

The War on Tigray, Ethiopia

Testimonies

I. Overview

“Tigrayans are being targeted with ethnic cleansing in the contested Western Tigray zone, according to a new report by human rights groups. The onslaught of rape and killings amounts to 'war crimes,' they added. Tigrayans in [Ethiopia](#) are facing a relentless campaign of ethnic cleansing being carried out by security forces from the neighboring Amhara region, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said Wednesday. The two rights groups in a joint report released Wednesday detailed how Tigrayan civilians in the disputed Western Tigray Zone of the country are allegedly being killed and subjected to various forms of sexual violence and abuses, including rape.

Some of these Tigrayans also faced mass detentions and forcible movements, a campaign that — along with the other reported abuses mentioned — "amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity," said the rights groups in a statement.

The report also alleged that newly-appointed officials in Western Tigray and the security forces from the neighboring Amhara region had some support and possible collaborations from the Ethiopian federal forces to carry out the alleged atrocities.”

(DW News on 06/04/2022; [Ethiopia: Tigray civilians targeted in 'crimes against humanity,' says report | Africa | DW | 06.04.2022](#))

“It is not the fault of the Tigray people. Many barbarisms have been conducted in Ethiopia, but what is happening in Tigray is of the highest brutality and cruelty. This is genocide of an entire people. They want to wipe-out the people of Tigray from the face of the Earth. I have said a lot of things but no one allows the message to be shared. Rather, it is being stifled and censored. The whole world should know it. The World must act now including all religious organisations to make their voice to stop the genocide.”

(The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Abune Mathias, 8 May 2021)

“I vividly recall the shocking images back in 1984 of a million emaciated Ethiopian men, women and children, many of them from Tigray, who had fled the country in the midst of a massive famine caused by prolonged drought, widespread food shortages, and discriminatory government policies. Today, the people of Tigray are being subjected to human rights atrocities on an appalling scale, and they are being denied urgently needed humanitarian aid – aid that is being blocked by the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries as well as other armed groups. The terrible reality today is that famine, crimes against humanity and genocide are occurring in Tigray, and they are occurring for one reason: the complicity of government officials in Addis and in Asmara. In fact, there are reports that the situation in Tigray could be worse than in Darfur.”

(US Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Press Statement on Tigray; 6 June 2021)

“We must stop barbaric crimes against women. Gang rapes and mutilation are being carried out in the Tigray conflict but the world prefers to look the other way. Innumerable witness accounts leave no doubt that war crimes are being committed on a huge scale in Tigray, the region of Ethiopia where a military offensive against rebels was launched last November. Often committed by the armed forces of neighbouring Eritrea, working alongside Ethiopia’s own army, these actions include mass sexual violence against women and girls. Such reports are terrible enough but it is only when you go into the details that you can fully appreciate that

these crimes are against the very core of humanity. The accounts from Tigray include women being repeatedly raped next to the bodies of husbands or brothers who had tried to protect them; being told the men in uniform raping them are deliberately selected for being HIV-positive; assaulted with....”

(Lord William Hague, The Times, 31 May 2021)

“Every now and then, East Africa breaks into world consciousness. It happened in the mid-1980s, when Ethiopia underwent a terrible famine. Teams of pop stars made two hit “Charity Singles”: “We are the World” and “Do they Know it is Christmas?”. Today, Ethiopia is again in the news, for War in Tigray, a region in the country’s north. What is happening there is worse than war, if such a thing is possible. Tigray is a theatre for war crimes and crime against humanity. To make it more interesting – if that is the word – Ethiopia’s head of state is the 2019 Nobel Peace Laureate, Prime Minister of Ethiopia.”

(Jay Nordlinger, National Review; 22 March 2021)

“The unfolding catastrophes in the War on Tigray: 52,000 civilians killed over 90 days; 4.5 million Tigrayans in need of urgent emergency aid to avert famine of the 1984/85 proportions; 2.2 million Tigrayans internally displaced; close to 100,000 refugees in Sudan; almost 100 % of crops in the fields in Tigray burnt; more than 75 % domestic animals in Tigray killed; and more than 75 % of health facilities, schools in Tigray looted, destroyed, or burnt”.

