

The Causes of Political Violence in Ethiopia and Prospect for Peace

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• Abstract •

This paper seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of political violence in Ethiopia, with a particular emphasis on the developments that have taken place since the year 2020. The main goal is to discuss why the violence is happening and who is responsible for it. Additionally, this paper aims to suggest ways to bring the country together and make peace. In the first section of this study, we explore the underlying reasons behind political violence in Ethiopia. We pay particular attention to historical disputes, ethnic rivalries, power conflicts, and external influences as significant elements fueling the turmoil. It highlights the critical need for promoting reconciliation, diversity in governance, and effective communication as crucial measures to address conflicts and maintain peace and stability in the nation. The following section of the paper emphasizes the significance of developing an equitable political system that fosters harmonious cohabitation, instills trust among different factions, and celebrates differences to lay the foundation for a cohesive and flourishing tomorrow for Ethiopia. It is our firm belief that creating a structure that encourages teamwork, understanding, and respect among all members of the society is crucial for the advancing Ethiopia in the years to come.

Key words : Ethiopia's Political Violence, Ethnic Nationalism, Ethiopia's Political Impasse, Ethiopia's Reconciliation

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I. Introduction

Ethiopian politics has been significantly influenced by ethnicity and identity politics for the last fifty years, leading to the organization and activation of different political groups. After the revolution in 1974, several militant groups based on ethnicity surfaced, such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and Afar Liberation Front (ALF). This emphasis on ethnicity in Ethiopian politics subsequently resulted in an extended period of civil conflict, political uncertainty, ethnic rivalries, and weakened state institutions.¹⁾

Ethiopia has faced a difficult political climate for over six years, starting in 2016. During this time, there has been widespread unrest, violence, displacement of people, and a weakening of the government's ability to enforce control. The year 2020 saw a further escalation of political instability when the TPLF launched an attack on the Ethiopian National Defense Forces' Northern Command, sparking a violent confrontation between the Federal government and TPLF fighters, worsening the already tense situation in the region.²⁾

The main focus of this research is to examine three closely linked investigations: Initially, the underlying reasons for political violence in Ethiopia, secondly, the prominent figures involved in the political turmoil, and lastly, the measures to eliminate political violence from Ethiopia. About the first inquiry, it is posited that the fundamental cause of political division stems from varying perceptions regarding historical ethnic ties, governmental setup, institutional systems, and methods of cultivating a cohesive national identity and principles.³⁾

To address the second research inquiry, our attention is directed toward the identification

1) Kassahun, Berhanu. "Conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Implication for Regional Security" in Redie Bereketeab, ed, *The Horn of Africa: Intra-State Conflict and Inter-State Conflicts and Security*. Pluto Press, 2013. p.79.

2) Abbink, Jon. "The Ethiopia Conflict in International Relations and Global Media Discourse," <https://www.e-ir.info/2021/11/21/the-ethiopia-conflict-in-international-relations-and-global-media-discourse/>(검색일: 2024.07.12).

3) Mengisteab, Kidane. "Poverty, Inequality, State Identity and Chronic Inter-State Conflicts in the Horn of Africa" in Redie Bereketeab, ed, *The Horn of Africa: Intra-State Conflict and Inter-State Conflicts and Security*. Pluto Press, 2013, p.26.

of the elements that lead to political instability, the diverse parties involved, and the impact on the political environment. To respond to the third question, we suggest strategies to promote inclusive political frameworks, facilitate productive national dialogues, and emphasize their significance in resolving the political impasse in Ethiopia.

We believe the existing body of literature has inadequately addressed the roles of narrow ethnic nationalism, the conflicting interests of elites, and the dynamics of the political marketplace in contributing to the persistent political deadlock that has afflicted Ethiopia. Since the emergence of the student movement in the 1960s, countless Ethiopians have dedicated their efforts, and in many cases their lives, to the pursuit of an inclusive and democratic political framework. Nevertheless, the advancement of Ethiopia towards a sustainable and transparent democratic system remains significantly short of the aspirations envisioned by the original architects of the democratic movement. While various factors may account for this ongoing failure, the competition and antagonism among elites stand out as a primary cause that warrants thorough examination. Moving forward, the subsequent section delves into the concept of political violence, followed by an examination of the methodology utilized in this study. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of political instability in Ethiopia.

