviews of Tigrayan refugees in Sudan, and remote interviews of Tigrayan and Amhara residents of Western Tigray and the Amhara region who suffered or witnessed abuses. Researchers also consulted medical and forensic reports, court documents, satellite imagery, and photographic and video evidence that corroborated accounts of grave abuses.

### **Campaign of ethnic cleansing**

Amhara regional security forces, militias, and newly appointed authorities carried out a coordinated campaign of ethnically targeted persecution beginning in late 2020.

In several towns across Western Tigray, signs were displayed ordering Tigrayans to leave, and local administrators discussed their plans to remove Tigrayans in open meetings. A Tigrayan woman from Baeker town described threats she faced by Fanos, an irregular Amhara militia: “They kept saying every night, ‘We will kill you ... Go out of the area.’” Pamphlets appeared giving Tigrayans 24-hour or 72-hour ultimatums to leave or be killed.

The authorities rounded up thousands of Tigrayans for long-term detention and abuse in overcrowded facilities. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch believe thousands of Tigrayans are still held in life-threatening conditions.

Security forces also used gang rape, accompanied by verbal and physical abuse, abduction, and sexual slavery. A 27-year-old Tigrayan woman said that a militia

member told her as the men raped her: “You Tigrayans should disappear from the land west of [the Tekeze River]. You are evil and we are purifying your blood.”

Authorities in Western Tigray also imposed restrictions on movement, humanitarian assistance, speaking the Tigrinya language, and access to farmland to coerce Tigrayans to leave. Amhara security forces, and in some places Eritrean forces present in Western Tigray, looted crops, livestock, and equipment, depriving Tigrayans of their means of survival. A 63-year-old farmer from Division village watched as a group of men destroyed his home. One of the men told him: “This is not your land. You have nothing to claim here.”

Rape and sexual slavery against women- Amnesty International interviewed four survivors of sexual violence who were held in an EDF camp in Kokob Tsibah district for nearly three months and subjected to rape and sexual slavery. Fanta\*, one of the survivors, told Amnesty International that five EDF soldiers gang-raped her for three consecutive days from 1 – 3 November 2022. She was kept in a house the EDF had occupied, before being moved to the EDF military camp where she was held captive with 14 other women. Fanta said: “They kept taking turns raping me for the entire three months. They never left me for the entire three months. When one of them leaves, the other will come. Is there anything that EDF didn’t do? We were locked [inside the camp] since the day they [EDF] took us to the camp. We could not go out and get medical support. We could not visit our family. There were many women detained with me.” Crucial post-sexual violence care must be administered within 72 hours to provide preventive measures for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Despite suffering numerous injuries, survivors of rape and sexual slavery interviewed for this research did not receive post-sexual violence care or any comprehensive medical care. Most of them only obtained medical treatment after the EDF left Kokob Tsibah on 19 January 2023.

## The way forward-

- Attempts should be made to moderate the role of Eritrea. The influence and leverage maintained by Eritrea over the GFDRE(Government of the Federal Republic of Eritrea), as well as over stakeholders within the Amhara and Afar regions, will continue to deter any meaningful progress in implementing initiatives to end the Tigray war. The Eritrean government has historical, personal and geopolitical motives to stay involved in Tigrayan and wider Ethiopian politics, with intentions that go beyond defeating the TPLF(Tigray People's liberation front). Any meaningful political process requires the total withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray and the lessening of Eritrea's influence within the Ethiopian body politic. Here, the role of the GFDRE is crucial. It needs to ensure that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Ethiopian state is maintained, and it should clearly communicate this priority to Eritrea. In the longer term, the nurturing of deeper trust between the GFDRE and the Tigrayan administration, including on security sector reforms, will be needed to keep Eritrea within its own borders. For this to be achieved, it is important for international partners to work with the GFDRE and the AU mediation team. AU High Representative Obasanjo's call, in late 2022, for Eritrea to withdraw from Tigray was a step in the right direction (this call was echoed by the British ambassador to Ethiopia in August 2023), and strengthening the role and coverage of the AU monitoring, verification and compliance team will be required to ensure this comes into effect.
- To achieve sustainable peace, Eritrea's interests will also need to be considered. Contested territories such as Badme, which had been awarded to Eritrea in 2000 by the EEBC(Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission), will not willingly

be returned to Tigray by the Eritrean government. The best way forward for both countries would be to implement the EEBC decision: current facts on the ground, as well as continued steps towards sustainable peace, as laid down in the CoHA (cessation of hostilities agreement), provide an opportunity for the acceptance of this decision in Tigray. However, if Eritrea refuses to leave other occupied parts of Tigray – particularly given the GFDRE's insistence on it doing so – then there is potential for another confrontation. In this scenario, the Ethiopian government would be concerned that Eritrea might seek to instrumentalize disenfranchised armed groups as proxies against it.

