

# Twelve Lessons to be Learned from the Ethiopian Conflict

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The Ethiopian Conflict [finally ended with a peace agreement](#) on 2 November between the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) and the TPLF, which had been fighting one another for almost exactly two years up until that point. Everything that transpired across that time taught the world some very important things that can hopefully be put to use for preemptively averting or decisively reacting to future such conflicts. Here are the twelve most important lessons to be learned from the Ethiopian Conflict:

## **1. Deeply Embedded Elite Become Embittered Whenever Their Privileges Are Threatened**

The TPLF had deeply embedded itself into the very fabric of the post-Civil War Ethiopian state and thus became embittered when [Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed](#) attempted to reduce their privileges as part of his far-reaching reforms. He envisaged restoring meritocracy in order to give his multimillennial nation's historically diverse people true equality within their federal system, yet this was vehemently opposed by the former ruling party, so much so that they decided to go to war to protect their privileges.

## **2. Ethnic Federalism Can Be Exploited For Separatist Ends**

The Ethiopian Constitution's clause enshrining the right to secession for every nation, nationality, and people was included in the law of the land partly for the purpose of emphasizing the voluntary unity of these diverse elements, each of which could leave if their rights weren't respected. The TPLF exploited this clause together with the federal

system's creation of the Tigray Region to promote their self-interested separatist cause, which was illegitimate since the Tigrayans' rights weren't ever threatened.

### **3. Information Warfare Fuels The Flames Of Ethno-Separatism**

The only way in which the TPLF stood any chance of "justifying" their self-interested separatist cause to the same Tigrayans who they claimed to represent was to manipulate their perceptions through information warfare aimed at making them fear that their rights were at risk of being threatened. To that end, they also relied on their extensive network of foreign civil society, media, and state supporters, each of which had ulterior motives for contributing to this campaign.

### **4. External Actors Exploit Domestic Tensions To Promote Their Interests In The New Cold War**

The US-led West's [Golden Billion](#) saw an irresistible opportunity to exploit the TPLF's self-interested separatist cause for the purpose of promoting their interests in the [New Cold War](#). In the Ethiopian context, they sought to punish that country for its policy of principled neutrality in refusing to take their side over China's, which at that time was their top opponent in the jointly [BRICS](#)- and [SCO](#)-led Global South prior to the [latest phase](#) of the [Ukrainian Conflict](#) that made Russia their [number one enemy](#).

### **5. Humanitarian Imperialism Is The Latest Form Of Hybrid Warfare**

The weaponization of humanitarian issues - whether objectively existing, completely fabricated, or a [combination thereof](#) - for advancing political goals at another country's expense via economic ([sanctions](#)) and/or military ("Responsibility to Protect") means/threats can be described as humanitarian imperialism. This latest form of [Hybrid Warfare](#) came to characterize the Ethiopian Conflict more than anything else and will thus be studied very closely by scholars across the coming years.

### **6. Grassroots Movements Organically Rise To Confront Fake News & Neo-Imperialism**

Activists at home and abroad organically came together to create the [#NoMore grassroots movement](#) in response to the fake news that was spewed to facilitate the neo-imperialist agenda of those foreign forces meddling in the Ethiopian Conflict. Their common anti-imperialist cause is inclusive enough to involve anyone in the world with similar principles, which thus resulted in revitalizing these hitherto dormant movements and therefore bringing hope other oppressed people across the Global South.

### **7. Existential Threats Posed By Foreign Divide-And-Rule Plots Can Strengthen National Unity**

Identity-driven tensions predate the Ethiopian Conflict, but their exacerbation and subsequent exploitation by foreign forces served to bring Ethiopia's diverse people closer together than ever before. This unexpected outcome was due to the [#NoMore](#) movement making everyone aware of how their preexisting problems were being manipulated to threaten their state's existence. That prompted all previously feuding but sincerely patriotic forces to unite in defending their beloved country.

## **8. Strong Synergy Between Civil Society & The Security Services Preserves Domestic Stability**

The only reason that Ethiopia remained domestically stable outside of its conflict-afflicted regions is because of the [strong synergy](#) between civil society and the security services, without which this historically diverse country would certainly have been “Balkanized” by now. People of all identities from all walks of life rallied behind the ENDF as their shield for protecting the existence of the Ethiopian state that all sincerely patriotic forces have a stake in preserving.

## **9. National Crises Provide Clarity About A Country’s True Friends & Foes**

Ethiopia discovered who its friends and foes truly were during the last two years of its national crisis. Those Western states that previously claimed to support democracy and human rights ended up being the ones violating Ethiopia’s national model of democracy and its people’s human rights by proxy, while states across the Global South [like Russia](#), China, Iran, and Turkiye united in supporting their victimized peer. Reconciliation with the first category is possible, but no one will ever forget what happened.

## **10. Well-Intended Regional Mediation Efforts Can Lead To Unexpected Breakthroughs**

The African Union-mediated peace process that culminated in South Africa led to unexpected breakthroughs precisely because those involved in it had positive intentions instead of ulterior motives like those Western countries that sought to meddle in these talks. “African Solutions to African Problems” is now more than just a slogan since it just achieved its most important deliverable, peace in Ethiopia, which will in turn provide a practical framework for resolving other African crises.

## **11. Difficult Compromises Are Required For Peace, Stability, and Unity**

The 12-point joint statement released by the GOE and the TPLF contains what can objectively be described as some difficult compromises by both parties on sensitive issues involving administrative, informational, judicial, political, and security affairs. These were required though in order to achieve peace, return stability to the country, and thus preserve national unity. It’s impossible to please everyone on both sides, yet they should all appreciate the difficult decisions made for the greater good.

## **12. The Ethiopian Conflict Is A Lesson For All Of Africa**

Ethiopia’s victory over the neo-imperialist forces that waged their [Hybrid War of Terror](#) against it as punishment for this country’s pragmatic policy of principled neutrality in the New Cold War will inspire other African states to follow its lead instead of deterring them like its defeat would have done. Furthermore, those disgruntled domestic forces similar in spirit to the TPLF will be deterred from destabilizing their country in collusion with foreign forces instead of being inspired had the TPLF won.

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