II. Definition of Political Violence and Conceptual Issues

The concept of political violence lacks a common conceptualization and it is a subject of controversy. In his book “Violent Politics: Strategies of Internal Conflict,” Michael Addison describes political violence as a conflict rooted in political motivations, influenced by deeper social, economic, and political issues. He delves into the origins and tactics associated with political violence, with a particular emphasis on the situation in Northern Ireland. Addison highlights several critical elements that contribute to violent political actions, including struggles for power, long-standing historical grievances, and the impact of outside forces. Additionally, he examines different approaches to counteract and reduce the occurrence of political violence.

Political violence is a multifaceted and debated concept, with scholars offering diverse

perspectives on its definition. The World Health Organization's understanding of political violence extends beyond physical harm to include deprivation, such as the deliberate denial of fundamental rights and necessities like freedom of expression, food, education, sanitation, and healthcare. This broader definition is evident in cases where activists are subjected to torture for speaking out against oppressive governments.⁴⁾

We define political violence as the intentional use of power and coercion to carry out physical and psychological attacks against specific groups or individuals to achieve political objectives. It encompasses a wide range of violent tactics such as insurrection, revolt, terrorism, kidnapping, assassination, and riot, all aimed at achieving political goals within a state. By focusing on the deliberate nature of political violence and its impact on the physical and psychological well-being of its targets, this definition sheds light on the complexities of using violence as a means to achieve political ends. The complexity of political conflict needs a comprehensive approach that takes into account the diverse factors that contribute to its occurrence. By integrating political, socio-economic, cultural, religious, and conflicting interest perspectives, this paper seeks to provide a thorough analysis of the underlying causes of political violence in Ethiopia.

About the question of what causes political conflict, there a bulk of explanations that are forwarded from various angles including political, socio-economic, cultural, religious, clashes of interests, and extra aspects. Patrick O'Neil has classified explanations of political violence causes into three groups: individual, ideational (based on idea), and institutional. The individual perspective of explanation focuses on psychological and strategic issues that motivate people to carry out political conflict. This approach may be taken as an idiosyncratic perspective. The ideational category of explanation tries to look into political conflict from the point of view of ideas i.e. contradiction, fundamentalism, nationalism, and related issues. The institutional perspective explains political conflict based on the roles of institutions in terms of shaping and orienting the attitudes and actions of individuals and societies in the political process. For this paper, an integrated approach of the above three explanation perspectives will be employed to look into the

4) Sousa, Cindy. "Political Violence, Collective Functioning and Health:A Review of the Literature", *Med Confl Surviv*, 29(3), 2013, pp.169-197, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3801099/>(검색일: 2024. 07.20).

political violence in Ethiopia.

This paper relies on a research framework that integrates hermeneutics and explanatory critique to explore the multifaceted dynamics of ethnic division, power struggles among the elite, ineffective governance, and the influence of the political landscape. Hermeneutics necessitates a profound analysis of texts to achieve a comprehensive understanding, whereas explanatory critique seeks to unveil the underlying reasons for certain phenomena and highlight inconsistencies.⁵⁾ Utilizing hermeneutics to analyze the historical origins of ethnic and elite politics provides an opportunity to uncover significant insights into the driving forces and power dynamics that have fueled political violence. This method enables a detailed examination of the complex interplay between various stakeholders and influences within a community, offering a deeper understanding of the intricate nature of political dynamics and the genesis of conflicts. As such, this paper demonstrates the connection between critical political turning points and the elite's wavering political stance and narrow focus on ethnicity. This analysis will illuminate the discrepancies between the desire for national unity, a genuinely diverse society, and a democratic framework on one hand; and the advocacy for ethnic separatism and the limitation of democratic freedoms on the other hand. Identity politics, a central issue in Ethiopian politics for the past five decades, has become a refuge for individuals who simultaneously act as advocates for their ethnic group's rights and seek personal benefits through any means at their disposal.

III. The Cause and Actors of the Political Violence in Ethiopia

1. Causes of Political Violence in Ethiopia

Over nearly five decades, Ethiopian politics has been predominantly shaped by ethnicity and identity politics. Following the 1974 revolution, there was a noticeable rise in ethnic-based militant groups such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden

5) Gibbons, Michael T. "Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4, 2006, pp.563-571.