(<https://savetigray.substack.com/p/a-special-place-in-hell-video-update?>)

“For months, the people of Tigray have been largely sealed off from the world, with electricity and telecommunication access severed and mobile phones often seized, leaving little to back up their claims of thousands, even tens of thousands, killed. That has begun to change. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken asserted last month that “ethnic cleansing” has taken place in western Tigray, marking the first time a top official in the international community has openly described the situation as such. The term refers to forcing a population from a region through expulsions and other violence, often including killings and rapes. The spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday called the accounts in the AP story “harrowing” and said, “We are very concerned.”

(Cara Anna AP, Miami Herald; 7 April 2021)

“The effects of this war will continue long after the guns have fallen silent. There will be empty spaces where civilian populations were murdered, and there will be a cohort of children growing up who are the results of the rape of their mothers. This further illustrates why it is absolutely the wrong time for the UK Government to be reneging on their promise to maintain UK aid spending at 0.7% of gross national income. I hope the Minister will reflect further on that disastrous decision. Even now, the UK Government can help avert yet more destruction in Tigray and provide justice for the survivors of the massacres and for the women who have been raped. It will, however, take much more than words; it will take action, and that is what I, and many others, hope the Minister will commit to tonight.”

(Helen Hayes MP, UK Parliament Debate on Conflict in Tigray, 25 March 2021)

“The war has gone on too long. It has caused a lot of suffering, death and destruction. No, I am not talking about the war in Ukraine. I am talking about the civil war in Ethiopia that has raged since November 2020. More than 500,000 people have died and many more have been displaced and left helpless because of this brutal conflict. While Tigrayans starve away under siege with only scanty help from the international community in a conflict that has lasted more than two years, last week the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen hosted a fundraiser for Ukraine at which over 9 billion Euros were

raised for Ukrainian refugees... It is not difficult to understand why the international community has been scarcely bothered by the protracted conflicts in Africa. For certain it is not for a lack of resources but for a lack of sufficient interest as these areas are of no significant strategic value. Unlike the Ukrainian conflict that spells danger for Europe, the conflicts in Africa are of no serious direct consequence. So, the commitment is not to peace and protection of life but to the protection of white lives. And there we have it, the racism that underlies the little interest in these other conflicts. It is not that the suffering of non-white peoples has been ignored. To add salt to the wound, statements have been made to the effect that non-white peoples are more accustomed, even more deserving of living in conditions of war and conflict. ...Thus, when one compares the attention that has been given to the Ukrainian conflict to the scanty attention given to the Ethiopian conflict, one cannot help but recall the incisive assessment of W.E.B DuBois who wrote at the dawn of the 20th century that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. More than a century later, DuBois's assessment rings truer in our day. I am certainly no DuBois but dare I say that the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of the color line. Steve Biko knew better when he said, "Black man, you are on your own."

(Trevor Lwere, The Observer; 11 April 2022)

II. Ethnic Targeting, Cleansing and Genocide

"A Pogrom is happening in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is killing its own citizens wantonly. That is chilling, but true: by attempting to extirpate Ethiopia of Tigrayan ethnicity and heritage, Ethiopia's military and government stands accused of purposeful ethnic cleansing, a precursor to all-out genocide, as outlawed by the UN Convention against Genocide"

(Professor Robert Rotberg, Former President of the World Peace Foundation; 28 January 2021)

"Ethiopian officials and allied militia fighters are leading a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing in Tigray, the war-torn region in northern Ethiopia, according to an internal United States government report obtained by The New York Times. The report, written earlier this month, documents in stark terms a land of looted houses and deserted villages where tens of thousands of people are unaccounted for. Fighters and officials from the neighboring Amhara region of Ethiopia, who entered Tigray in support of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, are "deliberately and efficiently rendering Western Tigray ethnically homogeneous through the organized use of force and intimidation," the report says. 'Whole villages were severely damaged or completely erased', the report said."

