



UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

VIII IBMRMUN 2022



PREPARADO POR
Amanda Lopes, Victor Hugo
Tito e Vinicius Lyro.



VIII IBMR MODEL UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

Agenda A: The role of Petroleum in Strengthening The Arms trade in Africa

Agenda B: War in Tigray and its impact in International Security

Vinícius Lyro
Victor Hugo Tito
Amanda Lopes

RIO DE JANEIRO

2022

Welcome to the VIII IBMR MODEL UNITED NATIONS, it is a pleasure to be the chair of this committee of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), composing this committee is the Post-Graduate in International Relations from Centro Universitário IBMR Vinicius Lyro, Victor Hugo Tito, Graduating from 4th period of International Relations at Centro Universitário IBMR and Amanda Lopes, graduating from 6th period student in International Relations at Centro Universitário IBMR.

We have prepared this study guide to support the studies that will be directed to the Committee. However, we instruct delegates to broaden the field of study beyond the guide, in order to promote a cordial and informative debate.

Head Director
Vinicius Lyro

Deputy Directors
Victor Hugo Tito
Amanda Lopes

SUMMARY

1. Security Council

- 1.1. Historical Background
- 1.2. Member States
 - 1.2.1. Permanent Members
 - 1.2.1.1. Veto Power
 - 1.2.2. Non-permanent Members

Countries' with Interests Affected

2. Agenda A: The role of Petroleum in Strengthening The Arms trade in Africa

- 2.1. Arms-petroleum connection
 - 2.1.1. Arms as a guarantee of access to petroleum
- 2.2. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)
 - 2.2.1. African States signatories
- 2.3. Failed States and the uncontrolled arms in Africa
- 2.4. Gulf of Aden
- 2.5. Human costs of arms trade
 - 2.5.1. Internally displaced people
 - 2.5.2. Refugees
- 2.6. Terrorist groups

3. Agenda B: War in Tigray and its impact in International Security

- 3.1. Historical Background
 - 3.1.1. Ethiopian civil war
 - 3.1.2. The Eritrean–Ethiopian border conflict

- 3.1.3. Tigray's western zone
- 3.2. Political Background
 - 3.2.1. Tigray people's liberation front (TPLF)
 - 3.2.2. Ethnic federalism
- 3.3. The Conflict Itself
 - 3.3.1. The ethnic issue
 - 3.3.2. Military operations
 - 3.3.3. Tigray Defense forces (TDF)
 - 3.3.4. Militias
 - 3.3.5. Chinese influence and its interests
- 3.4. Human Rights Violations
 - 3.4.1. Ethnic cleansing
 - 3.4.2. War crimes
- 3.5. International Security
 - 3.5.1. Refugee crisis
 - 3.5.2. Impacts on neighboring countries
 - 3.5.3. Economic and military effects

4. References

1. The United Nations Security Council

1.1 Historical Background

According to the Charter, the Security Council is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. Under the Charter, all Member States are obliged to carry out the Council's decisions. The United Nations' predecessor organization, the League of Nations, was conceived during World War I to promote international cooperation and achieve peace and security, however, it ended due to failure to prevent World War II. The five countries that were considered victorious at WWII took place as permanent members in the UNSC. The primary objectives of the United Nations were given to the maintenance of international peace and security; and to that end, by adhering to collective measures capable of preventing and eliminating threats to the peace and extinguishing acts of aggression or other violations of the peace, promoting settlements or solutions to international disputes that may lead to a breach of the peace (FOMERAND, 2009)

1.2 Member States

1.2.1. Permanent Members

Initially, in 1945, during the post-war period, the UNSC was constituted by five permanent members: the United States of America, the Republic of China, the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and, finally, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. After international recognition, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China, which declined to an unrecognized state according to the UN, and since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation took place in the UNSC.

1.2.1.1. Veto Power

Veto Power was not an innovation proposed by the UNSC. It became mostly known during the existence of the UN, but the League of Nations already had this mechanism, since the decisions that were to be implemented demanded a consensus by all the Member States which were attending the meeting. However, this was one of the reasons that resulted in the League of Nations failure, along with the non-participation of the countries with major importance in the international scenario. After the creation of the UN, in 1945, the Veto Power was implemented in the United Nations Security Council for the five permanent members. Nevertheless, this distinction is still being a controversy among the State members, mainly because the UN Charter itself declares that all State members are equally important and the veto power was responsible for previous inertness cases on past issues, as Rwandan Genocide. In order to veto a resolution, a permanent country shall only vote against a clause, a specific section or whole document.

1.2.2. Non-permanent Members

Along with the five permanent members, the United Nations Security Council has elected members, officially referred to as “non-permanent”, which hold their seats on a rotating basis by geographic region. Ten non-permanent members take place at the Security Council, with two-year term, considering regional groups. The current non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, with the region they were elected to represent, are: Kenya, Gabon and Ghana, by African Group; India and United Arab Emirates, by Asia-Pacific Group; Albania, by Eastern Europe Group; Norway and Republic of Ireland, by Western Europe and Other Group; and, Brazil and Mexico, by the Latin America and Caribbean Group (MALONE, 2003).

1.2.3. Countries’ with Interests Affected

According to the United Nations (2020) “a State which is a member of the United Nations but not of the Security Council may participate, without a vote, in its discussions when the Council considers that country's interests are affected”. Considering the agenda adopted and the UN Charter, five representations were considered as having the right to attend the meeting once their interests’ are affected.