National Liberation Front (ONLF), and the Afar Liberation Front (ALF). This surge in ethnic mobilization has led to a series of challenges for Ethiopia, including civil war, political instability, ethnic tensions, and overall state fragility.⁶⁾

Ethiopia is currently confronting a wide array of challenges that threaten to destabilize the country, sparked by intense political conflicts, stemming from the inability of the dominant political institutions to effectively address the cultural, socioeconomic, and political requirements of successive generations. To effectively examine the causes of the current political turmoil in a constructive way, it is essential to categorize them into five main challenges associated with the nation-building process: historical inequalities within the ruling class, political tactics based on identity, power conflicts among the elite, disagreements over state organization, and the influence of external forces on the political environment.⁷⁾

First, the primary contention among political leaders is the conflicting accounts of Ethiopia's nation-building process. According to Buzan, there are four distinct models of nation-state links: The first model suggests that the nation precedes the state and plays a pivotal role in establishing statehood, as seen in countries like Italy and Japan. The second model positions the state as the primary driver of nation-building, coming before the nation as an entity, as exemplified by the United States and Australia. The third model signifies the presence of nations divided into two or more states, such as Korea, and previously Germany.⁸⁾

The fourth type of state is characterized by the presence of multiple nationalities with distinct socio-cultural and historical backgrounds. Within this model, there are two sub-categories: the federative state and the imperial state. The federative sub-model, as seen in countries like the UK and Canada prioritizes economic advantages and allows different entities to maintain their unique identities without being forced to adopt a national identity. On the other hand, the imperial sub-model involves nation-building, where one dominant nation takes the lead in unifying the state. An example of an

6) Berhanu Kassahun, *op. cit.*, pp.71-92.

7) Kidane Mengisteab, *op. cit.*

8) Buzan, Barry. *People, States, and Fear: an Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era.* 2nd ed., Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991, pp.72-77.

independent imperial state that evolved into a modern multinational state is Ethiopia. The transition took place through the combination of willing adherence and pressure, leading to the peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups within the country while maintaining their distinct cultural identities.⁹⁾

The approach to nation-building has been a contentious issue in Ethiopia, with differing perspectives on how best to integrate the diverse ethnic groups within the country. The aftermath of the battle of Adwa marked a pivotal moment in Ethiopian history, as it set the stage for the expansion of the state and the establishment of a multi-ethnic nation under Emperor Menelik II's rule.¹⁰⁾ The increase in territorial boundaries has resulted in the development of two conflicting factions within contemporary political leadership. One faction comprises prominent figures who align themselves with the pan-Ethiopianist ideology. They posit that historical Ethiopian rulers, notably Menelik II, expanded the state to foster unity and inclusivity through state-building efforts.¹¹⁾

Another group of elites viewed the historical nation-building process as oppressive. They contend that past Ethiopian leaders, such as Menelik II, enforced a repressive state expansion strategy, leading to Ethiopia being perceived as a place where various nations and nationalities are subjugated.¹²⁾ Ethiopia's attempts at nation-building have been viewed differently by various groups: while some see it as a way to unite the nation and develop resources, others criticize it for resembling internal colonialism. These differing views on Ethiopia's historical nation-building efforts have led to political polarization, violence, and revolt among the country's political elite, contributing to a complex and challenging socio-political landscape.

Secondly, the influence of ethnic nationalism, which has deep roots in historical conflicts, is a key element contributing to the current political deadlock in Ethiopia. The

9) *Ibid.*

10) Adejumobi, Saheed. *The History of Ethiopia*. Greenwood Press, 2007, p.28.

11) Clapham, Christopher. "Ethiopian Development: the Politics of Emulation," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2006, pp.108-118; Aalen, Lovise. "Ethnic Federalism in a Dominant Party State: The Ethiopian Experience 1991-2000," https://www.researchgate.net/publication/37166542_Ethnic_Federalism_in_a_Dominant_Party_State_The_Ethiopian_Experience_1991-2000(검색일: 2024.07.11).

12) Gudina, Merera. "Contradictory Interpretation of Ethiopian History: the Need for a New Consensus in Ethnic Federalism: the Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective," *East African Studies*, 2007, pp. 119-130.

nationalities movement has been a prominent force in Ethiopian politics for decades, with its origins tracing back to the 1970s. Additionally, the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s has been instrumental in championing progressive ideologies and pushing for societal advancement in the country.¹³⁾ Despite the 1974 revolution, the Derg regime opted for a populist strategy and a centralized state system to uphold national cohesion, instead of tackling the matter of self-determination for various ethnic factions. Consequently, this decision paved the way for the emergence of ethnically-based political organizations like the TPLF, OLF, EPLF, and ONLF, which ultimately toppled the Derg regime in 1991 following an extended period of civil conflict.