(The New York Times; 26 February 2021)

"When, for more than a year, the Abiy Ahmed regime conducted ethnic profiling, targeting and cleansing of Tigrayans in Addis Ababa under the nose of the diplomatic communities, including those who work for UNDP Ethiopia, the UN system failed to raise an eyebrow let alone protest. These have been the precursor of the now out-and-out genocidal War on Tigray"

(MT; MKTUK; 8 March 2021)

"Denial of genocide strives to reshape history in order to demonize victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators. Denial of genocide is the final stage of genocide. It is what Elie Wiesel has called a "double killing." Denial murders the dignity of survivors and seeks to destroy remembrance of the crime. In a century plagued by genocide, we affirm the moral necessity of remembering – 'or acknowledging and stopping it when it is happening'- MT".

(Statement by Concerned Scholars and Writers, Armenian National Institute, April 24, 1998, accessed 3 March 2021)

“What happened in Rwanda showed that despite the creation of an organization set up to prevent a repetition of genocide – for the UN is central to this task – it failed to do so, even when the evidence was indisputable.”

(L.R. Melvern, an Investigative Journalist Who Researched the Rwandan Genocide)

“Modern genocides aren’t done Nazis style. Cheap, stealthy, smart way to do it is by starving, pillaging, raping, displacing. World then automatically demands humanitarian aid which will come but always little & late-allowing ethnic cleansers to finish job first #Ethiopia #Tigray”

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 23rd March 2021)

“If that’s what [#Ethiopia](#) PM said (I base 2ndhand on translation), then he condones violations of Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law [#IHL](#) aka ‘rules of war’ where it’s legitimate to use daggers on other combatants but it’s never ever legal to rape anyone [#Tigray](#)”

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 23rd March 2021)

“Any credible inquiry into [#Tigray](#) atrocities musn't just be impartial and independent but seen to be so. Will this really be the case here, if done 'jointly' with [#Ethiopia](#) institutions that aren't trusted? A compromised inquiry risks adding fuel to fire”

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 21st March 2021)

“Now, for the first time, they also bring proof of an official attempt at what is being called ethnic cleansing in the form of a new identity card that eliminates all traces of Tigray, as confirmed to The Associated Press by nine refugees from different communities. Written in a language not their own, issued by authorities from another ethnic group, the ID cards are the latest evidence of a systematic drive by the Ethiopian government and its allies to destroy the Tigrayan people.”

(Cara Anna AP, Miami Herald; 7 April 2021)

“The Amhara authorities now in charge of the nearby city of Humera took Seid Mussa Omar’s original ID card displaying his Tigrayan identity and burned it, the soft-spoken nurse said. On his new card examined by the AP, issued in January with the Amharic language, an Amhara stamp and a border of tiny hearts, even the word Tigray had vanished.

“I kept it to show the world,” Seid said. He added that only 10 Tigrayans remained of the roughly 400 who worked at the hospital where he had been employed, the rest killed or fleeing. “This is genocide ... Their aim is to erase Tigray.”

(Cara Anna AP, Miami Herald; 7 April 2021)

“What started as a political dispute in one of Africa’s most powerful and populous countries have turned into a campaign of ethnic cleansing against minority Tigrayans, according to AP interviews with 30 refugees in Sudan and dozens more by phone, along with international experts. The Ethiopian government of Nobel Peace Prize winner Abiy Ahmed is accused of teaming up with his ethnic group — his mother was Amhara — and soldiers from neighboring Eritrea to punish around 6 million people. Witnesses say they have split much of Tigray between them, with the Amhara in the west and Eritrean forces in the east.”

