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**“CONTEMPLATING DIPLOMATIC FRACTURES WHILE
BREAKING THE CYCLE OF SOCIOPOLITICAL INJUSTICE
AND APATHY”**



Reducing Instability in Ethiopia and Countering Post-Tigray Militant Threats

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Committee: Committee Name

Issue: Reducing Instability in Ethiopia and Countering Post-Tigray Militant Threats

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Introduction

Ethiopia has been facing renewed internal tensions due to the rise of new militant threats following the Tigray War. It is essential to explore the aftermath of the Tigray War and highlight the reasons for stability in Ethiopia and work towards achieving regional peace. The Tigray War took place between November 2020 and November 2022 in which a brutal civil conflict between the Ethiopian federal government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) caused severe casualties and led to the displacement of civilians. The conflict was officially declared to be over with the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement in November 2022. This agreement was initiated by the African Union and aimed to put an end to the hostilities between the opposing parties in Tigray. Despite the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, the conflict has not settled down and new causes for violence have emerged. Most notably, the situations in Amhara and Oromia regions have been highly volatile. The reemergence of the tension within the region is a clear threat to the peace between Armed militias such as Fano, the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). These groups have initiated insurgencies against the Ethiopian government, with the claim of defending their communities. However, the destabilizing nature of these post-conflict militant threats have undermined the implementation of the peace deal and have eventually led to millions of civilians to be displaced and in need of aid. The renewal of violence and resurgence of tensions, require the UNSC to take immediate action in reestablishing peace in Ethiopia. The fact that Ethiopia's internal instability poses a risk beyond its borders, makes this issue an immediate priority. Refugees flowing into neighboring countries like Sudan give rise to the potential of regional spillover in the African Union.

Definition of Key Terms

Insurgency: Insurgency is an uprising or rebellion by an organized group against their government or governing authority. Frequently, other terms are used to describe situations of insurgency, including uprising, rebellion, and insurrection. (Oxford Public International Law)

Regional Instability: Regional instability refers to a situation in which a specific geographic area experiences significant political, economic, or social turmoil that disrupts normal functioning and can lead to conflict or crises. (Yale University)

Ethnic Federalism: A form of federal system in which the federated regional or state units are defined by ethnicity. Ethnic federal systems have been created in attempts to accommodate demands for ethnic autonomy and manage inter-ethnic tensions within a state. (Academia)

Demobilization: The action of releasing someone from one of the armed forces, especially at the end of a war. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR): A post-conflict framework that collects weapons, formally dissolves armed groups, and supports ex-combatants returning to civilian life or being integrated into legitimate security structures. (United Nations)

Ceasefire: There is no official legal definition of ceasefire, but it can be defined as a ‘suspension of acts of violence by military and paramilitary forces, usually resulting from the intervention of a third party’. (Oxford Public International Law)

General Overview

Period Between The Tigray War and The Pretoria Agreement

The Tigray war took place after the political separation of the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF) along with other local Tigriyan regional authorities. The TPLF had run the Ethiopian government from 1991 to 2018. After Abiy Ahmed's government took control over Ethiopia, the TPLF stood as an opposition force to the newly established government. The tension between the TPLF and the federal government eventually blew into a full scale conflict in 2020. During this period, the federal authority structures had been completely dysfunctional. After two years of fighting, the Pretoria Agreement was signed under the supervision of the African Union. The agreement reestablished the federal authority structures and launched reintegration and disarmament steps.

Even though the Pretoria Agreement put an end to the state of active warfare, it failed to address the wider national tensions which were still present. Ethiopia has been in a post-war state where issues such as government legitimacy, territorial disputes and ethnic division are still prominent.

