

### [World Food Programme Issues a Stark Warning Regarding the Humanitarian Crisis in Tigray](#)

Earlier this week, the World Food Programme (WFP) expressed that an alarming 90% of Tigrayans are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, as the northern Ethiopian region continues to be ravaged by the months-long conflict there which began last November. To date, thousands of civilians have been killed as a result of the fighting, and millions more have been displaced from their homes and require relief services. In the preceding weeks, aid agency officials have warned that urgent measures need to be taken to ramp up supportive efforts in order to avoid the outbreak of a widespread famine. The humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated by assistance workers' difficulties in reaching the most vulnerable communities in Tigray, particularly those in rural and isolated areas. Moreover, extremely high levels of local crops and livestock across the region have been lost, further adding to the rife food and supply shortages. The WFP has appealed for more than \$200 million to address the growing disaster which has had a devastating effect on the civilian population.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the crisis is that purely humanitarian assistance attempts are themselves not free from being subjected to violence. In addition to the lack of access to many at-risk areas in the region, relief operations have also been hindered by instances of being attacked, blocked, or delayed which has resulted in the death of several aid workers in recent months. Reports have emerged of combatants killing aid workers while looting supply trucks that were on their way to being delivered to those in need. Just this past weekend, a local Ethiopian man working for an Italian charity organization was fatally wounded, making him the ninth humanitarian worker killed in Tigray since the start of the conflict. Some officials have even accused the warring parties of purposely targeting these non-combatants, adding to the alarming dangers of the relief efforts that should, conversely to the conditions on the ground, be fully protected from potential harm.

The ongoing conflict in Tigray has spurred the major humanitarian catastrophe in the Ethiopian province. The conflict itself began back in November of last year when the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) – a local force which has played a historically prominent role within the Ethiopian political structure – was accused of attacking an army outpost in the region by Prime Minister Ahmed Abiy's central government. The TPLF and Ahmed's regime have had a contentious relationship due to the fact that the latter's ascendancy to power in 2018 came at the expense of much of the former's previous influence. Before 2018, the TPLF possessed de facto control over the country's politics. This changed however when Ahmed was installed as prime minister, as he disbanded the longstanding Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition and by doing so sidelined the TPLF. Ultimately, the outbreak of the fighting was not surprising to many regional experts and analysts since Ahmed's government frequently alleged that the TPLF was trying to destabilize it, and therefore a fear existed that a protracted conflict was on the horizon for some time.

Currently, while over 1 million Tigrayans have received emergency humanitarian assistance, there are still many more in desperate need – an estimated 90% of the region's entire civilian population. Nearly seven months into the conflict, the fighting continues, to the severe detriment of local citizens there. As human rights officials warned this week, Tigray is on the brink of a serious famine if aid is not scaled up in the coming months.