(Cara Anna AP, Miami Herald; 7 April 2021)

III. Weaponisation of Hunger, Starvation and Famine

“Forced starvation is the latest chapter in a conflict where ethnic Tigrayans have been massacred, gang-raped and expelled. Months after crops were burned and communities were stripped bare, a new death has set in. The U.N. calls it the world’s worst hunger crisis in a decade.”

(Cara Anna, The Globe and Mail, 20 September 2021)

“The United Nations humanitarian chief has warned that famine is imminent in Ethiopia’s embattled Tigray region as well as the country’s north and there is a risk that hundreds of thousands of people or more will die. Mark Lowcock said the economy has been destroyed along with businesses, crops and farms and there are no banking or telecommunications services. “We are hearing of starvation-related deaths already,” he said in a statement released on Friday. “People need to wake up. The international community needs to really step up, including through the provision of money.” “The conflict has destroyed livelihoods and infrastructure ... brought about mass killings, abductions and sexual violence,” Lowcock told Al Jazeera before adding that there was evidence pointing towards Eritrea using “starvation as a weapon of war”, a violation and breach of humanitarian law. “There are now hundreds of thousands of people in northern Ethiopia in famine conditions. “That’s the worst famine problem the world has seen for a decade. There is now a risk of a loss of life running into the hundreds of thousands or worse.”

(Aljazeera; 5 June 2021)

“The United Nations is warning of a repeat of Ethiopia's devastating 1984 famine, and is calling for an immediate ceasefire in the northern region of Tigray. Mark Lowcock, the world body's humanitarian chief, told the BBC that hundreds of thousands of people were already experiencing famine conditions in Tigray after months of conflict. But the Ethiopian government has brushed aside talk of a ceasefire.”

(Andrew Harding, BBC Africa, 4 Jun 2021)

“Emaciated refugees to crops burned on the brink of harvest, starvation threatens the survivors of more than two months of fighting in Ethiopia’s Tigray region. The first humanitarian workers to arrive after pleading with the Ethiopian government for access describe weakened children dying from diarrhea after drinking from rivers. Shops were looted or depleted weeks ago. More than 4.5 million people, nearly the region's entire population, need emergency food. Hundreds of thousands might starve to death and some already had, according to minutes obtained by The Associated Press. There is an extreme urgent need — I don’t know what more words in English to use — to rapidly scale up the humanitarian response because the population is dying every day as we speak,”

(Mari Carmen Vinales, Head of the Emergency Unit for Doctors without Borders)

“In all my years as an aid worker, I have rarely seen a humanitarian response so impeded and unable to deliver in response for so long, to so many with such pressing needs. As an international community, we are clearly failing to deliver against the humanitarian imperative we are facing. Millions of women, children and men, including refugees, are in a truly desperate situation, suffering alone without aid or protection. The entire aid sector, NRC included, must also recognise our failure to define the scale of the crisis, to respond

early, to coordinate and to speak out – all of which has crippled the collective response. We must all act now and play our part to ensure aid reaches the millions of people suffering in Tigray.”

(Secretary-General Jan Egeland: Norwegian Refugee Council: Aid still not reaching Tigray, 1 February 2021)

“No more whitewashing: Aid is still NOT reaching civilians in desperate need in Ethiopia’s Tigray. Hunger and malnutrition reach them faster. In 40 years as humanitarian, I’ve rarely seen an aid response so impeded. We are failing as an int’l community”

(Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council)

“The head of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society said Wednesday that 80 percent of the country's conflict-hit Tigray region was cut off from humanitarian assistance and warned that tens of thousands could starve to death.

(AFP; 8 January 2021)

“In all my years as an aid worker, I have rarely seen a humanitarian response so impeded and unable to deliver in response for so long, to so many with such pressing needs. Millions of women, children and men, including refugees, are in a truly desperate situation, suffering alone without aid or protection. We must all act now and play our part to ensure aid reaches the millions of people suffering in Tigray.”

