



## Mapping the Humanitarian Emergencies in Tigray

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At the beginning of November 2020, after months of rising political tensions, an armed conflict emerged between the Government of Ethiopia and the - now ousted - Tigray Regional Government. As the conflict arose in the aftermath of a destructive locust plague and on top of the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, soon the realization came that the conflict would have a major impact on the Tigray Region's population, estimated at 6 million. Therefore, the objective of our research is to document as much information as possible on the rapidly evolving humanitarian situation, by making use of the 'power of maps', and hence to make the invisible visible. For this, we have collected qualitative as well as quantitative evidence on the situation on the ground, and have prepared 22 maps on different topics, ranging from background information on rainfall, topography, population density, land cover... to territorial control by the different parties involved in the conflict, humanitarian needs and access, civilian casualties, internally displaced people, banking and telecommunication services, and food insecurity. To prepare these maps, we have derived information from secondary data sources (mainly reports from humanitarian organizations), and also have collected our own data based on telephone interviews (n > 2000) with long-trusted key informants in different (sub-)districts of the region. The interviews comprised of general data collection (n > 1500), semi-structured interviews (n > 300), in-depth interviews (n > 100) and generalist interviews with office holders

at regional, national and international levels ( $n > 100$ ). Due to telecommunication blackouts, data collecting has been very challenging. As of the end of April 2021, the research results show that (i) conflict incidents still occur on a daily basis, (ii) more than 7800 civilian casualties and 200 massacres\* have been reported\*\*, (iii) more than 2200 civilian casualties have been fully documented\*\*, (iv) up to 1.7 million people have been internally displaced, (v) more than 4.5 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, (vi) humanitarian access remains restricted due to safety issues, and (vii) many war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. Even though many people already live in a dire situation, the continuation of the Tigray conflict may lead to another failed harvest in the 2021 cropping season and consequently could lead to a widespread famine. Via this atlas, we hope to provide valuable information to humanitarian organisations and local governments, and to raise international attention for the conflict – which may lead to independent investigations on war crimes.

\*A massacre has been defined as ‘a conflict incident in which at least 5 civilians were killed on the same day at the same location’. \*\*This is only the tip of the iceberg, as information only gradually becomes available.

## References

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