

Civil War Induced Human and Economic Crises in Northeastern Ethiopia from 2020-2022

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Abstract

Civil wars have become the most frequent and destructive form of conflict in the international community, which can bring human, economic, political, and social crises. This study assessed the civil war-induced human and economic crises in northeastern Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022. The study used a qualitative research method, particularly a case study design. This is an online desk research method using the available published and unpublished sources and materials. Ethiopia is the second-most populated country in Africa, after Nigeria, with a population of roughly 120 million and over 90 ethnic groups and 80 languages. It entered an impasse civil war on December 4th 2020. The civil war brought devastating human and economic crises in the northeastern part of the country. More than 1.3 million people were killed in the civil war. Furthermore, more than 31.4 million people, including 16.5 million children, 7.8 million women and 5.7 million people with disabilities are suffering due to multiple, overlapping hazards in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is one of the world's largest internally displaced countries, in which the northeastern Ethiopia civil war has taken the dominant role. Currently, more than 25 million people have been displaced. In the three-war period, more than 29.7 million Ethiopians, out of whom 12.5 million children, have faced food insecurity and/or serious hunger. Furthermore, the civil war brought dreadful and shocking property and infrastructural looting and destruction, as well as institutional crises. Ethiopia needs more than \$25 billion for reconstruction. The study concluded that the violations of human and democratic rights and humanitarian laws have been committed in Amhara, Tigray, and Afar regional states, constituting genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is therefore called for an independent, impartial and credible criminal investigation consistent with applicable international human rights standards to ensure accountability.

Keywords: Civil war, economic crisis, human crises, northeastern Ethiopia

Introduction:

Civil wars have become the most frequent and destructive form of conflict under international criminal law. The U.N. provides the widely accepted definition of civil war, which encompasses coordinated, sustained violence between a government and a rebel organization or between two or more insurgent groups. Civil wars can take lives and tear apart communities, destroy physical infrastructure and human capital, arrest socio-economic development, and leave behind indelible marks on collective psyches (Florea, 2017). Civil war can be defined as a politically organized, large-scale conflict that occurs within a country principally among large or

numerically important groups of its inhabitants or citizens over the monopoly of physical force within the country (Gersovitz & Kriger, 2013).

Civil wars are the most common form of conflict in the post-1945 era. Between 1945 and 1999, 127 civil wars in 73 states resulted in 16.2 million battle deaths and more than 50 million displaced people. As we know in the cases of Lebanon, Bosnia, Kosovo, Liberia, Sudan, and many other countries, civil war generates enormous human suffering, along with economic, political, and social devastation (Taydas et al., 2011). Civil war violence may involve external actors, but the violence occurs within the boundaries of a country and predominantly involves internal actors. A range of 500 to 1,000 deaths could, in principle, be equally consistent with a common understanding of civil war as an event that causes major destruction (Gersovitz & Kriger, 2013, Sambanis, 2004).

In the same vein, civil wars are recurring events in Ethiopian history. Between 1 and 1.5 million lives were lost as a direct result of civil wars (Human Rights Watch, 1991; Central Statistical Authority, 1991). Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country, after Nigeria, with a population of roughly 120 million, over 90 ethnic groups and 80 languages, has entered the bloody civil war that has left human, economic, political, social and institutional crises (Harshé, 2022). Ethiopia is viewed as a guarantor of security in Africa, an attitude now heavily tempered by mistrust over the current government's actions against its people (Gavin, 2023).

During Abiy's regime, Ethiopia entered into a bloody and dreadful civil war, which left multidimensional crises in the country (Vanguard News, 2022). Many scholars have argued that ethnic federalism has led to dire consequences or is the root cause of the current civil war in Ethiopia (Donner et al., 2022; Abay et al., 2022). Since 2018, ethnic tensions, and competition over state resources and power have been the other causes of the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia (Felbab-Brown, 2022; Teshome, 2022). The immediate cause of the civil war was the attack of the Tigrayan regional security forces on the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) Northern Command Headquarters on November 4th 2020 (Abay et al., 2022; Donner et al., 2022; Gesesew et al., 2021).

