

Tigray Was Literally Destroyed by the U.S., Says Former Ethiopian Diplomat

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Mohamed Hassan Tells Tribunal on U.S. Imperialism That the U.S. Encouraged the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to Launch an Insurgency Against the Ethiopian Government in November 2020 and Gave Diplomatic and Media Cover for Their Aggression

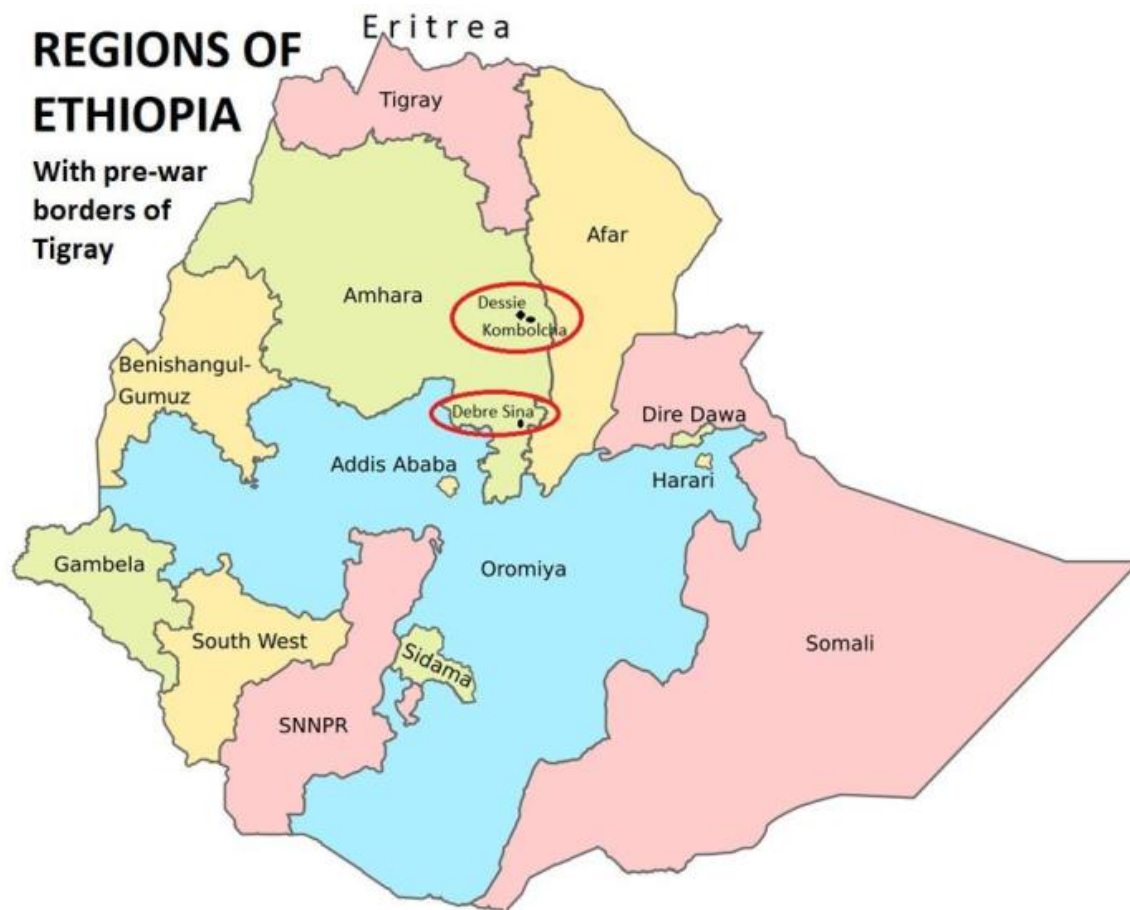
The Motive Was to Use the TPLF to Control the Horn of Africa Region

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Mohamed Hassan is a former Ethiopian diplomat who was involved in protests in the early 1990s with future Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi to secure greater rights for Ethiopia's Muslim population.

Hassan told an [international tribunal on U.S. imperialism](#) that the U.S. government is responsible for the destruction of Tigray, an Ethiopian province, after the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) launched an insurgency in November 2020 against the Ethiopian government.