Considering Agenda A, it would be Nigeria, one of the largest oil producer on the African continent, and which, as a result, also suffer from violence and the presence of terrorist and paramilitaries groups in their respective territories. Considering Agenda B, those

would be Ethiopia, since it does have an ongoing conflict in its territory (which would be Tigray), and Human Rights Watch, considering that Tigray is not a State, and it seems necessary to represent this territory, since its citizens and the international community are claiming that human rights are being violated in Tigray.

2. Agenda A: The role of Petroleum in Strengthening The Arms trade in Africa

2.1 Arms-petroleum connection

In order to fully comprehend what is happening with the security of the African continent, it is necessary to explain and understand the role and relationship of oil in the armament context, since there is an intrinsic relation between them. This is because, as is well known, Africa is a continent rich in several natural resources, one of these being oil itself, which has always been a prominent resource compared to the others, especially while regarding the actual energy issues and the fact that it is an exhaustible resource compared to many others.

Also, many african countries still do rely on oil trade as a matter of economic survival, what do explain why so many terrorist groups, militias, and separatist groups still struggle in order to control its production, which would strengthen its presence and legitimacy in their respective regions of control. This would also explain why they still rely so much on firearms trafficking, in order to obtain and maintain the necessary control in their influence regions. This explains, for example, the strong terrorist activity of the Boko Haram group in Nigeria, since it is one of the largest oil producing countries on the african continent, and the terrorists always aimed to seek control of its production (CAMPBELL, 2017).

2.2 The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

As it is already exposed by its name, this treaty is based on the regulation of all types of weapons, and is also related to several other treaties that were signed between UN member states. It has its origins between the late 90s and early 2000s, with its foundations designed by the then president of Costa rica, Oscar Arias, who proposed new global means to manage, control and prevent illegal international weapons negotiations, mostly in order to preserve peace alongside the countries, also supported by many non-governmental organizations, like Amnesty International.

Even though The ATT was only officially signed by April 2013 by the UN General Assembly, it only came into force by December 2014, with 112 States signing it and 29 States signing it, but yet, not ratifying it, many of them African States, which led to not being an official treaty since all States related must ratify it. The non ratifying process of this treaty culminates in the several regional conflicts that we are able to see alongside the International System, mainly in Central America, and more specifically in Africa, a constantly war-torned continent.

2.2.1. African States signatories

As already said, the only reason why the ATT was not yet ratified, is because 29 States did not agree into it yet, and a bigger part of them are African countries, which might be an explanation for the continuous violence in the continent. Still, we do have African countries being signatories, like Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo and Zambia.

African countries who did sign but not yet ratified it are Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Libya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Therefore, this contributes to the non official regulation of weapons transit in the continent, and, by this, also does contribute to the thousands of deaths, famine, and instability of many African countries, like Somalia, a failed State (UNTC, 2022).

2.3 Failed States and the uncontrolled arms in Africa

Although many African States are signatories of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), most of them cannot, by themselves, guarantee this organized control over the distribution of illegal weapons in their territories, mainly because many of these are the so-called Failed States. These mentioned are those who are no longer able to guarantee control over their territory, cannot guarantee their territorial integrity and cannot guarantee dignified lives to those who do their best to survive (ADESOJI, 2017).

This is not only related to the emergence of paramilitary and/or terrorist groups, but it is also related to the bankruptcy of these States, since once this large amount of

weapons is allowed to enter their territory, this necessarily causes that violence grows, as well as, consequently, hunger and misery as a result of the lack of control of the State related to all these issues. Currently, the biggest example we have of a failed state is Somalia, which, despite still having a government representation in its own right, depends for the most part on international assistance, mainly from the United States of America to carry out actions against paramilitary groups, and terrorist groups like Al Shabab, having little or no control over their territory. An example of this is the fact that its own capital, Mogadishu, is a constant target of numerous attacks.

2.4 Gulf of Aden

In order to properly comprehend the role of petroleum and its connections to the arms trade in Africa, it is extremely necessary to know about the role of the Gulf of Aden in this context, and its deep roots with a State in particular, Somalia. The gulf of Aden is located close to the Oman Sea, between Somalia and Yemen, and also close to Eritrea and Ethiopia, being an essential deepwater passage for delivery and oil trade, since it has a connection with Suez Canal, being essential for the world's petroleum commerce (ISS, 2022).

Despite its importance, it is not protected as it should be by the international community, since piracy is a big issue in this region of the globe, most specifically the Somali Piracy, also a big issue for Somalia and for the protection of its integrity. Also, this is one of several other factors that turned Somalia into a failed State. This also explains why petroleum remains to be one of the most important issues for international security, which may be explained by the Somali Piracy, being a major antagonist and contributing to the rise of violence and arms trafficking in Africa while dealing with piracy operations between its territory and Yemen (ISS, 2022).

2.5 Human costs of arm trade

The consequences of the relationship between the arms trade and petroleum extraction on the African continent have an impact not only on the sovereignty and stability of African States through the attempt to control the great powers but also on the lives of the civilian populations that make up these States. The connection between arms and petroleum has an indirect and direct impact on the production of refugees, displacement of groups, human

rights violations, mass deaths, and the promotion of terrorist groups involved in this trade and which consequently produce terror against these civilian populations.