The Ethiopian Defense Forces, Eritrean Defense Forces, Amhara Special Forces, and Fano allied militia on one side. The Tigray Defense Forces allied with Sudan forces, the Samira militant group, the Kimant militant group, the Gumz militant group, the Oromo Liberty Front (OLF) or Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), and other foreign forces (Sudan, Egypt) were allied to the other side in the northeastern civil war (Gavin, 2023, Harshé, 2022). The humanitarian and economic crisis related to the conflict could have devastating effects nationwide in general in northeastern Ethiopia in particular (Crisis Group, 2021, United Nations, 2022a).

The northeastern Ethiopia civil war has had a huge impact not only on Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions, but also nearly all regions in Ethiopia, and neighbouring countries, and its persistence threatens the stability of the Horn of Africa and Red Sea regions (Felbab-Brown, 2022; United Nations, 2022b). Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Somali, the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Gambella, have experienced conflicts, intercommunal tensions, or violence. This is due to the growth of ethnocentrism, prejudice, stereotyping, competing claims over resources, land rights, administrative boundaries, and political, economic, and political unrest (United Nations, 2022b; Vanguard News, 2022).

No part of the country escaped the impacts of the civil war in one way or another (Today News Africa, 2022). Currently, at least 31.4 million people, including 16.5 million children, 7.8 million women and 5.7 million people with disabilities are suffering due to multiple, overlapping

hazards: armed conflict, severe drought, flooding, intercommunal violence and outbreaks of diseases including cholera, measles and malaria (UNICEF, 2022).

The civil war in Ethiopia has committed widespread violations and destruction, including the military targeting of civilians and civilian properties; mass and extrajudicial killings; gender-based sexual violence; arbitrary arrest and detention; mass displacement of civilians; destruction of property, food, and religious sites and cultural heritage; ethnic discrimination; and enforced information blackouts (Davies, 2022).

Following the Tigray Forces military offensive and control of several areas in the Amhara and Afar regions, there were unbelievable violations of human rights and destruction and looting of properties and infrastructure. In Amhara and Afar regional states, Tigray Forces and their alliances purposely and intentionally committed these cruel and unedifying violations, such as the unlawful killing of civilians, physical and psychological injuries, sexual and gender-based violence, property destruction, and institutional destruction. In this civil war, women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, farmers, and religious leaders were the most affected groups. Likewise, in the Tigray region, the federal forces, the Eritrean Defense Forces and their alliances committed the same war crimes (Teshome, 2022).

In the Amhara region, millions have faced severe starvation; thousands have died, causing mass displacement. Likewise, millions of Tigrayans are suffering food shortages and hunger-related causes, and many people have died. The Afar region also experienced the same crises (Crisis Group, 2021; United Nations, 2022a). Therefore, Ethiopia has been embroiled in a large-scale civil war that has continued for more than two years. The civil war in northeastern Ethiopia is among the world's deadliest conflicts in the 21st century, lasting from 2020 to 2022.

There are different national and international reports concerning the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia. However, the data show that these reports and previous studies on the civil war crisis in northeastern Ethiopia were focused only on the Tigray regional state, overlooking the unbelievable cries of the Amhara and Afar regional states. As a result, what distinguishes this study from previous studies is that it was conducted comprehensively on the civil war crises in northeastern Ethiopia, from 2020 to 2022.

Theoretical Perspectives - Greed and Grievance Approach to Civil War Onset and Bargaining Theory:

All countries host some citizens who are dissatisfied or frustrated with existing political, economic, and social conditions, motivating them to engage in civil wars. About the root causes of civil wars, Collier and Hoeffler have introduced a conceptual dichotomy to literature: 'greed' vs. 'grievance' (Taydas et al., 2011). The greed argument refers to self-interested, even selfish, behaviour such as low levels of economic development, a prior history of civil war, and political instability, which are the main motivations behind civil wars. Whereas the grievance approach identifies discontent and frustration about the existing political and economic situations taken as the primary motivation for civil war (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Walter, 2009).