The Failure of The Pretoria Agreement and The Post-War State

Following the Pretoria Agreement, the federal government took steps in disbanding regional armed forces. This act was not perceived positively by the Ethiopian populace living in the region. It was seen as an act of disempowerment rather than stabilisation. In places like Amhara, it made the regional populace think that they were being neglected and left without protection. This perception led to the formation of regional groups that fought against the federal government since they thought that the government had turned on them instead of supporting them in the post-war state of the country.

Since there are no legitimate and credible judicial organs, both the TPLF and the federal government grow increasingly paranoid thinking that the other side is initiating plans to rearm in secret. This state of uncertainty makes the ceasefire initiated by Pretoria fragile. It is also important to mention the lack of a stable chain of command. Even if the high ranking leaders engage in peace talks, the armed fighters and commanders refuse to fight. The lack of a single chain of command both in the main two opposing actors and regional militant formations, leads to further fragmentation of power.

The highly volatile environment and the presence of small armed militia groups described as Fano, increases the tension within Ethiopia. The population in areas of higher instability are easily manipulated by the small militant groups positioning themselves as protectors and are often recruited into these groups out of fear or promises of protection. The unsafe environment in areas like Tigray and Amhara fueled by the federal government's negligence on the protection of the populace of the region hampers the public trust on the government, making the local population resort to the protection of the regional militant groups.

The Regional Issues

In the Amhara region, tensions have escalated due to the previously stated issues such as the presence of Fano, the lack of a single chain of command in armed groups. When the federal government sought to seize full control over the region and reduce the autonomy of the regional armed forces, the regional armed groups and the Fano retaliated and the conflict intensified.

In Oromia, the insurgency is mainly led by the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). The military and political tension between the federal government and the OLA has worsened the state of civilian security and displacement. The prominent presence of the OLA and their heavy influence on the region, makes critical transportation routes and economic zones dysfunctional.

Humanitarian and Civilian Impact

Although the nature and intensity of fighting differs by region, Ethiopian civilians continue to face severe humanitarian consequences, including large-scale displacement, the loss of livelihoods, and the disruption of basic services. In many affected areas, insecurity interrupts food supply chains and limits access to healthcare and education, deepening existing vulnerabilities and worsening long-term recovery prospects. At the same time, instability increases exposure to human rights abuses and weakens local protection mechanisms, particularly for displaced communities and groups caught between armed actors. Humanitarian operations are also frequently constrained during active fighting, as access routes become unsafe, restrictions increase, and aid delivery becomes inconsistent. As a result, security policy is highly important in humanitarian planning. A purely military approach risks further deteriorating civilian conditions, while humanitarian assistance alone cannot stabilize contested regions without parallel political engagement and coordinated security measures.

Major Parties Involved

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the federal government holds responsibility for national security, implementation of the post-war framework and maintaining territorial integrity. They are in charge of the main armed force of the country, Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), and other federal institutions. Following the Pretoria Agreement, the federal government has aimed to restore state authority and restart services in affected regions. In addition, they have aimed to restructure security forces. However, their policies such as the disbandment of regional armed groups have been interpreted by some regional actors and the population as a hostility.

Tigray People's Liberation Front

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) used to be the dominant actor in the Ethiopian government. They were in charge of the federal government from 1991 to 2018. Due to the rising tensions with the new federal government, the TPLF became a prominent actor in the Tigray War. During the Tigray War, the TPLF transitioned from leading the armed resistance to engaging in a reintegration process after the Pretoria Agreement. The interim administration in Tigray has focused on restoring governance, rebuilding institutions, and improving humanitarian access. Aiming to achieve these goals, they have been more open to cooperating with the federal government of Ethiopia. However, unresolved issues such as territorial disputes, the slow implementation of the DDR process and persistent trust issues with federal authorities continue to impact TPLF's relationship with Addis Ababa's government and affect the stability of the post-war state of the country.