2.5.1. Internally displaced people

The disputes between regional actors and international powers for the control of petroleum on the African continent and the uncontrollable increase in the arms trade to guarantee access to that same petroleum have been destroying family life and the sense of identity linked to the community of thousands of African people who daily have to abandon their hometowns and everything they know to become Internally Displaced People (IDPs) of their nations for fear of violence and attacks by terrorist groups, federal and paramilitary forces that increasingly have access to arms and promote the worsening of humanitarian crises, which go unnoticed by the international media due to their exclusive focus on the western world.

The nations that form the horn of Africa, such as Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia, lead the IDP numbers together, largely due to the relationship between the uncontrollable arms trade between the region and the Middle East and the increase in the firepower of armed groups that cause the displacement of the civilian population to other places due to the risk of death and serious injuries. According to 2016 UNHCR estimates, Somalia alone has approximately 1.3 million internally displaced people, which form the thousands of stories of why they left their cities or other forms of social organizations and which are directly or indirectly linked to the state's inability to control the increasing power of armed groups, resulting in neighbors becoming dangerous, risk of death, theft, terrorist attacks and human trafficking.

2.5.2. Refugees

The daily increase in refugees from African nations occurs for the same reasons as the increase in internally displaced people since the uncontrollable arms trade in the region puts the lives of these people at risk and hostage to atrocities against humanity, that their only exit is to submit themselves to asylum requests or live in large refugee camps, where the basic needs of human life are often not fully satisfied.

UNHCR numbers and estimates can show that, in Central Africa alone, there are at least 434,174 refugees, many of which make the Central African Republic one of the nations with

the highest number of refugees in relation to its population numbers. Still, it is important to highlight that most of these refugees end up being accepted in other African countries that also go through humanitarian crises due to the difficulty of crossing the African continent to the European continent and the high barriers imposed by Europe for these refugees.

2.6 Terrorist Groups

The large presence of terrorist groups on the African continent is directly related to what has been presented previously, mainly as a result of the failed states that are present on the African continent and the incessant arms trafficking that occurs in the territory. It is important to point out that this intrinsic relationship, where all this is intertwined and depends on each other for its occurrence, is a structural problem and one that is too worrying not only for Africa, but also for the international community, which, however, has not gained its true relevance (CFR, 2021).

This, consequently, contributes for the entire structural scenario to continue, even more, becoming something favorable for not only the emergence of new terrorist groups, but also their consolidation, as is the case of Boko Haram, with a large presence and operations in Nigeria and Cameroon, as is also the case of Al Shabab, present and active mainly in Somalia. In this sense, what was mentioned above in the topic of the Gulf of Aden is also essential to understand the intermittency of these groups, mainly due to the strong presence of illegal trade on the west coast of the African continent, mainly in Somalia (Washington Post, 2017).

3. Agenda B: War in Tigray and its impact in International Security

3.1 Historical Background

Currently, one of the hundreds of conflicts that occur throughout the international system and mainly along the African continent, the conflict in the Tigray region is gaining more and more notoriety. This region of northern Ethiopia has a long history of hostilities, having been one of the stages of the Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991) and the Eritrean-Ethiopian War (1998-2000), ending the conflicts and declaring peace in a official only in 2018 through the “Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship”, and of course, the Ethiopian Civil War, which demonstrates how unstable the region can be, mainly because it is on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which necessarily includes these countries in the problem of the current conflict.

3.1.1 Ethiopian civil war

Since European colonization in Africa, Ethiopia was one of the only countries that was not colonized, all this thanks to the invasion and annexation of some territories. As a result of these actions, several people were ruled by a single government. However, the government was composed of only one of the various ethnicities that made up Ethiopia, the Amhara people.

Until 1930 Ethiopia was an empire, ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie. This plurality of peoples to the detriment of just one ethnic group ruling all the others, generated a social organization very similar to the Indian one, the ethnic classifications, where there were 1st, 2nd and 3rd class peoples.

3.1.2 The Eritrean–Ethiopian border conflict

One of the regions within Ethiopian domination was Eritrea, and the Emperor of Ethiopia treated the Eritrean People with the same class distinction, making them inferior.

With such violence and barbarism coming from the imperial government, there was the formation of a militia with the purpose of becoming independent from the Ethiopian Crown, called the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF).

In this process, in 1937 a communist dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam took power in Ethiopia, who with his army called the Red Terror, killed and annihilated his political-ideological opponents.

3.1.3 Tigray's western zone

Another militia formed was the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). With this scenario the liberation front of Eritrea and Tigré established an alliance in northern Ethiopia, making this region strong enough to resist the atrocities of the Dictator Mengistu, which in turn doubled the level of repression, even going so far as to surround the Tigré region to affect the food supply. Estimated that more than one million Ethiopians died during his rule.

3.2. Political Background

To be able to analyze the Tigray War, which has so far claimed approximately half a million victims in the region and has lasted for almost two years, it is necessary to understand

all the political problems that led to the disorder in the structural sectors of Ethiopian's society, which permeate power struggles, coups, elections, and the clamor for political reforms, and erupted in the escalation of violence and the current war in the region.

Considered to be one of the oldest independent nations on the African continent, in the early 1970s, Ethiopia saw famine, corruption, inflation, and the failure to build significant political and economic reforms raze the monarchical regime of Emperor Haile Selassie, which once was seen as the door to change in the Ethiopian nation (HENZE, 2000). It was within the context of unrest arising from the established economic, political and social chaos, together with the growth of the communist movement as a result of Ethiopian discontent with the expansions over the Eritrea region and the support for Ethiopian communists by the Soviet Union, that the military began to organize and incite a complete revolution. Consequently, overthrowing the Selassie monarchy made way for a new form of government, which absorbed the socialist premises in ideology and the military in structure (OFCANSKY, 1993).