The grievance theory assumes that the direct and strong link between deprivation-induced discontent and political violence, government actions, such as discrimination, the degree of political repression, ethnic dominance, and economic dysfunction create grievances at the individual or group level and galvanize civil wars (Florea, 2017; Taydas et al., 2011; Anyanwu, 2002). A greed-based approach also typically examines factors that encouraged rebel predatory behaviour, such as the presence of lootable resources and the conditions that favour or make

insurgency more feasible, like state weakness, rough terrain, external support from other countries, outbursts of civil conflict, or political instability (Anyanwu, 2002).

To settle and resolve the civil war, bargaining and negotiation are vital methods. Conflict resolution and bargaining approaches view civil war as a puzzle, given the existence of less costly alternatives to settling disputes (Anyanwu, 2002). Scholars' use of bargaining theory to account for civil war termination and the recurrence of civil wars are outlined. According to the bargaining theory, civil war is one of the policy tools available to rational actors who seek to resolve a dispute. Parties can be expected to resort to bargaining to resolve disagreements over the allocation of goods, resources, power, or politics (Hartzell, 2017). Hence, this theoretical approach is fitting to assess the civil war-induced human and economic crises in northeastern Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022.

Methods and Materials:

The study was carried out using a qualitative research approach, particularly a case study design. A case study is a pragmatic inquiry that is important to investigate the economic and human crises of civil war. The study mainly employed online desk research, including published and unpublished sources and materials. The design is very useful to get multiple sources of evidence to study issues under the study in detail. Eligible sources of data, such as research articles, books, media, YouTube, documentaries, and government, and organizational reports on the economic and human impacts of the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia, were used. The author used various search engines, such as Sci-Hub, Bookfi.net, Library Genesis, www.freefullpdf.com, and Google Scholar.com etc. Then, the collected data were thematically analyzed in line with the objectives.

Results and Discussion:

For more than two years, the governments of Ethiopia and Tigray forces, with their alliances, have been in the deadliest civil war, throwing the country into economic, human, political, social and multidimensional crises. Accordingly, the root and immediate causes, of human and economic crises of the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022 were presented and discussed in this subsection.

Causes of Civil War in Northeastern Ethiopia:

Civil wars can bring human and economic crises, such as political assassinations, mutinies, or coups; civilian massacres; sexual violence; displacements; famine and starvation; and infrastructural and property destruction (Gersovitz & Kriger, 2013). The Civil Wars are not independent events that occur in isolation, but rather the cause and outcome of a process of political contentions (ibid.). Studies show that the presence of weak social institutions, such as the legal system, and political and economic institutions, is the major cause of civil wars (Djankov & Reynal-Querol, 2010), According to sociologists, the regime types.¹ The greed and grievances of leaders are the other major causes of civil wars. The existence of an autocratic government can lead to chaos and disorder, and finally to civil wars (Miguel et al., 2004).

The greed and grievance-based studies showed that the low level of economic development, political violence, and government illegal actions are the major causes of civil wars

¹ a common argument posited that the risk of civil war breakout would be higher in autocracies, totalitarians, and authoritarian regimes

(Anyanwu, 2002; Florea, 2017; Taydas et al., 2011; Walter, 2009). Furthermore, poor and hungry societies are much more likely than high-income societies to fall into civil conflict over scarce vital resources, such as arable land (Djankov & Reynal-Querol, 2010). Civil war is more likely to occur in countries that are poor and weak state (Blattman & Miguel, 2010). According to the study conducted by (Miguel et al., 2004) in 41 African countries, economic stagnation, and dictatorship regimes are the causes of civil conflict, i.e., civil war is related to changes in income and democracy.

In the same vein, the EPRDF experienced an era of authoritarian rule under Prime Minister Meles (1991–2012), who believed in the Leninist formula of “democratic centralism” in the guise of an “ethno-federalist nation” (Donner et al., 2022). Hence, Meles adopted the system of ethnic federalism in 1994, which organized Ethiopia into 10 ethnolinguistic states and 2 chartered cities, creating distrust among regions, which is the root cause of the current civil war (Harshé, 2022). Likewise, after the end of Tigrayan domination in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy has ascended and has continued the system of ethnic federalism and belied or ridiculed the international actors and Ethiopians by being a “phoney and silent dictatorship,” leading the country to the worst and most destructive civil war (Gavin, 2023). Despite receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, Abiy quickly acted to roll back domestic restrictions on freedom, chaos, disorder, extreme dictatorship, and the worst civil war (Gavin, 2023).