(Statement by Secretary General Jan Egeland: Norwegian Refugee Council: Aid still not reaching Tigray; 1st February 2021)

IV. Sexual Violence and Rape as Instrument of War

“It’s clear that rape and sexual violence have been used as a weapon of war to inflict lasting physical and psychological damage on women and girls in Tigray. Hundreds have been subjected to brutal treatment aimed at degrading and dehumanising them. The severity and scale of the sexual crimes committed are particularly shocking, amounting to war crimes and possible crimes against humanity. It makes a mockery of the central tenets of humanity. It must stop. The Ethiopian government must take immediate action to stop members of the security forces and allied militia from committing sexual violence, and the African Union should spare no effort to ensure the conflict is tabled at the AU Peace and Security Council.”

(Agnes Callamard, Secretary General, Amnesty International, 11 August 2021)

“What ‘Rape as a Weapon of War’ in Tigray Really Mean. Thus, we come to the conclusion that in Tigray, the patterns of rape and sexual violence carried out by the ENDF, the EDF and Amhara regional militia and special forces against Tigrayan civilians are consistent with acts of genocide, potentially conducted with the intent of destroying the Tigrayan people.”

(Dyan Mazurana and Dr Hayelom Mekonnen World Peace Foundation, 10 August 2021)

“We must stop barbaric crimes against women. Gang rapes and mutilation are being carried out in the Tigray conflict but the world prefers to look the other way. Innumerable witness accounts leave no doubt that war crimes are being committed on a huge scale in Tigray, the region of Ethiopia where a military offensive against rebels was launched last November. Often committed by the armed forces of neighbouring Eritrea, working alongside Ethiopia’s own army, these actions include mass sexual violence against women and girls. Such reports are terrible enough but it is only when you go into the details that you can fully appreciate that these crimes are against the very core of humanity. The accounts from Tigray include women being

repeatedly raped next to the bodies of husbands or brothers who had tried to protect them; being told the men in uniform raping them are deliberately selected for being HIV-positive; assaulted with....”

(Lord William Hague, The Times, 31 May 2021)

“In Tigray, sexual violence has become a weapon of war. The world must step in now and call the assaults what they are: a war crime”

(Helen Clark, Former Prime Minister of New Zealand and Head of UNDP. Foreign Policy, 16 August 2021)

“The Catholic Pontifical charity organization, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International, has reported the gross violation of human rights in Ethiopia’s Tigray region where military have been accused of raping women including Catholic Nuns. According to [the Catholic charity organization](#), soldiers from neighboring Eritrea, who entered the Horn of Africa country to support the Ethiopian federal troops, are committing a chain of other atrocities including killing innocent civilians. The source described the current situation in Tigray where the killings target younger people as “a genocide.” “This is clearly genocide against the people of Tigray. This is not just fighting; they are killing everybody. That is a sign of genocide. Many people are escaping from Tigray to Sudan and some of them, especially the young, are escaping because they are being targeted,” the source told ACN in the Wednesday, June 2 report. The source added in reference to the perpetrators of the abuses, “They are deliberately targeting the young. Young people are killed, our ladies and women are abused with sexual harassment. That is a sign of genocide itself.”

(Agnes Aineah, Aciafrica, 2 June 2021)

“Selam, a 26-year-old coffee seller in Edaga Hamus, 100km away from Tigray’s capital of Mekelle, said she was abducted by Eritrean soldiers with 17 other women in January. They took us into the forest. When we arrived there, there were around 100 soldiers who were waiting for us. They tied the hands and feet of each one of us. And then they raped us without mercy,” she told the Telegraph as she fought through tears. We stayed that way for three days. After three days the soldiers killed five girls who had been tied with us. They poured [alcohol] over our wounds. They danced standing over us. By the time she was taken into the forest, she had already been raped several times by men she recognised as Eritrean soldiers. After the first attack, her abusers were waiting for her as she returned to her house from the hospital with contraceptives and post-exposure HIV drugs. Why the hell did you want this? We want you to be sick. That is what we are here for. We are here to make you HIV-positive,” Selam recalled one of the men as saying. A doctor working in the sprawling Hamdayet refugee camp at the Sudanese border also said several women had reported being raped by Amharan soldiers who told them they planned to ethnically cleanse Tigray. The women that have been raped say that the things that they say to them when they were raping them is that they need to change their identity – to either Amharise them or at least leave their Tigrinya status... and that they've come there to cleanse them... to cleanse the blood line," Dr Tedros Tefera told CNN. Practically this has been a genocide, he added.”