Hassan blames the U.S. because they encouraged the TPLF uprising, imposed sanctions on Ethiopia to weaken it, and gave the TPLF diplomatic and media cover for their terrorist operations that fueled brutal counter-reprisals by the Ethiopian government.



Source: rsonderriis.substack.com

Some [600,000 people](#) are estimated to have been killed during the two years of the war, which ended in November 2022.

The U.S.'s main motive for encouraging the rebellion was to restore the TPLF to power in Ethiopia, which they ruled from 1991 to 2018, and to use the TPLF to control the strategically important Horn of Africa region.^[1]



Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) soldiers. [Source: twitter.com]

Hassan Ali recounted a visit that he had in the early 1990s with then-National Security Adviser Anthony Lake who told him that the U.S. strategy for maximizing its influence in Africa in the post-Cold War era was by dividing the continent into four sub-regions dominated by key anchor states over which it would gain leverage.

These states were: a) Egypt under Hosni Mubarak; b) South Africa under Thabo Mbeki; c) Nigeria under General Sani Abacha; and 4) Ethiopia under TPLF rule (its leader, Meles Zenawi, was Ethiopia's president from 1991 to 1995 and Prime Minister from 1995 until his death in 2018).

When they first came to power in Ethiopia in 1991, the TPLF had popular legitimacy because they helped overthrow the Derg, a Marxist dictatorship led by Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The U.S. hated Mengistu because he closed U.S. military bases in Ethiopia, including the Kagnew communications base in Eritrea.

[According to Dr. Simon Tesfamariam](#), an Eritrean doctor and activist living in New York, the TPLF was a minority regime in that it preferentially represented the interests of the Tigrayan people, which make up only 6% of the Ethiopian population.

Tesfamariam [told journalist Ann Garrison](#) that, over the last three decades, "the U.S. showered the tribalist, bourgeois TPLF minority regime with roughly a billion dollars a year in aid under the guise of humanitarian assistance. In exchange, TPLF served as Washington's policeman in the Horn of Africa and used its influence in the African Union, which is based in Addis Ababa, to protect Washington's interests on the African continent."

Hassan Ali said that, in order to sustain his kleptocratic rule, Zenawi provoked ethnic divisions and committed large-scale war crimes when Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 2006/2007 and provoked a war with Eritrea in 1998 where the [TPLF carried out a large-scale](#)

[ethnic-cleansing operation against Eritreans living in Ethiopia.](#)

Dr. Saleh Mohammed Idriss, a professor at the Asmara College of Education, recounted before the International People's Tribunal a conversation between Meles Zenawi and CIA agent Paul Henze where Zenawi said to "look at the conflict from the point of view of Tigray. It needs access to the Red Sea and the only way is through Eritrea [which gained its independence from Ethiopia in 1991]."

In 2018, the TPLF was overthrown in a popular uprising that resulted in the rise to power of Abiy Ahmed, a former member of the Oromo Democratic Party who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his role in helping to broker a durable peace agreement with Eritrea, and for releasing political prisoners and establishing a free press after years of TPLF authoritarian rule.

According to Hassan Ali, the peace deal with Eritrea worried U.S. imperial planners who preferred a conflict-ridden Horn region over which they could assert their hegemony through divide-and-rule tactics.



Abiy Ahmed with Eritrean President [Isaias Afwerki](#) in March 2019. [Source: [wikipedia.org](#)]

To make matters worse, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki was considered a [Castro-type figure](#) and Eritrea an African equivalent to Cuba. Along with Zimbabwe, it is the only country in Africa to resist the presence of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

After gaining its independence in 1991 following a long liberation struggle necessitated by the decision of U.S. Defense Secretary John Foster Dulles in the 1950s to support Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrea, Eritrea rejected loans from the World Bank and IMF and promoted

economic self-reliance under a socialist governing model.

To punish it for its defiance, the U.S. began imposing crippling sanctions in the mid-2000s under the false pretext that Eritrea supported the Somali terrorist group Al-Shabab.