When Prime Minister Abiy dissolved the EPRDF coalition, which comprised four parties, the TPLF did not accept its dissolution due to fearing the loss of political, economic, and other dominance and benefits (Donner et al., 2022). The seeds of the current political instability in Ethiopia could be traced to the assertion of the Tigray ethnic group to restore its erstwhile dominant position and the continuity of ethnic federalism in the Ethiopian polity as well as society (Harshé, 2022). On the other hand, the self-indulgence and frustrations that led to their loss of desire for their political, economic, social, and all-sided dominions, as well as their fear of ill-treatment and disbelief over Abiy’s government were the causes of the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia. In September 2020, the TPLF held parliamentary elections, which the federal government declared illegal, and created high tension between the Ethiopian federal government and Tigrayan regional forces (Donner et al., 2022).

In September 2020, the TPLF held parliamentary elections, which the federal government declared illegal, and created high tension between the Ethiopian federal government and Tigrayan regional forces (Donner et al., 2022). Due to this, the Tigrayan regional security forces attacked the Ethiopian government’s Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), Northern Command Headquarters on November 4th 2020. This was regarded by the central government as an act of rebellion and was declared war on Tigrayan regional forces, TPLF leaders and politicians recognized them to be “terrorists,” which is the immediate cause of civil war in the northeastern part of Ethiopia (Donner et al., 2022; Gesesew et al., 2021).

Hence, the ethnic constitutional dispute between federal and Tigray leaders, the greediness and grievance of Tigray’s leaders, the weakness of central power, and the attack on the Ethiopian government’s National Defense Force by the Tigrayan regional security forces are some of the causes of the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia. The authors believed that these were the root and immediate causes of the civil war and the heart of the current worst crises in Ethiopia. The occurrence of conflict throughout Ethiopia and civil war in northeastern Ethiopia are the leading causes of devastating deaths, displacements, other serious crimes, and disruption of market and livelihood activities.

Human Crises of Civil War in Northeastern Ethiopia:

- i. **Human Deaths:** Killings of combatants may be allowed in armed conflict and war. However, it is a war crime to commit certain offences against civilians (Carsten, 2019). Civilians' deaths are one of the crises caused by the northeastern Ethiopian civil war. It brought the greatest human devastation in Amhara, Tigray, and Afar regional states. The civil war in northeastern Ethiopia was conducted largely in towns and rural areas with dense civilian populations, which resulted in a significant number of human deaths. In addition to the combatants, women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, farmers, and religious leaders were the most affected groups in this civil war. The civil war was committed in violation of the principles of distinction, necessity, precaution, and proportionality (Teshome, 2022; World Vision, 2022).

The civil war in northeastern Ethiopia is the deadliest event of the 21st century in the world. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news on October 29, 2022, and Obasanjo, the former President of the Republic of Nigeria, the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia was the greatest and most devastating war in the world, in which 600,000-800,000 people were killed. The direct and indirect crises of the civil war in Amhara, Tigray, Afar, and Oromia are added, the estimated total lives lost in Ethiopia's civil war would be close to 1 million (Today News Africa, 2022; Ethio 360 Media, 2022).

However, many scholars argue that more than 1.3 million Ethiopians were killed by the Northeastern Ethiopian Civil War (Ethio 360 Media, 2022). According to President Obasanjo, nearly 600,000 Tigrayans were killed by the northeastern Ethiopian civil war (Today News Africa, 2022). Furthermore, more than 360,000 Amhara and nearly 50,000 Afar were killed due to this civil war. Of these deaths, many were civilians, such as children, women, elders, persons with disabilities, farmers, and religious leaders.

- ii. **Sexual Violence:** In Ethiopia, particularly in the northeastern parts and the Oromia region, gender-based violence has increased significantly (Okafor, 2022). According to the International Commission on Human Rights, rape and sexual violence had happened "on a staggering scale" since the earliest days of the conflict, targeting Amhara Afar and Tigray women and girls with particular violence and brutality" (United Nations, 2022b). Tigrayan forces had committed rape and sexual violence against Amhara, Afar women, and Eritrean refugees (United Nations, 2022b).