With the fall of the empire in 1974, the military junta created the Derg (officially Provisional Military Administrative Council), a council made up of military members and provisional in theory, which was responsible for ruling Ethiopia until the “civilization” of the government in 1987, even though in practice this military junta remained in control of state power until 1991. It was also during the 1970s that the Derg launched a heavy campaign of political repression and mass executions, called Qey Shibir or red terror, of supposed enemies of the new regime and its leader, Mengistu (ABBINK, 1995). It is also in the scenario of military control of the state machine that one of the great actors of the Tigray war appears for the first time: the Tigray people's liberation front, emerging as an opposition to the current government (BBC, 2021).

Despite the establishment of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), which led to a popular referendum on a new civil constitution and obtained 81% of Ethiopia's approval in 1987, the military junta saw its ruin being built through the droughts and famines that affected million Ethiopians and left a million dead, in addition to the insurrections fueled in northern Tigray and Eritrea and which brought an end to the Ethiopian war of 1991 when the TPLF formed a coalition to govern the country, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), made up of ethnic-based parties. It was through this coalition that, since 1994, a system of government known as ethnic federalism was established by the then prime minister Meles Zenawi, a system that was directly responsible for giving more autonomy to

Ethiopia's regions while being heavily accused of repression of the opposition by the still strong control placed in the hands of the central government.

For decades, until he died in 2012, Zenawi was the one who led the EPRDF coalition as president and then as prime minister, thus ruling Ethiopia under his new political system. However, after Hailemariam Dessalegn took office for the death of Zenawi, numerous protests began to erupt across the country, both anti-government and demands from the largest ethnic group, the Oromo, for an end to human rights violations and the release of political prisoners, making with Dessalegn stepping down in 2018. With Dessalegn's resignation from office, Abiy was elected in April of the same year, with proposals for dialogue and liberalization, with an implicit focus on the relocation of the FLPT from the center of power of the coalition that governs Ethiopia.

It is at this moment that a profound process of withdrawal of individuals from the Tigrayan ethnic group has started from high positions in the Ethiopian State government, such as the intelligence, air force, heads of the armed forces, and state industry, where the FLPT maintained a strong presence and power as a coalition leader (MOLFINO, 2021). With this move, Abiy was able to garner more popular acclaim but also fuel unease among his critics in the Tigray region, who saw his policy choices as ending the territorial dispute with Eritrea and removing Tigrayan politicians accused of corruption as an action of destruction of the federal system and the centralization of power in the hands of his new party, the Prosperity Party, after he dissolved the coalition in 2019 (BBC, 2021).

The tensions peaked in September 2020, when Tigray formalized his own elections, which were received as a clear challenge to the power of the central government that had postponed elections due to Covid-19. In response to elections classified as illegal, the Abiy government cut government funding directed to the region the following month, leading to the cataclysm of animosity between the two forces (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2021): with the attacks on Ethiopian military bases in search of weapons by Tigray Forces and the Abiy-led offensive in response, sparked by months of political wrangling between the Abiy government and Tigray's ruling political party, and a clear result of a fight between Ethiopia's federal government and the state region of Tigray for sovereignty (GHRD, 2021).

3.2.1 Tigray people's liberation front (TPLF)

As one of the central actors in the Tigray war, the Tigray people's liberation front currently exists as a paramilitary group opposing the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, as it is formally banned as a political party and classified as a terrorist threat by the new Ethiopian government (BLOOMBERG, 2021). Before Abiy entered power and at the beginning of the war, the TPLF consisted of a political party formed ethnically by Tigrayans and ideologically belonging to the revolutionary left wing, having risen in the Ethiopian political scene in 1975 as a strong opposition actor and leader of popular uprisings against the then socialist military junta that controlled the state spheres (ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 2022).

With ethnic nationalist roots, the TPLF has always had in its genesis the yearning for the autonomy of the Tigray region and, throughout history, marks its political presence as a primordial defender of a new Ethiopian political restructuring on the pillars of a system that can guarantee the ethnic autonomy of the regions that form the State of Ethiopia (ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 2022). As a result of its political stance against the Derg, in little more than a decade, the TPLF grew from a small group born in northwest Tigray to the most powerful armed liberation group and by forming, with other ethnic groups, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front coalition became Ethiopia's leadership from 1991 to 2018, when its members were dismissed from the center of state power with the removal of Tigrayans from government positions by the new prime minister.

Since then, the TPLF has been one of the actors in the civil war that has spread throughout Ethiopia, being one of the fronts of the Tigray region against the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), mainly due to the active participation of its members in Tigray Defense Force, a paramilitary rebel group, who possess guerrilla warfare tactics. It's important to mention that, along with the ENDF, the Tigray Defense Force is accused by rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, of actively committing war crimes against the civilian population who are held hostage by the criminal actions that took place in the course of the war.

Figure 1: A parade for the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, February 2020.



Source: New York Times, 2022.

3.2.2 Ethnic federalism

Ethnic federalism consists of a form of a federal system based on ethnic criteria for the definition of its regional or state federated units. In theory, this federal system would be able to politically meet the demands for more autonomy for ethnic groups while managing inter-ethnic conflicts and disputes within a multi-ethnic state, as is the case of Ethiopia with its approximately 80 ethnic groups (MINORITY RIGHTS).