In 1991, after a change in leadership, the EPRDF, which was predominantly influenced by the TPLF, showed a significant interest in restructuring the state through the implementation of an ethnolinguistic federal system. While federalism itself is not inherently negative, the decision of the EPRDF to embrace ethnic-based federalism was considered inappropriate and misguided. The Ethiopian Constitution underscores the supreme authority of the various nations, nationalities, and peoples within the country, placing a strong emphasis on group/ethnic identity over individual rights. Additionally, article 46/2 of the constitution specifies that states should be demarcated based on settlement patterns, language, and identity. Consequently, this approach hindered citizen-focused political discussions and actions, fostering ethnic-based political mobilization instead, which ultimately resulted in a rise in ethnic tensions over time.

The methods employed by the EPRDF regime to undermine and demonize political opponents have been a significant factor in the political landscape of Ethiopia. This tactic has resulted in the formation of political groups and coalitions that are predominantly formed along ethnic lines, with extremist factions such as the TPLF and the OLA resorting to violent means to challenge the government. Despite some initial positive developments in 2018, the TPLF and its associates have escalated their military activities through the use of ethnic-based propaganda and animosity. This has led to an unprecedented attack by the TPLF forces on the Northern commands of the Ethiopian National Defense forces, sparking a complex civil conflict and widespread political unrest in the country.¹⁴⁾

13) Tareke, Gebru. *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*. Yale University Press, 2009, p.24.

Thirdly, the disagreements regarding core issues like social class, ethnic identity, and the approach to enacting reforms highlight the profound rifts and diverse belief systems that have influenced the political landscape of Ethiopia throughout its history. The divisive issues at hand have played a crucial role in molding the ideological disparities and entrenched rifts within the nation, adding to the intricacy of Ethiopian political dynamics.¹⁵⁾ The student movement in the 1970s resulted in the establishment of two leftist political factions, namely the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON). These groups held differing views on democratic reforms and issues related to nationality. The EPRP, which was formed by radical intellectuals, advocated for immediate democratic transformation and private ownership of property. Conversely, the MEISON supported a more gradual approach to democratic reform and state ownership of property.

This unsuccessful attempt to change the socio-political and economic discourse showed that Ethiopian politics was taking one step forward and two steps backward. There were three significant consequences of this political failure after the 1974 revolution. One significant outcome was the transformation from a diverse, multicultural political dialogue to one centered around identity and ethnicity, as numerous leaders deserted their multicultural beliefs following the violent events of 1976-77 and embraced identity-based politics instead. This shift posed a significant challenge to Ethiopia's national cohesion, giving rise to political deadlock.

Various political factions that opposed the Derg regime in Ethiopia made a significant shift from peaceful resistance to engaging in guerrilla warfare in rural regions. Among these groups were the TPLF, OLF, WSLF, EPDM, EPLF, and others, which collectively contributed to the second revolution in 1991 after a prolonged seventeen-year civil conflict. This change in political tactics brought about a complex political trajectory marked by manipulation, scheming, and blame-shifting, ultimately establishing a damaging political norm. The adverse effects of this transformation underscored the prevalence of sectarianism, conspiracy, and political maneuvering within Ethiopian political organizations

14) Yusuf, Semir. "What is Driving Ethiopia's Ethnic Conflicts?" 2019, <https://issafrica.org/research/east-africa-report/what-is-driving-ethiopias-ethnic-conflicts>(검색일: 2024.06.30).

15) Tareke, Gebru. *op. cit.*, p.33.

and their leadership, leading to widespread disillusionment among the general population.¹⁶⁾

Fourth, the disagreement surrounding the state structuring model has been identified as the fundamental reason behind the political unrest in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has encountered difficulties in determining the most appropriate model for organizing the state, with deliberations extending to include various political modernization frameworks such as the Japanese Meiji imperial system. Following the ousting of the Derg regime, Ethiopia embarked on a path towards ethnic federalism, a multiparty system, and a free market economy. This shift led to a change in the focal point of political conversations, with discussions emphasizing the rights of nationalities to self-determination in the aftermath of the 1991 revolution, significantly influenced by Ethiopian nationalism.