- **Interests Of Eritrea-**
- Eritrea remains a major force in Ethiopia's political and security dynamics. Eritrea's explicit motivation for engaging in the Tigray war has been the elimination of the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) and, by extension, the removal of any perceived threat to the Eritrean government emanating from Ethiopia. This threat had been synonymous with the Ethiopian federal state, of which the TPLF was the leading partner until 2018.
- Eritrea is arguably the only one of the primary belligerents in the Tigray war to have achieved some of its goals: a significant weakening of the TPLF and the devastation of northern Ethiopia, including the near-decimation of Tigray's economy. Eritrea has also captured territory that it has long claimed along its shared boundary with Tigray, some in line with that which was delimited by the Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) in the 2002 Algiers Agreement, which was fully accepted by the GFDRE in 2018. Eritrea has used its alliance with the Abiy administration and its participation in the war as pretexts to encroach into vast areas of northern Ethiopia. Until April 2021, both Ethiopia and Eritrea consistently denied the presence of Eritrean forces in



Tigray despite mounting evidence – not only of their presence, but also of their involvement in gross human rights violations against civilians in the areas they captured. In February 2021 the UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs claimed that up to 40 per cent of Tigray's territory was controlled by Eritrean forces. Eritrea has also sought to build strong links with elements of certain Ethiopian subnational ethnolinguistic groups. This signifies that Eritrean president Isaias Afewerki has crafted a contingency to protect his interests in Ethiopia, with or without the consent of Prime Minister Abiy and the GFDRE.

- Confidential reports suggest that the relationship between the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments has deteriorated considerably since the signing of the CoHA, with tension between the two countries increasing due to Eritrea's exclusion from the negotiation process. Moreover, since the signing of the CoHA, Ethiopia has openly expressed a desire to play an active role in the Red Sea region and to secure its own access to the sea. Prime Minister Abiy is reported to have said that Ethiopia will seek to secure direct port access, either peacefully or by force. This will have caught the attention of Eritrea's leaders, given that Ethiopia lost access to two Red Sea ports – Assab and Massawa – and became landlocked when Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia in 1991.
- No matter how this conflict is finally resolved, neither Ethiopia nor Tigray will recover quickly from it. Many Amhara elites believe that the TPLF helped the GFDRE in its fight against Fano insurgents in Amhara region in August 2023, and this is likely to complicate the reconciliation and reconstruction process. The CoHA will likely see the TPLF and other Tigrayan nationalists remain in control of Tigray, contrary to Eritrean aspirations that they will be completely defeated. The GFDRE has also agreed to ensure the withdrawal of

Eritrean forces and the protection of Ethiopian territorial sovereignty. Reports have suggested the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from a few cities and towns in Tigray, which could be a step in the right direction.<sup>46</sup> However, Eritrean forces remain present and active, notably in rural parts of northern Tigray, and dispute is likely to continue over contested areas on either side of the border.

- Eritrean interests therefore remain pivotal to consolidating peace in Tigray, while presenting a significant diplomatic challenge. Only a handful of countries have enough influence with Eritrea to attempt to moderate their policy in Ethiopia – and it is unclear if they would be willing to pursue this leverage. Eritrea enjoys support from China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, including for its infrastructure, logistics and military equipment. Saudi Arabia and the UAE were also key players in achieving the landmark 2018 peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea that reversed decades of enmity. China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are also among the largest investors in Ethiopia, and consequently have increasing influence, as well as a shared interest in a more stable Horn of Africa region.
- Eritrea has consolidated its relationships with Russia and China since 2018, with both countries' foreign ministers making visits to Asmara – in the case of Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, as recently as January 2023. Isaias's visit to China in May 2023 featured a red carpet, a guard of honour military procession and a 21-gun salute, and during his visit to Moscow in early June he defended Russia's invasion of Ukraine.