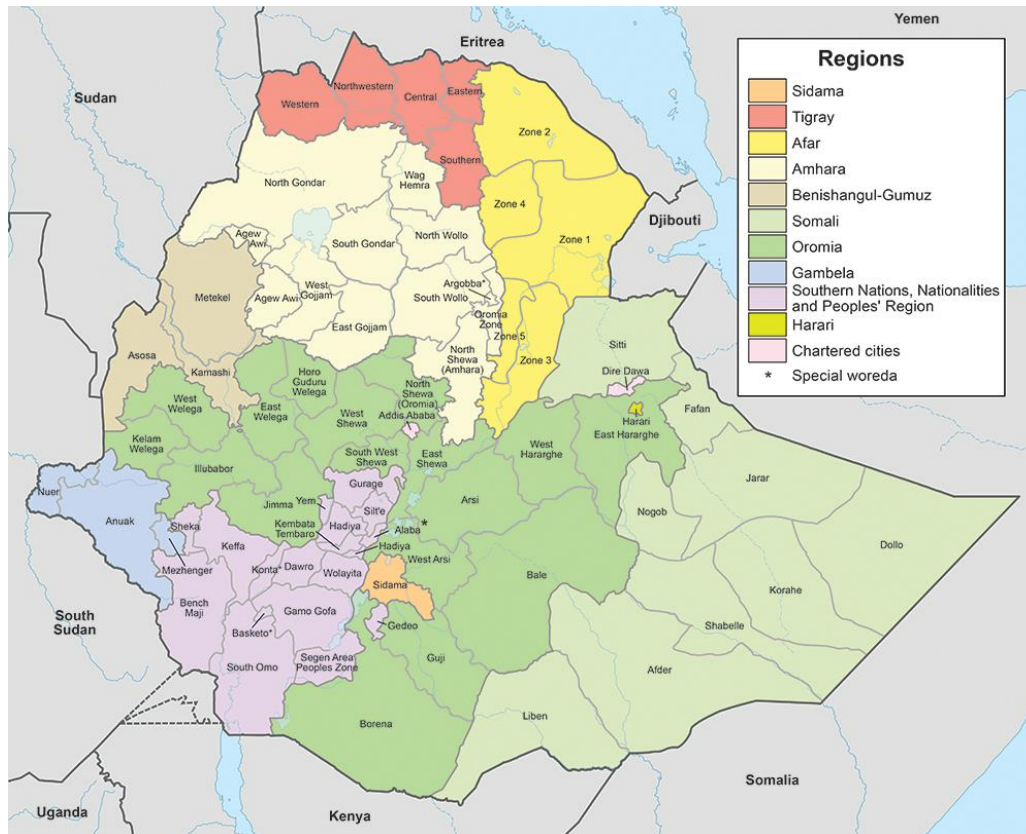
Established in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia through the 1994 constitution, with the entry of the EPRDF coalition and the TPLF to power, the new system was responsible for radical transformations in the previously existing political structure, shifting from a deeply centralized political system to a federal order based on Ethiopian ethnic groups. It was through ethnic federalism that, in the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium, there was a restructuring of the Ethiopian understanding of citizenship, politics, and identity with ethnic bases, in addition to the connection between ethnicity and territory, with the now division of Ethiopia's federal structure being built on the foundations of ethnolinguistic understanding (SHEWADEG, 2020).

With the entry of the new constitution, Ethiopia was divided by ethnic boundaries into nine regional states and two chartered administrative councils, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, bidding farewell to the model of provinces existing during the Derg (EMBASSY

OF ETHIOPIA). Seeking to resolve the ethnic conflicts that run through Ethiopian history, and to equalize the standard of living between the regions, the government guaranteed these regional states autonomy in judicial, legislative, and executive functions where each ethnic group would have the right to govern itself, at the same time they would be guaranteed to be represented within the central bodies and institutions of the Ethiopian government.

However, even with the certain political stability achieved through the new federal system and its reasonable path toward prosperity, new challenges were created for the central government, including the accommodation of ethnic groups within regional boundaries and the discontent of other ethnic groups with the leadership position that the TPLF had within the coalition that governs the country and made the Tigrayans spend almost 30 years as holders of central power to the detriment of majority groups, like the Oromos. In addition, the success of the system is also questioned by political experts since the entire framework of political restructuring implemented in Ethiopia had as its central objective the reduction of conflicts and ethnic clashes, but failing to be able to prevent the outbreak of the Tigray War (ADETO, 2021).

Figure 2: A map of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism zones and regions.



Source: ACCORD, 2021.

3.3. The Conflict Itself

Even though the Tigray War had its official beginning by November 2020, clashes and tensions between TPLF and the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea were constant since the civil wars that assolated the region in the 1990s, and the ethnic issue is extremely necessary in order to understand the whole conflict and its motivations.

From November 2020 till the present days, Ethiopia is going through a major conflict in large scale, what did not occur since Eritrean-Ethiopian War, which was officially ended only by 2018 with negotiations between the two countries, and were primarily performed by the actual Prime-Minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Abiy Ahmed, an Oromo representative. Even though he won this award, many question if this is truly fair, since two years later, Ahmed delayed electoral processes, which were contested, in most part of it by other minorities, and changed them, retrieving a major autonomy that many of them had.