A report of the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Accountability and Redress Investigation and Prosecutions Committee revealed that 2,212 women, girls, boys, and men were subjected to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including gang rape, when the Tigray People's Liberation Front took over parts of the Amhara and Afar regions. 2192 gruesome sexual attacks have been committed in Amhara Regional State and 20 sex and gender-based violence in Afar Regional State. Similarly, this horrible sexual violence was committed in the Tigray Regional States (Ethiopian News Agency, 2023). 376 2,212 sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were committed by both Ethiopian and Eritrean forces in Tigray (Global Report on Food Crises, 2022). To the worst of the gang rapes, the raped

women and children lack access to proper healthcare, social welfare, and justice services (Okafor, 2022).

As eyewitnesses and survivors showed, gang rapes have been committed in horrible and unedifying manners, particularly in Amhara Regional State. According to an assessment conducted by Teshome (2022), Tigrayan Forces committed sexual and gender-based violence to demoralize, dehumanize, and punish, often indiscriminately in a targeted manner. Oftentimes, these acts were committed with the knowledge of military commanders and officials of the Tigray forces. The attacks were often perpetrated in a premeditated and cruel manner, including through gang rape in front of family members and husbands and the insertion of foreign objects into the vagina (ibid.; Meaza, 2021).

Furthermore, the gang rapes committed against the Amhara ethnic group are unique because the TPLF terrorist group intentionally selected HIV AIDS positive Tigray men and raped the Amhara women (Meaza, 2021). Hence, these gruesome incidences of gang rape included intentionally sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV-AIDS. The survivor experienced abortion and grievous physical and emotional trauma.

This is confirmed through direct interviews conducted with many survivors and substantiated via documentary evidence obtained from health facilities, rehabilitation centres, regional women's sector bureaus, and prosecutors' criminal investigation files (Ethiopian News Agency, 2023). Even though women were exposed to these serious crimes and needed psychosocial support and treatment, they remain ignored (Ahmed, 2022). This is the crime of crime. These are exactly incidents that amounted to serious violations and abuses that violated international human rights, international humanitarian law and national laws. These serious crimes were intentionally committed against civilians who had not taken any part in the hostilities and conflict.

- iii. **Displacement:** Conflict and drought are the primary drivers of displacement in northeastern Ethiopia, including the recurrent conflict in Oromia, and Benishangul Gumuz was the main cause of displacement. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Ethiopia is the third largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, home to over 924,000 refugees and asylum seekers. The ongoing conflict killed thousands and internally displaced millions of Ethiopians (Okafor, 2022).

Internal displacements from several parts of Tigray, Amhara and Afar Regional States swelled the number of camps set up for internally displaced people. About 440,000 people in Tigray, more than 225,000 people in Afar and 732,000 in Amhara have been displaced due to the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia (Gavin, 2023; UNICEF, 2022). According to the government of Ethiopia's Afar region, more than 377,000 people have been displaced by warfare at the current time (Reuters, 2021). Similarly, more than 11.6 million people in the Amhara region are displaced and highly starving without or with very little aid (Addis Standard, 2022c).

Generally, more than 25.9 million people in Ethiopia need humanitarian assistance as a result of internal conflict, displacement, and recurrent natural hazards (ACAPS, 2022). The number of people in need of food assistance in northern Ethiopia is more than 13 million people (United Nations, 2022). These

displaced people are particularly from Amhara, Tigray, and Afar regional states, including children and elders, faced severe starvation, malnutrition, access to medical services, and diseases and death, the need for life-saving emergency humanitarian (Amhara Association of America, 2021; Gavin, 2023).

Economic Impacts of the Civil War in Northeastern Ethiopia:

Ethiopia is in the midst of a civil war that has the worst economic crisis in its wake resulting in serious deterioration of food security and severe starvation, budgetary deficiency, and property and institutional damages.