(Lucy Kassa and Anna Pujol-Mazzini, The Telegraph “7 March 2021)

“Ethiopia confirms rape allegations in Tigray conflict -The authorities in Ethiopia have confirmed incidents of rape took place in the conflict-hit Tigray region in the wake of a military offensive against the local ruling party. It comes after [the UN said it had received reports](#) of a high number sexual violence and abuse in the region, including of individuals forced to rape members of their own family. ‘We have received the report back from our Taskforce team on the ground in the Tigray region, they have unfortunately established rape

has taken place conclusively and without a doubt,' Minister of Women, Ethiopia, Filsan Abdullahi tweeted on 11 February 2021."

(BBC News, Africa, 12 February, 2021)

"What is the fuss about Tigrayans women being raped, our soldiers are being killed!"

(Abiy Ahmed's Response to Sexual Violence and Rape in Tigray; House of Representatives Session, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; 23 March 2021)

"We are horrified by the reports and allegations we have received of sexual violence during the conflict in Tigray. The survivors of these alleged attacks must not be seen as statistics but as individual women and girls whose lives have been profoundly altered by the violations committed against them"

(Gemma Connell; U.N. Humanitarian Chief for East and Southern Africa)

"I am greatly concerned by serious allegations of sexual violence in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, including a high number of alleged rapes in the capital, Mekelle. There are also disturbing reports of individuals allegedly forced to rape members of their own family, under threats of imminent violence. Some women have also reportedly been forced by military elements to have sex in exchange for basic commodities, while medical centres have indicated an increase in the demand for emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) which is often an indicator of sexual violence in conflict. In addition, there are increasing reports of sexual violence against women and girls in a number of refugee camps."

(Pramila Patten; The U.N. Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict)

"It's not just the rape – it's the way this is done. I know of a father who was tied up to a chair with a rope between his lips, forced to watch as five Eritrean soldiers took turns to rape his 12 year old daughter. They are even forcing fathers, brothers and uncles to rape their own children and relatives, and killing them for refusing – what Tigrayan will rape his own family member?! They rape pregnant women. We are also hearing accounts of Eritrean forces killing women and raping their corpses after. It's difficult to find one-time rape victims; even those who have been raped have been raped again. I know these are unconscionable and horrifying to the human mind; I am telling you as a priest – but this is what they are doing. To them, this is law."

(The horrors of the Tigray war: Eyewitness accounts. Eritrean Hub; January 30, 2021)

"What type of cowardly men are these to fight their wars thru the bodies of women? What kind of perverted cause can only be advanced by inflicting unspeakable sexual brutality on women? What kind of degraded nation allows the industrial-scale rape of its women? #Tigray #Ethiopia"

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 20th March 2021)

"Important update from @MSF on #Tigray, where according to doctors speaking to @cnn, "almost all the women they treat recount similar stories of being raped by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers, in a self-proclaimed mission of retribution & were operating with near-total impunity." twitter.com/MSF EastAfrica"

(Eman El-Shenawi @Eman El-Shenawi; 20th March 2021)

"Heartbreaking accounts from victims reveal how rape is used as a weapon of war in the Tigray region of

Ethiopia @nimaelbagir reports”

(The Lead CNN @nimaelbagir; 19th March 2021)

“rape is not just a weapon of war but also instrument for chillingly called “cleansing the bloodline” #Tigray

#Ethiopia Same thing I saw Janjaweed do in #Darfur genocide in 2003+ sponsored by then #Sudan regime

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 19 March 2021)”

“Even as the Amhara fighters took turns raping her, they offered the young woman a twisted path to what they considered redemption.