Amhara Regional Authorities and Fano-Affiliated Militias

The Amhara region is an important political and military actor in Ethiopia since Amhara forces have shown active participation in the Tigray War and later opposed the federal government over issues like security restructuring in the Amhara region. Fano is not a single unified force but a loosely connected group of independent militias and unorganised groups with no single chain of command and weak leadership structures and objectives. Their influence is reinforced by local support, fears of marginalisation and continuous disputes over territory and regional autonomy in Amhara. The fragmentation of armed actors affiliated with Fano also complicates negotiations as there is a loose chain of command and weak connections between group leaders and armed fighters.

Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)

Operating mainly in Oromia, the OLA is one of the most active insurgent forces in Ethiopia. They have been heavily targeted by the federal government throughout the war and after the war. The OLA has led various armed operations with the basis of political discrimination, armed abuse and the mistreatment of the regional populace. The opposition between the OLA and the federal government has also created tensions among the local population and the government since in some areas, ethnicity based discrimination and armed violence have occurred. Due to this, the Oromo people have retaliated against the government. Even though the government has tried to establish grounds for negotiation with the OLA, these efforts have repeatedly failed. The federal government continues to face issues in the Oromia region in terms of trust-building operations and the alignment of political demands of both sides with security guarantees.

State of Eritrea

Eritrea played a major role during the Tigray War, intervening militarily and shaping security realities near Ethiopia's northern border. Even after Pretoria, Eritrea remains a significant factor because any continued tensions whether through alleged indirect influence, unresolved border-related security concerns, or broader strategic rivalry could destabilize northern Ethiopia again. Eritrea's relationship with both the federal government and militant actors related to TPLF is therefore an important background variable for UNSC assessments.

African Union (AU)

The AU was the primary mediator of the Pretoria Agreement and remains crucial for African-led legitimacy in conflict resolution. Its role includes maintaining diplomatic pressure for implementation and supporting monitoring structures. IGAD, as a regional bloc, has also been involved in encouraging dialogue. More specifically around tighter stability in the Horn of Africa and

peace efforts related to Oromia. Together, AU and IGAD provide the most realistic platforms for mediation that Ethiopia is likely to accept.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
4 November 2020	Tigray War begins: Prime Minister Abiy orders a military offensive in Tigray after a TPLF attack on the Northern Command base.
28 June 2021	Unilateral ceasefire: Ethiopian forces withdraw from Mekelle, Tigray's capital, after Tigrayan fighters regroup. A humanitarian truce is declared, but fighting later spreads to Amhara and Afar regions.
24 March 2022	Humanitarian Truce: Federal government and Tigray agree to a temporary ceasefire to allow aid into Tigray. This pause in fighting lasts about five months.
2 November 2022	Pretoria Peace Agreement: The Ethiopian Government and TPLF sign an AU-mediated Pretoria Agreement in South Africa.
January–March 2023	Peace Implementation: Tigray forces begin disarmament and hand over heavy weapons. An interim administration for Tigray is formed. Parliament removes TPLF from their terrorist list.
April 2023	Fano Insurgency ignites: Federal order to dissolve regional special forces sparks protests in Amhara. Clashes between Amhara Fano militia and the federal government begin. The Ethiopian Parliament declares Fano militias as terrorist groups.
25 April 2023	OLA Peace Talks: Government and Oromo Liberation Army hold talks in Tanzania, mediated by Kenya.
July–August 2023	Escalation in Amhara: Fano rebels regroup and heavy fighting spreads across Amhara. Militants temporarily seize towns and the federal government declares a State of Emergency in Amhara.