- i. **Deterioration of Food Security and Sever Starvation:** The most commonly used definition of food security is that of the FAO (2003, p. 28), which defines food security as “when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Cochrane, 2018).

However, widespread and severe levels of acute food security have occurred across Ethiopia. Ethiopia is experiencing several intersecting humanitarian crises, including, overlapping hazards, civil war, armed conflict, severe drought, flooding, intercommunal violence and outbreaks of diseases including COVID-19, climatic shocks, desert locust infestation cholera, measles and malaria (Abebe & Belaineh, 2022; UNICEF, 2023; United Nations, 2022b). According to UNICEF US\$ 674.3 million is needed to meet the critical humanitarian needs of children, adolescents, women, and men in Ethiopia (UNICEF, 2023).

These intersecting crises are affecting nearly 31.4 million people including 16.5 million children, 7.8 million women and 5.7 million people with disabilities and resulting in deaths, food insecurity, displacement, and protection risks, which require urgent humanitarian assistance (UNICEF, 2023; United Nations, 2022). From these, the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia (the Tigray, Afar and Amhara Region States) takes the greatest percentages. In northern Ethiopia (the Tigray, Afar and Amhara Regions), a sprawling humanitarian crisis has intensified (UNICEF, 2023).

In the Amhara, Tigray, and Afar Regional States, the civil war had a dramatic impact on food security, mainly through large-scale displacements and movement limitations that impaired livelihood activities, market functioning, and access to basic services (Global Report on Food Crises, 2022). In these areas, there is destruction of agricultural tools and livestock, burning and pillaging of crops by armed forces, market disruptions, economic downturn, input shortages, and lack of supplies of food items (Mobley & Justice, 2022). This has resulted in the deterioration of food security and serious anger in Ethiopia (Hassen & Rynn, 2022).

In Tigray, over 20 per cent of under-age children and half of pregnant and breastfeeding women are malnourished. Meanwhile, 16 per cent of people in the Amhara region and 32 per cent of people in the Afar region are reported malnourished (United Nations, 2022a, 2022c; World Food Program, 2022). Furthermore, widespread famine is rapidly unfolding across the regions, and accusations persist that the Abiy Government is intentionally imposing mass starvation as a tactic of war (Gavin, 2023). United Nations human rights

investigators have said the Ethiopian government is using “starvation of civilians” as a weapon of war (Al Jazeera, 2022).

Currently, more than 11.6 million people in the Amhara region are highly starved without very little or no humanitarian aid, which needs urgent food assistance (Addis Standard, 2022a; Global Agricultural Monitoring, 2022). According to a report by the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit, 4.8 million people in Tigray, and 1.3 million people in Afar, regions need urgent food aid (Global Agricultural Monitoring, 2022; World Vision, 2022). According to the current data collected from the three-war period, millions of people in northeastern Ethiopia are faced with food insecurity and/or hunger due to the compounded impacts of civil war, displacement and climatic shocks such as severe drought and floods. Hence, the total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance throughout Ethiopia stands at 29.7 million out of whom 12.5 million are children (World Vision, 2022; UNICEF, 2022 & Addis Standard, 2022b).

As conflict has constrained agricultural production, households have faced extreme food insecurity due to constraints in market supply and access that are contributing to rising food prices, making basic food commodities inaccessible or unaffordable for many households (Mobley Justice, 2022). The combination of civil conflict, COVID-19, and drought has caused inflation to soar, the prices of staple foods are high and continue to rise, and the Food Price Index in Ethiopia was up by 49 per cent (World Food Program, 2022). The civil war and other hazards are together driving food insecurity in Ethiopia (Global Agricultural Monitoring, 2022). Malnutrition and food insecurity are reaching unprecedented levels in the face of devastating overlapping crises of the civil war and/or conflicts and drought across Ethiopia, particularly in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara Regional States (Abebe & Belaineh, 2022).