By consequence, this led to many conflicts occurring in Ethiopia's territory, mostly between major minorities, like the Somalis against the Oromos, and the most notorious one,

the Tigrayans, mostly represented by the TPLF, who were truly unsatisfied with the current conduction of the actual government of Ethiopia and the deconstruction of the Ethnic Federalism. Even though many would think that the Oromos would be truly satisfied, since the current Prime-Minister is a Oromo, most of them did not feel represented, mostly the Oromo Liberation Front, a party/paramilitary group, which united themselves with the TPLF against Abiy Ahmed, creating the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces (UFEFCF), a rebel coalition against the current government, which is still struggling against it (The Guardian, 2021).

3.3.1. The ethnic issue

Ethiopia is famously known for its vast ethnic diversity, something that has become a coexistence and government obstacle for several historical periods, from Abyssinia (Ethiopian Empire) to the actual republican era. Including Eritrea (which was part of Ethiopia) ethnic minorities, its territory is composed by more than 80 ethnic groups, with one of them being a majority amongst them, the Oromos. Also, we do have other major minorities, like the Amhara (the second major minority), the Somalis, the Tigrayans, the Sidamas, the Gurages, the Welaytas, the Hadiyas, the Afar, and the Gamos. These minorities represent the major ethnic groups who compose this multi-ethnic State known as Ethiopia (DW, 2021).

Unfortunately, despite this huge diversity, the presence of so many ethnic groups culminated in many conflicts throughout Ethiopian history, since major minorities like the Oromo and the Amhara struggled to rise into national power. Also, this presence culminated in minor ethnic groups like the Somalis and the Tigrayans to struggle into claiming their own territories and to proclaim their own nations, leading to decades of conflict and secession within Ethiopian territory (DW, 2011).

3.3.2. Military operations

The Ethiopian Government, with its bloody and devastating military actions in 2020, carried out a series of military operations with the purpose of taking control of the regions located in Eritrea. The objective is to take control of the cities from the hands of the armed militias fighting against the dictatorship in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said on social media: “I am pleased to share that we have concluded and ended military operations in the Tigré region”

About an hour earlier the PM had reported the following: “The federal government is now fully in control of the city of Mekelle”

To complement operations Abiy put all national security in search to arrest the leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Tigre (PFLT): "The federal police will now continue their task of arresting TPLF criminals and taking them to court," the prime minister said, calling the government's actions an operation under the country's law and order.

3.3.3. Tigray Defense Forces (TDF)

After taking Mekelle City in 2020, Tigray Defense Forces in a turnaround in June 2021 managed to drive the Ethiopian army out of the city and re-establish the old government. After heavy losses, the Ethiopian government declared a unilateral ceasefire which was not accepted by the people of Tigris.

In a statement, the spokeswoman for the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) said it was ruling until they were driven out by Ethiopian troops, and promised that returning to power would persecute the invading Enemies.

This whole conflict began when Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy declared that the FLPT was responsible for the attacks on Ethiopian army bases in Tigray.

3.3.4. Militias

The militias within the Ethiopian Government have their origins since the time of the Empire, where a group using force and violence dominated and classified other peoples making them inferior.

Even with the communist dictatorship and later the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad, the Eritrean Liberation Front and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) were one of the most notorious militias in the region, as they were one of the only ones that managed to stop the advances of the federal army. Ethiopian.

When the Prime Minister was elected in 2018, he dissolved the TPLF coalition, so he tried to centralize his power, generating great dissatisfaction among the People of Tigray, as they lost their governmental representation.

3.3.5. Chinese influence and its interests

After years of massacre and conflicts, the African continent found itself abandoned and at the mercy of the great powers and who on many occasions neglected their people, which opened the way for Chinese influence on the African continent that some even dare to call Chinese neocolonialism.

In the case of Ethiopia, we can see that since 2015 China has been financing infrastructure works, such as health, education and mobility. In 2015 alone there were almost 14 million dollars of Chinese investments. 2019 arrives and China builds a mega highway on Ethiopian's ground. This is nothing close to the 12 billion dollars the country has been receiving since the 2000s, all that amount being Chinese investments.

For “renovations of large projects that have improved living conditions in the region and generated thousands of jobs – roads, railways, dams and factories”

With so many investments, Ethiopia gained the nickname “China of Africa” as a result of rapid economic growth and the fact that several Asian businessmen, mainly from China, took their companies to the African country. Thanks to massive Chinese investment, Ethiopia's GDP grew by 10% for the year. Chinese influence has been going on since the Cold War, where China saw an opportunity to perpetuate its socialist ideology in these newly independent countries, making them not leave the socialist ideological sphere.

China is eyeing Chinese resources and the opportunity it has to expand its market and use African (Ethiopian in this case) labor to leverage its economy and manages to have these countries under its influence because its billion-dollar loans make the African countries, in particular Ethiopia, are held hostage by the great power that is the People's Republic of China.

3.4 Human Rights Violations

Since the beginning of the Tigray war in November 2020, several international human rights groups and organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have publicly reported on the constant accusations of crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes that have been taking place within Ethiopian territory by actors indirectly or directly involved in the conflict.

According to the report on possible human rights violations presented by Kaari Betty Murungi, president of the International Commission of Experts on Human Rights in Ethiopia, it

was possible to find important evidence that those involved in the Tigray war are also linked to serious violations and abuses of the international human rights and humanitarian law, many of which are war crimes. The report was also able to highlight the humanitarian crisis that the more than 6 million people in the Tigray region are suffering as they are denied the right to basic services by the federal government and its allies, and it can be seen as a tactic of using hunger to win the war (OHCHR, 2022).