During the early phases of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, significant progress was made, such as the introduction of a transitional charter aimed at safeguarding human rights and civil liberties, as well as the convening of a national peace conference for civil societies. However, the path towards liberalization encountered challenges, including the deliberate suppression of political opposition, internal power struggles within major political parties, and political tensions between the EPRDF and opposition groups. These all impeded Ethiopia's advancement towards an inclusive and democratic political framework. By endorsing ethnic-based parties and discrediting Pan-Ethiopianist movements, the ruling coalition maintained its grip on power through identity politics and the suppression of alternative ideologies. These actions hindered the country's transition towards a more open and democratic political landscape.¹⁷⁾

Fifth, the involvement of external actors has further exacerbated the political deadlock in Ethiopia, a country that plays a pivotal role in the tumultuous Horn of Africa region. This region has a long history of conflict with a mix of interstate and civil wars. The strategic significance of the Horn of Africa lies in its control over vital water passages, including the Red Sea trade route, the Bab al Mandab strait, and the Nile River. The

16) Gudina, Merera. "Contradictory Interpretation of Ethiopian History: the Need for a New Consensus in Ethnic Federalism: the Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective," *East African Studies*, 2007, pp. 119-130.

17) Aalen, Lovise. "Ethnic Federalism in a Dominant Party State: The Ethiopian Experience 1991~2000," https://www.researchgate.net/publication/37166542_Ethnic_Federalism_in_a_Dominant_Party_State_The_Ethiopian_Experience_1991-2000(검색일: 2024.07.11).

interference of external actors in Ethiopia's political landscape has only served to complicate an already complex situation, with different interests at play and competing agendas. It is crucial for all parties involved to prioritize dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful resolutions to mitigate the political stalemate and work towards stability in the region.¹⁸⁾

The intervention from external actors resulted in the emergence of insurgent factions like the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which get substantial backing from competing foreign entities in terms of weaponry and various provisions.¹⁹⁾ In 1991, insurgents seized control with substantial support from the United States and European nations, resulting in major changes in Ethiopian political dynamics. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the United States identified the TPLF-led EPRDF government as a vital partner in the Horn of Africa region as a component of the anti-terrorism campaign.²⁰⁾ The regime controlled by the TPLF managed to strengthen its authority by suppressing opposition groups and their supporters, including those linked to the U.S. The conflict intensified when the TPLF launched an attack on ENDF forces, receiving military assistance from the United States and European nations. The U.S. and Europe are utilizing political turmoil to uphold their influence over resources, strategic areas, and markets for Western products, such as arms and technologies. Additionally, Egypt's pursuit of dominance over the Nile River is driving attempts to spark an ethnic-centered internal conflict that could potentially destabilize Ethiopia, reshaping the nation's political landscape as external parties pursue their interests at the expense of the Ethiopian population.

2. Actors of the Political Violence in Ethiopia since 2020

A multitude of actors play a role in the political unrest in Ethiopia, a situation that has persisted for more than two years starting from November 4, 2020. Three primary groups are significantly involved in the ongoing conflict in the northern region of the country:

18) Shinn, David. "Ethiopia: Governance and Terrorism" in the Robert I. Rotberg, ed. *Battling Terrorism in the Horn Africa*. The World Peace Foundation, 2005, pp.93-118.

19) Tareke, Gebru. *op. cit.*, pp.45-46.

20) Shinn, David. *op. cit.*, pp.110-111.

political figures and factions that feel marginalized due to recent shifts in power, various ethnic paramilitary organizations, and external forces that have a stake in the outcome of the turmoil. Each of these groups brings their motivations, grievances, and interests to the table, contributing to the complexity of the situation. The political instability in Ethiopia has deep-rooted causes and multifaceted dynamics, making it challenging to find a sustainable solution that addresses the concerns of all parties involved. As the conflict continues, all actors must engage in dialogue, prioritize peace-building efforts, and work towards finding common ground to resolve the crisis. The international community also has a role to play in supporting peaceful resolution efforts and ensuring that the people of Ethiopia can live in a stable and secure environment.²¹⁾

First, Ethiopian politics is characterized by a complex dynamic of conflict between the established politicians and groups who have been marginalized from power. This rift between the ruling party, opposition leaders, and dissenting factions has a history of tension, resulting in a cycle of political unrest within the country. The year 2018 marked a crucial turning point for Ethiopian politics when the leadership change within the ruling coalition EPRDF triggered internal divisions and public protests against political repression, human rights abuses, and corruption. These events further exacerbated the already fragile political environment in the country. Following these developments, there was a significant shift in Ethiopia's political landscape with the emergence of the Prosperity Party, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2019. This new political entity sought to implement reforms grounded in capitalist principles, a unionist ideology, and a vision of nation-building that emphasized a unified Ethiopian identity.