Despite efforts for humanitarian aid in civil war-affected areas, the humanitarian aid is highly restricted to the Tigray region, with no or little aid in Amhara and Afar regional states. Unlike the Amhara and Afar regions, there is continuous humanitarian aid for the Tigray regional state at different times. For instance: the United States conveyed over 1,700 metric tons (Blinken, 2022), and more than 1,000 trucks carried food, medicines, non-food items, and fuel by UNICEF (Schlein, 2022); the United Nations offered 169 trucks with 4,300 metric tons of food (United Nations, 2022b, 2022c). Finally, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has decided to implement the World Bank-financed recovery project for Tigray regional state, with US\$ 300 million (Addis Standard, 2022b).

The conflict, which has spilt over into Tigray, Amhara, and the Afar Regional States, has killed thousands of people, displaced millions from their homes, and left hundreds of thousands on the brink of famine (Al Jazeera, 2022). The severity of food insecurity in Ethiopia is the worst globally, driven by the impacts of prolonged civil war, and natural and human-made hazards. To the worst, millions of people, particularly in Amhara, Tigrayan, and hundreds of Afar have suffered serious food insecurity and hunger-related causes of diseases. In the Amhara, Tigray and Afar regional states, millions of people have faced serious

starvation and hunger and many children have been exposed to malnutrition and passed away daily.

- ii. **Budgetary Deficiency and Inflation:** The civil war is hurting Ethiopia by further weakening a pandemic-stricken economy marked by inflation and hard currency shortage that limits imports and export system (Crisis Group, 2021). Ethiopia's external debts mature by mass as the country's foreign exchange reserves dwindle, jeopardizing its ability to repay its loans on time. In the following few quarters, before June 2023, it is anticipated that Ethiopia will be liable for servicing a total of USD 1.6 billion in interest on loans. According to sources, debt payment requests from creditors to the Ethiopian government were USD 320 million for December 2022 alone, with China contributing USD 104 million (Fitch Ratings, 2022).

According to Sewale (Ph.D.), Ethiopia's external debt payment possibility worsened (Ashenafi, 2022). Ethiopia's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating was likewise reduced from 'CCC' to 'CCC-' by the international rating agency (Fitch Ratings, 2022). The downgrade of Ethiopia's to 'CCC-' rating reflects the significant risk of a default event that may result from the government's participation in the G20 Common Framework (CF) debt relief initiative, given the mechanism's guiding principle of comparable treatment of both official and private creditors (FY23) and USD1 billion in FY24 (ibid.).

As a result, the internal and external debts are unable to be paid; the microeconomic situation in Ethiopia has declined; there is high inflation, no reserves, a cut in international aid, and no civil servant salaries at the end of January 2022 (Fitch Ratings, 2022). This has resulted in dwindling funding for foreign direct investment, manufacturing and construction winding down, and restricted access to food, medicines, and commodities. Hence, millions of people, primarily in the Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regional States have faced budgetary deficiencies and inflation (Hassen and Rynn, 2022).

The civil war in the northeastern and external and domestic pressures have brought high inflation in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has been recording high inflation (over 10%) since 2018, and in October 2021, it stood at 34.2% year-on-year (World Food Program, 2022). The depreciation of the national currency (the Ethiopian Birr) is a major driver of the increasing cost of living, as the cost of bulk imports and raw materials unavailable in the country continues to increase (United Nations, 2022b, 2022c; World Food Program, 2022). Currently, Ethiopia has faced high budgetary deficiencies and inflation that have resulted in the increment of food supplies and food prices, which has worsened this situation across the country. This situation is worse in northeastern Ethiopia, which has brought high inflation and radically raised the prices of food.

Properties, Infrastructural, and Institutional Damages:

In addition to the extreme violence and abuse, there was high property, infrastructural, and institutional damage etc. in the northeastern parts of Ethiopia (World Vision, 2022). In the Amhara, Tigray, and Afar Regional States, there was widespread organized large-scale property looting,

destruction of government administration facilities, institutions, and public and private properties,² which were fully or partially destroyed and looted (Abebe & Belaineh, 2022; Teshome, 2022). Furthermore, private properties (hotels, shops and/or supermarkets, residences, vehicles, crops, household materials, food items, clothes, electronic goods and others were damaged, and domestic and farm animals were killed (Abebe & Belaineh, 2022).