September 2023	Humanitarian Alarm: The UN Commission of Experts reports ongoing atrocities and risks of genocide in Ethiopia, urging continued international scrutiny. Meanwhile, humanitarian agencies warn of famine risk in Tigray and parts of Amhara if aid delays persist.
22 November 2023	OLA Talks Fail: A third round of peace negotiations with the OLA in Zanzibar ends without agreement. Fighting in Oromia and Amhara persists at lower intensity.
November 2023	One Year After Pretoria: Ethiopian government and AU mark the first year of the Tigray peace deal. Federal authorities reaffirm commitment to Pretoria's full implementation despite delays. Plans are announced for a referendum to resolve Tigray-Amhara boundary disputes.
December 2025	Fragile Stability: Tigray remains largely peaceful under the Pretoria pact, but Ethiopia faces " <i>a sharp escalation in tensions</i> " in the north. The Fano insurgency in Amhara and the OLA rebellion in Oromia continue to challenge Ethiopia's unity.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Previous efforts to resolve instability in Ethiopia have centered on ending large-scale hostilities, restoring governance, and creating conditions for reintegration and recovery. The most significant step was the Pretoria Agreement (2022), which established a cessation of hostilities framework, outlined disarmament and reintegration expectations, and aimed to restore services and humanitarian access in northern Ethiopia. In parallel, the African Union established the grounds for diplomacy, maintained limited monitoring mechanisms, supported implementation and reinforced the legitimacy of an African-mediated process. Beyond Tigray, there have also been attempts to negotiate with armed actors in Oromia, including rounds of dialogue with the OLA, but these efforts have repeatedly stalled due to trust issues among actors, enforcement challenges, and unresolved political demands. The federal government has additionally reinforced the security sector restructuring by attempting to standardise command and reduce the autonomy of regional armed structures, though these reforms have generated resistance in some regions and, in certain cases, triggered further confrontation. Finally, international actors and UN agencies have worked to mitigate civilian suffering through humanitarian operations and access arrangements, but relief efforts remain vulnerable to insecurity and political constraints, underscoring that peace implementation and stabilization require synchronized political, security, and humanitarian coordination.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions must balance Ethiopia's sovereignty with the UNSC's responsibility to prevent escalation, protect civilians, and support sustainable establishment of peace. First, the international community should encourage a national de-escalation framework that goes beyond Tigray, meaning that localized ceasefires and structured dialogue initiatives should be pursued in Amhara and Oromia in parallel with continued implementation of Pretoria. In this context, the UNSC can reinforce and politically back AU-led mediation, while supporting stronger verification mechanisms such as incident reporting channels, third-party monitoring of ceasefire violations where consent exists, and regular briefings to reduce misinformation-driven escalation. Second, Ethiopia and its partners should expand DDR pathways to non-state armed actors outside Tigray, including incentives for disarmament, structured cantonment where feasible, reintegration support through job training and community-based programs, and differentiated accountability that separates rank-and-file fighters from individuals responsible for grave violations. Third, the UNSC should push for a stabilization approach that places civilian protection and humanitarian access at the center of security planning, supporting safe humanitarian corridors, protection of medical facilities, and consistent access for aid organizations since humanitarian collapse can rapidly reignite conflict dynamics. Fourth, longer-term stability requires an inclusive political process that addresses regional grievances without rewarding violence; this can include confidence-building steps, meaningful participation in national dialogue mechanisms, and credible dispute-resolution processes for contested territories and governance questions. Finally, if spoilers deliberately undermine peace processes or commit serious abuses, the UNSC may consider carefully calibrated targeted measures such as travel bans or asset freezes focused on individuals rather than broad economic pressure, alongside calls for credible accountability and reconciliation mechanisms that reduce incentives for armed mobilization.

Conclusion

Ethiopia's post-Tigray landscape demonstrates that ending large-scale warfare does not automatically translate into nationwide stability. While the Pretoria Agreement significantly reduced violence in the north, unresolved political, territorial, and security challenges continue to fuel armed confrontation elsewhere, placing civilians and regional stability at risk. For the United Nations Security Council, sustained engagement is therefore necessary to support African-led mediation, encourage inclusive political processes, and ensure that security measures are aligned with humanitarian and civilian protection priorities. A coordinated approach that integrates dialogue, stabilization, and accountability remains essential to preventing further escalation and supporting a durable peace in Ethiopia.

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