She had returned to her looted home in Humera. There, she was seized by militia members speaking Amharic. When she asked them to speak her native Tigrinya, which she understood far better, they became angry and started kicking her.

She fell, and they fell upon her. She remembers at least three men.

“Let the Tigray government come and help you,” she recalled them saying.

They also made her a proposal: “Claim to be Amhara and we’ll give you back your house and find you a husband. But if you claim to be Tigrayan, we will come and rape you again.”

The woman’s Amhara neighbor was present during the attack. When she later approached him for help, there was none.

“So what?” she recalled him saying. “You came back. Behave and be quiet.”

The woman cried all night. The next day, she found little comfort in learning that many others in her neighborhood had been raped, too.

“One mother and daughter had been forced to watch each other,” she said. “One woman was raped on the road, with people watching. Other accounts were worse than mine.”

She left for Sudan. It was mid-February. Afraid to speak with anyone, she waited almost a month before seeking medical care.

“I was ashamed,” she said, and started to cry. She watched the doorway warily, fearing the rumors that can spread among the refugees.

She said she was grateful to be HIV-negative, but she is pregnant. For a long moment, she was silent. She can hardly think about that yet. Her family back home doesn’t know.

The United Nations has said more than 500 rapes in Tigray have been reported to health care workers. But the woman from Humera, whose account was confirmed by her doctor, assumes many more survivors are hiding it just as she did. The AP doesn’t name people who have been sexually abused.

Several refugees from different Tigray communities told the AP they watched or listened helplessly as women were taken away by Amhara or Eritrean fighters and raped. It was like taunting, said Adhanom Gebrehanis from Korarit village, who had just arrived in Hamdayet with the welts from a beating by Eritrean soldiers on his back.

“They do these things openly to make us ashamed,” he said.

He described watching Eritreans pull aside 20 women from a group of Tigrayans and rape them. The next

day, 13 of the women were returned.

“Go,” Adhanom said the Eritreans told the others. “We already have what we want.”

(Cara Anna AP, Miami Herald; 7 April 2021)

“Secondly, I want to talk about the widespread use of rape and sexual violence. It has been estimated that 10,000 women in Tigray have been raped, and recent reports on Channel 4, the BBC and CNN have all documented the horrific nature of the attacks, including kidnapping, imprisonment, rape and mutilation. On Monday this week, an unprecedented letter signed by 12 leading figures in the international community called for the sexual violence to stop. They said there is only one medical facility in the whole region fully equipped to meet the survivors’ needs.

What especially stands out are the ferocity of the attacks, which is evident from reports and photographs of injuries to women, including the mutilation of women’s genitals, and the targeting of women because they are Tigrayan. The rapists have talked of “Amharanising” the women and purifying their blood. The use of rape as a weapon of war is always abhorrent and heinous, but for soldiers to claim to be purifying or cleansing women by raping them makes this violence look genocidal. What also stands out is the impunity. There is no indication that either the Ethiopian or Eritrean Governments are taking any steps whatsoever to rein in their troops. Those responsible for the sexual violence inflict it with complete impunity. On Tuesday, the Ethiopian Government admitted there had been sexual assaults on women in Tigray, but sought to justify it as a consequence of the conflict.”

(Helen Hayes MP, UK Parliament Debate on Conflict in Tigray, 25 March 2021)

V. Crime Against Humanity

“The Maikadra Massacre of over 600 Tigrayans by Amhara Militias and Fano Paramilitary is a “Double Killing” of Tigrayans when the EHRC conspired with the Amhara Revanchists to twist it as crime against Amharas by Tigrayan Youth.”

