



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Updated: Genocide Emergency Alert: Ethiopia May 2021

Ethnic violence in Ethiopia has escalated since Genocide Watch issued an emergency alert in November 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic allowed Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to consolidate his power. His term was extended, national elections were postponed twice, and emergency laws were proposed to restrict freedom of speech. The postponed 2020 elections [will be held on June 21, 2021](#).

Minorities within Ethiopian regions remain targeted by ethnic regional militias, particularly in the Oromia, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, Somali, and Tigray regions. In Amhara and Oromia, tensions between majority and minority populations have resulted in massacres. The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) has [targeted](#) Amhara people in Oromia. On April 19, 2021, the Ethiopian government [declared a state of emergency](#) in the Amhara region and deployed federal forces.

In Benishangul-Gumuz, the Gumuz militia has targeted ethnic Oromo, Shinasha, Amhara, and Agew minorities. On November 15, 2020, dozens [were massacred](#) in an attack on a bus in the region. [Ethnic attacks killed](#) 100 civilians in December 2020. On April 22, 2021, an armed group killed civilians and [took control](#) of Sedal Woreda county, home of the [Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam](#), near the border with Sudan. Sudan opposes Ethiopian government plans to rapidly fill the dam's reservoir.

In Tigray, the war that broke out between the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Force (TPLF) and the Ethiopian government on November 4, 2020 continues. Ethiopian federal troops and Eritrean troops remain in the Tigray region. Ahmed and Eritrea's President, Isaias Afwerki, are united in their belief that the TPLF is the enemy of their respective governments. Tigray is now victim to systematic violence with genocidal intent. [As of April 2021](#), close to 2,000 victims of massacres of Tigrayans have been identified.

On November 23, 2020, Eritrean troops massacred hundreds of Tigrayan people in Axum. [ID cards](#) in the Tigrayan language were replaced by ID's in Amharic. [Mass rape](#) by Eritrean and Ethiopian troops is [weaponized and described](#) as a "cleansing of blood lines". Food insecurity [affects](#) 5.7 million people. Both Eritrean and Ethiopian troops have prevented delivery of humanitarian aid. As of April 2021, [more than 62,000](#) Ethiopians sought refuge in Eastern Sudan because of the violence.

On March 17, 2021, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the United Nations [agreed to conduct a joint inquiry](#) into the crimes against humanity being committed in Tigray.

Genocide Watch considers Ethiopia to be at Stage 5: Organization and Stage 9: Extermination. Because Ethiopia denies allegations of genocidal massacres in Tigray, Genocide Watch also considers Ethiopia to be at Stage 10: Denial. Genocide Watch recommends:

- The U.S., E.U., and other providers of arms to Ethiopia should cut off all weapons sales.
- Eritrea should withdraw all of its military troops from Ethiopia immediately.
- The U.N., African Union, and U.S. should offer to broker a ceasefire between the warring parties in Ethiopia and bring them to the negotiation table to end this civil war.
- Genocidal massacres by the Oromo Liberation Army against Amhara, and by Eritrean and Ethiopian troops against Tigrayans must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.
- The Ethiopian Constitution should be amended to remove the ethnic regions' right of secession.
- Ethnic regional militias must be disbanded. Minority rights must be protected in ethnic states.
- Ethiopian diasporas in the U.S. and Europe should stop sending money to support ethnic war.
- The Ethiopian government should open Tigray to aid groups to distribute food and medicine.