3.4.1. Ethnic cleansing

According to reports by Human Rights Watch, troops from the Amhara region, allied with the federal forces of Ethiopia and Eritrea, would be responsible for a silent ethnic cleansing of the Tigrayan communities of West Tigray that lasts for more than one year, and with the possible participation direct from Ethiopian federal troops. According to these documents, it is through the forcible removal of the elderly, women, and children from their hometowns and the incarceration of men in overcrowded places exposed to disease, hunger, and torture by Amhara forces that ethnic cleansing goes unnoticed by the international community and marks an expressive number of people who were taken from their communities due to their ethnicity.

2.4.2. War crimes

The Tigray Defense Forces (TDF), according to the 2022 report of UN, are involved in accusations of using civilians as human shields, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and extrajudicial killings of civilians, in addition to the destruction of civilian structures, including houses and hospitals in the Afar and Amhara regions. On the other hand, Mulugeta Gebrehiwot, founder of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, spoke about the conflict, saying that the ENDF and the EDF were involved in ethnic cleansing, massive sexual violence, and torture of the civilian population of Tigray, and publicly describe the murder of these individuals as a literal genocide supported by government forces in Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea.

3.5 International Security

3.5.1. Refugee Crisis

With increasing tensions and the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia and Eritrea due to the Tigray war, the civilian population of the regions that are at war is faced not only with an

exponential increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced people but also with the deterioration of their living conditions inside the refugee camps as a result of the scarce resources to which they have access, including food, clean water, and medicine. In addition, they have to deal with the constant destruction and threat of attacks on their camps by federal or paramilitary forces, as is the case with the Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps in Tigray, destroyed in early 2021 by Eritrean government forces, which left a population of 20,000 Eritrean refugees homeless until they were taken to new camps, Mai Aini and Adi Harush, where the refugees have also suffered from fear from attacks in places close to the two camps.

Similarly, Ethiopian refugees are facing long walks to be able to cross border zones between Tigray and Sudan in search of survival and refuge from the violations of their human rights by the actors in the conflict. It's estimated that approximately 3,000 people flee daily, mainly through the border points of Hamdayet, Lugdi/Village 8, and Al Asera, towards Sudan, which, until March this year, received 60,000 Ethiopian asylum seekers and refugees, most of whom are unaccompanied children who ended up losing their families or were lost amid the worsening attacks.

3.5.2. Impacts on neighboring countries

The impacts on the States adjacent to Ethiopia and the territory of Tigray, are occurring mainly due to the great violence that runs through the Ethiopian territory, and that, consequently, takes many civilians belonging to ethnic minorities, mainly the Tigrayans, who are being forced to leave their homes. This is occurring either because of the ongoing conflict, or because of the consequences left by it, such as poverty, misery and the fear of being targets of ethnic cleansing (UNHCR, 2022).

Currently, the States that are suffering the greatest consequences from these conflicts are Sudan, Eritrea (although it is involved in the conflict), and the Tigrayan territory itself, due to internally displaced persons. It is important to emphasize that refugees from this conflict are all receiving help from UNHCR, HRW and Sudan itself so that they can take refuge, however, they still face many difficulties in having access to basic resources, as well as it ends up being something complex for a State as Sudan to deal with, as it is also already a country that suffers from poverty and violence, and also the effects from the COVID-19 Crisis (UNHCR, 2022).

3.5.3. Economic and Military Effects

The military and economic effects resulting from what is happening in Tigray and Ethiopia are catastrophic, where it is currently necessary to count on the help of several NGOs, which, consequently, depend on donations from civil society, States and the African Union. In this sense, because the center of the conflict is primarily in Ethiopian territory, many resources are having to be used mainly to finance the State's war against the TPLF, since it is a relatively consolidated belligerent group. Despite it, this offensive is costing too much for the Ethiopian government, culminating in economic crises in the country and also due to the effects of the crisis resulting from the covid-19 pandemic, which still impacts many countries, such as Niger itself, the destination country. of many refugees (BAGOUR, 2021).

4. References

ADENIYI, Adesoji. **“THE HUMAN COST OF UNCONTROLLED ARMS IN AFRICA - Cross-national research on seven African countries”**. Disponível em: https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/rr-human-cost-uncontrolled-arms-africa-080317-en.pdf

ADETO, Yonas Adaye. **Violent ethnic extremism in Ethiopia: Implications for the stability of the Horn of Africa**. ACCORD. 19 Jan. 2021. Available at: <<https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/violent-ethnic-extremism-in-ethiopia-implications-for-the-stability-of-the-horn-of-africa/>>. Accessed on: Oct 30 2022.

BAGOURI, Samar. **“The Extensive Cost - How the war in Tigray is impacting Ethiopia’s economy?”**. Disponível em: <https://futureuae.com/en/Mainpage/Item/6933/the-extensive-cost-how-the-war-in-tigray-is-impacting-ethiopias-economy>

BRUM, Maurício. **Um novo colonialismo?**. Superinteressante. 5 July 2019. Available at: <<https://super.abril.com.br/sociedade/um-novo-colonialismo/>>. Accessed on: Oct 20 2022.

CALLAMARD, Agnès; ROTH, Kenneth. **Ethiopia’s Invisible Ethnic Cleansing**. Foreign Affairs. 2 June 2022. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ethiopia/2022-06-02/ethiopias-invisible-ethnic-cleansing?utm_medium=social>. Accessed on: Sept 30 2022.