The TPLF, a dominant force within the EPRDF for three decades, strongly resisted the transition towards a unified national party, deeming it unlawful and regressive. This clash of beliefs and objectives between the Prosperity Party and the TPLF exacerbated pre-existing tensions within the coalition, resulting in a widening divide that posed a serious threat of escalating into violent confrontations. The power struggle and quest for supremacy between these two factions within the Ethiopian political sphere underscored the complexities faced by the nation's leaders in reconciling conflicting narratives and

21) Blanchard, Lauren. "Ethiopia's Transition and the Tigray Conflict," Congressional Research Service, pp.1-7. <https://crsreports.congress.gov>(검색일: 2024.07.04).

aspirations for the future. As the tensions heightened, acts of violence and possible attempts to assassinate highlighted the dangers involved in the struggle for political control and influence in Ethiopia. The growing divide between the Prosperity Party and the TPLF has brought attention to the internal rifts within the ruling coalition, revealing the complexities faced by the country's leaders in navigating conflicting goals.

Second, the political violence factions in Ethiopia involve ethnic-based paramilitary groups and militias, which experienced a brief reduction in guerrilla fighter activities following political changes implemented by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. However, the conflict reignited between the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and TPLF fighters, prompting the resurgence of ethnic-aligned guerrilla units and militias. The TPLF suffered a major defeat against the ENDF, sparking intense guerrilla warfare.²²⁾ In June 2021, the federal government announced a ceasefire in Tigray, which resulted in the withdrawal of troops and the subsequent resurgence of TPLF guerrilla fighters in the region. This development triggered the activation of various ethnic-based paramilitary groups and militias throughout the country, particularly in response to armed groups affiliated with the TPLF in the Amhara region. The conflict primarily involved clashes between the government forces and the TPLF, with Amhara-affiliated groups engaging in combat against the TPLF's efforts to advance their position. However, tensions have since heightened between Amhara paramilitary factions and the federal government after the establishment of a lasting ceasefire agreement with the TPLF in 2022.

On June 18, 2022, more than 400 ethnic Amharas were tragically killed in the West Wollega zone of the Oromia region.²³⁾ The government contends that the TPLF military and political leaders, along with external adversaries, have supported various armed groups, leading to the majority of the atrocities and coordinated killings. The responsibility for these violent acts, the government claims, lies with militias and guerrilla fighters such as TPLF, OLA, GLF, and Gumuz Militias, who are accused of perpetuating political violence and causing harm to civilians. Additionally, the government warns that the combined efforts of these hostile groups, including TPLF forces and OLA, pose a

22) *Ibid.*, pp.3-5.

23) Human Rights Watch, "Ethiopia: Civilians in Western Oromia Left Unprotected," August 31, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/31/ethiopia-civilians-western-oromia-left-unprotected>(검색일: 2024.07.05).

significant threat to the stability of the state.

Third, external interference in Ethiopia's internal affairs has been playing a destabilizing role in the ongoing political violence in the country. Sudan's encroachment into Ethiopian territory in the al-Fashaqa area and Egypt's support of insurgent groups are clear indications of a coordinated effort to weaken Ethiopia and assert dominance over the Nile River. By attempting to disrupt Ethiopia's national unity through actions such as taking the GERD matter to the UN Security Council and engaging in joint military training, Egypt and Sudan are contributing to the escalation of tensions within the region. The Ethiopian Air Force's destruction of an aircraft transporting arms to TPLF insurgents, believed to have come from Sudan, highlights the ongoing proxy conflict in Ethiopia, where various regional players are utilizing local paramilitary forces and terrorists. This incident serves as a clear indication of the complex dynamics at play in the region and the significant impact of external involvement in the internal conflict within Ethiopia.