(GSTS, 14 March 2021)

“Investigation by the very agencies that are at the centre of the Genocidal War on Tigray - as either as collaborators, supporters, or condoners of perpetrators - is the ultimate measure of inhumanity and injustice as it is complicity in covering-up crime against humanity and war crimes”

(GSTS; 14 March 2021)

“The EHRC failed to ensure that human rights are protected, respected and enforced and to take necessary measures when they were violated. Instead, the EHRC whitewashed human rights violations through compromised methodologies, dismissing credible allegations and eschewing a clear stand on human rights violations”.

(Skirting Human Rights Violations – Amnesty International Report on EHRC, 2019)

“The ECHR has built an unenviable track record of dismissing credible allegations of human rights violations, producing questionable investigation reports, and many times, failing to act in clear cases of human rights violations. When it has had the occasion to investigate and report allegations of torture and other ill-treatment in its submissions to the UNHRC and Ethiopia’s Federal High Court, it missed the

opportunity to alert the Ethiopian public about human rights violations occurring in Ethiopian prisons and to hold the authorities to account. This briefing shows in detail how the Commission has often attempted to dismiss allegations of human rights violations by the authorities”.

(Skirting Human Rights Violations – Amnesty International Report on EHRC, 2019)

“The longer an independent enquiry takes to start investigating crimes against humanity in #Tigray #Ethiopia, more the time given to perpetrators to clean up the crime scene i.e. sanitise ground zero & degrade evidence collection. As I saw happen in #Darfur “

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; @mukeshkapila; 20th March 2021)

VI. War Crimes

“The attacks violated the ‘laws of war’. Human Rights Watch has accused the Ethiopian military of indiscriminately shelling urban centres during the conflict in the northern region of Tigray. Homes, schools, hospitals and marketplaces were not spared when artillery was fired indiscriminately towards Tigray's towns and cities. In one attack Eighty-three civilians, including children, were killed and more than 300 others were wounded.

(BBC News, 11 February 2021; Human Rights Watch, 11 February 2021)

“Ethiopia must fulfil its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, as well as under the Rome Statute, which describes the targeting of civilians, including through deliberate starvation. Pressure must be exerted to ensure an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of Eritrean troops, the opening of humanitarian corridors to assist refugees and civilians, and the immediate, independent verification and investigation of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

(Mervyn Thomas, Founder of CSW, a non-for-profit Christian Humanitarian Group; 24 November 2020)

“The US-based group said the attacks violated the ‘laws of war’ and urged the government to investigate. Human Rights Watch has accused the Ethiopian military of indiscriminately shelling urban centres during the conflict in the northern region of Tigray last November. Homes, schools, hospitals and marketplaces were not spared when artillery was fired indiscriminately towards Tigray's towns and cities, according to the report. In one incident Eighty-three civilians, including children, were killed and more than 300 others were wounded, Human Rights Watch alleges”

(BBC News, 11 February 2021; Human Rights Watch, 11 February 2021)

“The attacks on Tigray’s health facilities are having a devastating impact on the population. Health facilities and health staff need to be protected during a conflict, in accordance with international humanitarian law. This is clearly not happening in Tigray. Hospitals, healthcare centres and clinics across Ethiopia’s Tigray region have been looted, vandalised and destroyed in a deliberate and widespread attack on healthcare, according to MSF teams on the ground. Of 106 health facilities visited by Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) teams between mid-December and early March, nearly 70 percent had been looted and more than 30 percent had been damaged. Just 13 percent were functioning normally and in some places

the looting is ongoing.

(Oliver Behn; MSF General Director; 15 March 2021)

“In my 30 yrs humanitarian work in brutalised places e.g. Darfur, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Bosnia, I have never came across situations like #Ethiopia #Tigray where military deliberately sets out to occupy/destroy most health facilities. World Record in Human Degradation”

(Professor Mukesh Kapila; Writer, Author & Global Health Humanitarian; Twitter; 14 March 2021)

(Makonnen Tesfaye; Compilation Updated on 11 April 2022