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS. **Al Shabab**. Disponível em: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab#chapter-title-0-2>

Deutsche Welle. **“Conflito de Tigray agrava divisões étnicas na Etiópia”**. Disponível em: <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/conflito-de-tigray-agrava-divis%C3%B5es-%C3%A9tnicas-na-et%C3%B3pia/a-60066165>.

Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia Population Census Commission. **Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007: Population and Housing Census Results**. Dec. 2008. Disponível em: https://web.archive.org/web/20090325050115/http://www.csa.gov.et/pdf/Cen2007_firstdraft.pdf

FOMERAND, Jacques. **The A to Z of the United Nations**. 1st ed. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009.

GHOSH, Bobby. **The World's Deadliest War Isn't in Ukraine, But in Ethiopia**. The Washington Post. 23 Mar. 2022. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/the-worlds-deadliest-war-isnt-in-ukraine-but-in-ethiopia/2022/03/22/eaf4b83c-a9b6-11ec-8a8e-9c6e9fc7a0de_story.html>. Accessed on: Sept 7 2022.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL. **International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia Finds Reasonable Grounds to Believe that the Federal Government Has Committed Crimes against Humanity in Tigray Region and that Tigrayan Forces Have Committed Serious Human Rights Abuses, Some Amounting to War Crimes**. United Nations. 22 Sept 2022. Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/09/international-commission-human-rights-experts-ethiopia-finds-reasonable-grounds#:~:text=The%20report%20found%20reasonable%20grounds%20to%20believe%20that%20Tigrayan%20forces,property%20in%20Kobo%20and%20Chenna.>>>. Accessed on: Oct 30 2022.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. **Ethiopia: Eritrean Refugees Targeted in Tigray**. Human Rights Watch. 16 Sept 2021. Available at: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/16/ethiopia-eritrean-refugees-targeted-tigray>>. Accessed on: Sept 27 2022.

Human Rights Watch. **"Ethiopia: Eritrean Forces Massacre Tigray Civilians"**. Disponível em:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/05/ethiopia-eritrean-forces-massacre-tigray-civilians#>.

Institute for security studies. **"Is Somali Piracy finally under control?"**. Disponível em: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-somali-piracy-finally-under-control>

MALONE, D & MAHBUBANI, K: **"The UN Security Council — from the Cold War to the 21st Century"**, UN World Chronicle, 30 March 2004.

MARCUS, Harold G.; Mehretu, Assefa; Crummey, Donald Edward. **"Ethiopia"**. Encyclopedia Britannica, 26 July 1999. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia>>. Accessed on: Oct 30 2022.

MILLER, Sarah. **Nowhere to Run: Eritrean Refugees in Tigray**. Refugees International. 3 Mar. 2022. Available at: <<https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2022/3/1/nowhere-to-run-eritrean-refugees-in-tigray>>. Accessed on: Sept 27 2022.

OFCANSKY, Thomas P.; Berry, LaVerle B. **Ethiopia: A country study**. Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Sept. 1993.

REUTERS STAFF. **Primeiro-ministro da Etiópia anuncia que operação militar em Tigré foi concluída**. Reuters. 28 Nov. 2020. Available at: <<https://www.reuters.com/article/internacional-etioopia-conflito-idBRKBN2880PU-OBRWD>>. Accessed on: Oct 20 2022.

SHEWADEG, Biruk. **Ethnic Conflict under Ethnic Federalism**. ACCORD. 25 Feb. 2020. Available at: <<https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/ethnic-conflict-under-ethnic-federalism/>>. Accessed on: Oct 30 2022.

THE GUARDIAN. **“Alliance of Ethiopian factions puts government at risk of overthrow”**. Disponível em: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/05/nine-ethiopian-factions-to-form-alliance-against-government>

TRONVOLL, Kjetil. **“In-Depth Analysis: Towards Tigray Statehood?”**. Addis Standard. Disponível em: <https://addisstandard.com/in-depth-analysis-towards-tigray-statehood/>.

THE NEW YORK TIMES.

THE WASHINGTON POST. **“Boko Haram vs. al-Shabab: What do we know about their patterns of violence?”**. Disponível em: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/10/02/boko-haram-vs-al-shabab-what-do-we-know-about-their-patterns-of-violence/>

UNITED NATIONS. **Tigray: Eritrean refugees ‘scared and struggling to eat’ amid aid obstacles**. UN News. 21 Jan. 2022. Available at: <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1110252>>. Accessed on: Sept 27 2022.

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION. **The UN Security Council**. Disponível em: <http://www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/united-nations/the-un-security-council.html>.

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS. **Arms Trade**. Disponível em: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/att/#collapse2>.

UNITED NATIONS TREATY COLLECTION. **Arms Trade Treaty**. Disponível em: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVI-8&chapter=26&clang=_en.

UNHCR. **Ethiopia's Tigray Refugee Crisis Explained**. The UN Refugee Agency. 16 July 2022. Available at: <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/ethiopia-s-tigray-refugee-crisis-explained/#Where%20are%20Ethiopian%20refugees%20crossing%20the%20border?>>. Accessed on: Sept 27 2022.

YOUNG, John. **The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples Liberation Fronts: A history of tensions and pragmatism**. The Journal of Modern African Studies, v. 34, n. 1, p. 105-120, 1996

WORLD BANK GROUP; UNHCR. **Forced displacement and mixed migration in the Horn of Africa**. 2015.