The active backing of the TPLF forces by the United States and the European Union has stirred controversy, as it implicates the Ethiopian federal government for alleged wrongdoing. Consequently, the U.S. has enforced sanctions on Ethiopian institutions and leaders, as well as suspended Ethiopia's access to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Meanwhile, UN agencies have also shown their backing for the TPLF leadership and fighters amidst the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. 1. The involvement of the U.S. and the European Union in Ethiopia's internal affairs has worsened the situation by backing insurgent groups, prolonging the conflict, and increasing instability in the Horn of Africa. The support given to the TPLF forces has added complexity to Ethiopia's political situation instead of promoting peace and stability.

IV. The Quest for National Reconciliation and Inclusive Political System

Up to this point, we have examined five primary factors and three categories implicated in the political unrest in Ethiopia. These encompass internal disputes among the ruling class, assertions of ethnic identity, contests for authority, divergences concerning the

organization of the state, and outside pressures. Moreover, we delved into the key players involved in political violence in Ethiopia since 2020, exploring how their actions have shaped the current state of affairs in the country.

Ethiopia is currently facing a severe political crisis that is escalating into a prolonged civil conflict, with the situation becoming increasingly complex due to various factors and parties involved. Examining the political turmoil in Libya, Syria, and Yemen reveals that extended conflicts frequently disintegrate the state, underscoring the significance of averting such a situation through the promotion of national unity and the shift towards a more inclusive political framework. Examining the difficulties encountered by these nations reveals the importance of tackling the root causes of discontent and fostering communication between various groups as essential measures in averting the collapse of the governing system. Ethiopia needs to focus on reconciliation, unite different factions, and create ways for political involvement to prevent the harmful effects of long-lasting conflicts. The central government has taken steps to address the root causes of the conflict by forming the ‘National Dialogue Commission’ to encourage conversations between different segments of society and promote a positive environment for inclusive discussions to achieve national unity.²⁴⁾

Organizers of national dialogues should thoroughly analyze multiple factors to guarantee the success and efficiency of their efforts. They must take into account all relevant components to achieve their desired outcomes and make a positive impact. These factors include the support of influential figures, the trust of the general public, the participation of external stakeholders, the cultural diversity of participants, past experiences with dialogue processes, and the current level of violence and its trends. Addressing these elements is essential to achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes in any national dialogue effort. Transitioning towards an inclusive political system is crucial for achieving national reconciliation due to several reasons. An inclusive political system allows all political factions to express their opinions peacefully and constructively. Furthermore, a participatory political environment helps in preventing a resurgence of past conflicts and

24) Federal Negarit Gazette of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2021, pp.13879-13898. https://www.lawethiopia.com/images/federal_proclamation/proclamations_by_number/dialogue%20commission.pdf(검색일: 2024.06.05).

chaos. The transformation of South Africa from apartheid to democracy in the 1990s stands as a significant example of successful political change. By learning from it, Ethiopia can understand the importance of inclusivity in the political system for achieving national reconciliation. National dialogue initiatives play a crucial role in this process by addressing various factors that contribute to the success of reconciliation efforts.²⁵⁾

Throughout history, different generations have rebelled against unfair rules and social injustices by initiating revolutions. Examples of this are the 1974 revolution, the 1991 overthrow of the government after a long-armed struggle, and the 2018 political reform following a powerful popular uprising. These movements resulted in the downfall of authoritarian regimes and the establishment of new administrations. However, despite the efforts and sacrifices, Ethiopia's political system has yet to undergo a true democratic transformation and the establishment of democratic institutions.²⁶⁾

National unity is essential to mend the rifts created by ethnic and political disputes. It is important to encourage conversations between various ethnic communities and political groups to establish trust and collaboration. By promoting understanding and cooperation, we can work towards healing the wounds of division and create a more harmonious society.

The political leaders in the Horn of Africa have not effectively used the political market and lack political intelligence, causing issues in the local political scene. To prevent civil unrest and encourage a successful national conversation, Ethiopia needs to lead in creating a fair and authentic political structure. By putting such a system in place, Ethiopia can work towards avoiding the repetition of political obstacles and set the stage for achieving important national goals. These goals include establishing a social contract for future generations, addressing past grievances, strengthening efforts towards democratization, and mobilizing resources for national growth and poverty reduction.