Nearly 8,700 schools nationwide have been reported as fully or partially damaged, and 2.9 million children are out of school. About 70% of damaged schools are in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara (Abebe & Belaineh, 2022; World Vision, 2022). For instance, in the Afar and Amhara regions, more than 2,511 health facilities, including hospitals and health posts, have ceased operation as a result of the destruction, damage, and pillage they sustained. In addition, more than 1,090 schools were fully destroyed, while 3,220 sustained partial damage in both regions. Financial institutions, in particular 18 commercial banks with 346 branches, sustained billions of birr worth of loss due to looting and destruction by Tigray Forces in both regional states Teshome, 2022; World Vision, 2022). Similarly, the conflict destroyed 2,681 schools. In addition, 38 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and 3 universities have also sustained varying levels of damage (Ashenafi, 2022).

Due to this, institutional services are in general very poor and contribute to poverty and poor living conditions in Ethiopia due to the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia and other crises. Over 80% of the population is multidimensionally poor, and the poverty rate is worse (Donner et al., 2022). Furthermore, access to social protection and social security in Ethiopia is extremely limited, and the citizens of the country are highly frustrated in their daily movements and lives.

According to Obasanjo, the former President of the Republic of Nigeria, the cost of the reconstruction and rehabilitation of private and public properties and institutions in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar has been estimated at \$25 billion (Today News Africa, 2022). From this, the Amhara region needs between 700 billion and 800 billion Ethiopian birr to rebuild the war-affected areas of the Amhara regional state (Ashenafi, 2022).

Conclusion and Policy Implications:

The large-scale civil war in northeastern Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022 was the deadliest in the world. The ethnic-based constitution, the greed and grievance interests of Tigray's leaders, the weakness of central power, and the attack of the Tigrayan regional security forces on the Ethiopian National Defense Force Northern Command Headquarters on November 4th 2020 were the major causes of the civil war in northeastern Ethiopia.

The civil war in northeastern Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022 was the most destructive of the world civil wars, leaving the most unthinkable devastating human, economic, political, and social crises/impacts in the country in general, and the northeastern part in particular. The civil war brought multidimensional in Amhara, Tigray and Afar regional states, although the degree and magnitude of the crises vary across these regions. In the three-war period, more than 1.3 million people were killed. Civilians including children, women, elders, persons with disabilities, farmers, priests and monks were killed; physical and psychological injuries, sexual violence, trauma and exposure, famine and serious starvation, serious hangers and diseases, and displacement. In the three-war period, more than 29.7 million Ethiopians out of whom 12.5 million have faced food

² hospitals, clinics, health posts, secondary and primary schools, religious institutions, universities, banks and banking infrastructure, public business centres, telecommunications, machinery, electricity, factors, medicine, laboratory equipment, buildings

insecurity and danger due to the compounded impacts of civil war, displacement and climatic shocks such as severe drought and floods.

Furthermore, the civil war brought dreadful and shocking properties and infrastructural looting and destruction, as well as institutional crises, such as the destruction of economic, health, education, political, and religious institutions, which resulted in a lack of access to social services. The civil war has brought immense devastation, which Ethiopia needs or might cost more than \$25 billion for reconstruction.

The study suggested that there is a need to be all-inclusive dialogue and negotiations to bring about a cessation of hostilities and to realize a sustainable peace. However, they have already started peace and bargaining processes and agreements have been intervened between the Federal government and the Tigray regional government with the isolation of Amhara and Afar governments and people who were the actors and victims of the civil war. The author believed that the peace and bargaining processes would not be effective and sustainable since it is not an all-inclusive one. The peace agreement is based on the national interest of foreign countries, particularly based on America's interest, which ignored the interest of the Amhara and Afar people, and even violated the sovereignty of Ethiopia.

The study showed that human and democratic rights and humanitarian law violations have been committed in Amhara. The extensive report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the United Nations, and the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia showed that genocide crimes, crimes against humanity and war crimes were committed in the northeastern part of Ethiopia. Therefore, it is recommended that all perpetrators or parties as well as the supporters who were direct and indicator contributors to human, economic, political, and social and other crises in northeastern Ethiopia should be investigated independently and brought to The Hague International Court of Justice.

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