Ethiopian politics is currently confronted with numerous urgent requirements that must be met to tackle its persistent issues and foster a sense of stability. It is crucial to develop a political framework that ensures equitable representation and active involvement

25) Sorenson, John. "The State, Ethnicity and Human Rights in Ethiopia" in the Crisis and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa. Ashgate Publishing, 2008, pp.39-63.

26) Clapham, Christopher. *op. cit.*, p.109.

of all ethnic groups and marginalized communities. Such an inclusive system can significantly alleviate societal tensions and foster a collective sense of belonging among the entire population.

Most of all, economic stability is essential for the well-being of a nation. Tackling issues like inflation, joblessness, and poverty is vital for progress. By creating and enforcing policies that encourage economic growth and ensure fair distribution of resources, the living conditions for people in Ethiopia can be significantly enhanced.

Second the rule of law is essential for keeping society orderly and safeguarding the rights of individuals. It is important to enhance the legal system and make sure that justice is applied fairly to everyone. This can be achieved by improving the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, making them more open and responsible in their actions.

Addressing ongoing conflicts, especially in areas such as Tigray and Oromia, is essential to stop additional violence and the displacement of people. This process requires engaging in negotiations to establish peace agreements and tackling the underlying issues that lead to these conflicts.

Working together with countries around the world is crucial for promoting peace and development. It is essential to reach out for help from the global community to support humanitarian efforts, improve infrastructure, and strengthen local skills and abilities. Through the establishment of a fair and authentic political system, Ethiopia can create a strong foundation for a more secure and prosperous future, ensuring that the country moves towards sustainable development and peace.

VI. Conclusion

In the past few years, Ethiopia has faced a serious wave of political turmoil that has escalated into a devastating civil war. This turmoil has had grave consequences, including a shocking rise in targeted violence, the collapse of legal systems, pervasive brutality that has caused numerous deaths and disappearances, massive internal displacements, and fierce military clashes occurring throughout the country. The political stalemate in Ethiopia stems from several reasons, primarily the differing views among political elites regarding

previous nation-building efforts. Essentially, there are two dominant factions: one advocates for a unified approach to state-building, while the other argues that the government's tactics are repressive. Additionally, the growth of narrow ethnic nationalism has fueled political aggression, taking on a form similar to fascism cloaked in ethnic identity, which has further exacerbated tensions and conflicts across the nation.

The conflicts surrounding the nation-building efforts and the focus on identity politics have intensified Ethiopia's political stalemate and violence over the years. Moreover, the involvement of outside forces in the region's political affairs has exacerbated the existing turmoil in Ethiopia. To end this cycle of violence, it is vital to create a political framework that encourages inclusive participation and peaceful engagement. Establishing trust among important parties and nurturing a democratic culture that embraces diversity is key to reaching this objective. The national dialogue initiative should emphasize the establishment of democratic institutions and foster an inclusive atmosphere to lay the groundwork for a thorough democratic system in Ethiopia.

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【국문요약】

에티오피아의 정치적 불안정 요인 분석과 향후 민족 화해 방안

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본 논문의 목적은 두 가지이다. 첫째, 에티오피아의 정치적 폭력 현상을 심층적으로 분석하여 정치적 폭력 현상이 왜 발생하고 있는지, 그 원인이 누구에게 있는지를 파악하고자 한다. 둘째, 이 논문은 에티오피아를 하나로 묶고 평화를 만드는 방안을 제시하고자 한다. 이를 위해 본 논문의 첫 번째 부분에서는 에티오피아의 정치적 폭력의 근본 원인을 분석할 것이다. 특히 분쟁의 원인이 되는 주요 요인으로 역사적 분쟁, 민족적 경쟁, 권력 갈등, 외부적 영향 등을 분석한다. 또한 국가의 평화와 안정을 유지하고 갈등을 해결하기 위한 중요한 수단으로 화해와 통치의 다양성, 효과적인 의사소통을 촉진하는 것이 중요하다는 점을 강조하고 있다. 에티오피아가 화합하고 번영하는 미래를 준비하기 위해 다양한 파벌 간의 신뢰를 형성하고, 차이를 기념하는 평등한 정치체제를 구축해야 한다는 점을 강조한다. 향후 에티오피아가 발전하려면 사회 구성원 모두의 팀워크와 이해, 존중을 증진하는 구조를 구축할 것을 촉구하고 있다.

주제어 : 에티오피아, 폭력, 인종 경쟁, 미국과 유럽의 개입, 에티오피아의 화합과 민주주의

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