After the TPLF tried to overthrow the Ethiopian government, Eritrea was [accused of dressing its soldiers in Ethiopian army uniforms and committing atrocities against Tigrayans](#).^[2]



Ethiopia and Eritrea anti-sanctions demonstration in New York City. [Source: [mronline.org](https://www.mronline.org)]

The sanctions as such were expanded upon—to the detriment of the Eritrean people who were deprived of vital medicines and goods and prevented from carrying out financial transactions using the SWIFT system.

Failing to acknowledge the negative impact of the sanctions, an [article](#) in *The Atlantic* by the former chief of mission at the U.S. embassy, Steve Walker, characteristically referred to Eritrea as a “human rights house of horror” and “totalitarian state,” which was “poor” and had “no realistic hopes of development” thanks to “revolutionary economic policies.”

Margaret Kimberley [wrote in Black Agenda Report](#) that such negative and prejudiced views obscured the fact that Eritrea is a functioning and proudly sovereign state, which overcomes the hardships created by U.S. sanctions to care for its people.

It was Eritrean military intervention, furthermore, at the request of the Abiy regime, in November-December 2020 that wiped out the backbone of the TPLF army in Tigray.

Checking All the Propaganda Boxes

Grégoire Lalieu is an investigative journalist from Belgium who testified at the People’s Tribunal on U.S. Imperialism that the Tigray War checked all the boxes of Western war propaganda the way it was presented in Western media.

Western economic interests and geopolitical scheming in the African Horn region was obscured and the history of U.S. imperial intervention in the region was ignored along with the history of TPLF atrocities.

Piggybacking off the official statements of the U.S. State Department, the media made it seem as if Abiy Ahmed had started the war because he had become arrogant after winning the Nobel Peace Prize when the TPLF was reported to have initiated hostilities by attacking the Ethiopian army's northern command on November 4, 2020.

The Ethiopian government was accused of committing legions of atrocities amounting to genocide and trying to induce famine and starve the Tigrayan population when atrocities were committed on all sides of the war and no famine actually resulted.^[3]



Samantha Power ✓
@PowerUSAID

BREAKING: @UNReliefChief declares just now on #Tigray: “There is famine now. There is famine now.”

He adds: “This is going to get a lot worse.”

9:12 AM · Jun 10, 2021

Queen of humanitarian intervention raises false alarm of a famine. [Source: rsonderriis.substack.com]

A parade of articles echoed the inflammatory narrative, including from the putatively left-wing [Nation](#) Magazine.

Democracy Now produced a series of similarly slanted [reports](#) alleging genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the use of rape as a weapon in Tigray, [relying heavily](#) on *CNN* reporter Nima Elbagir.

The Sudanese-born Elbagir, who is reportedly [married](#) to the current British ambassador to Iraq, [Mark Bryson-Richardson](#), [relentlessly pushed the narrative](#) of genocide perpetrated by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces, and in September 2022 won an [Emmy Award for her documentary “Ethiopia: Hallmarks of a Genocide.”](#)

Unreported in this documentary is the fact that the first massacre of the war was committed by TPLF militias at Mai Kadra on the Sudan border on November 9, 2020. The TPLF also fired rockets at civilians targets extending into Eritrea, forced the conscription of child soldiers, misused humanitarian relief supplies, committed gang rapes and fabricated evidence of Ethiopian army war crimes.^[4]

Western media generally left the impression that the Ethiopian army would carry out a genocide if the U.S. did not intervene to protect the Tigrayan people.



Funeral services at Abu Aregawi Church for victims of mass killing carried out by TPLF-allied militias that occurred in Mai Kadra on November 9, 2020. [Source: [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org)]

Lalieu pointed out that the demonization of the Ethiopian military and Abiy Ahmed was comparable to the demonization of Muammar Qaddafi, Slobodan Milosevic, Vladimir Putin and other foreign leaders that the U.S. was intent on overthrowing by force.

Many U.S.-based journalists and academics relied for their assessment on TPLF representatives, allowing the U.S. and TPLF to monopolize the debate. The consequence was to help build public support for the U.S. sanctions and for military intervention, which the usual cohort of liberal proponents of humanitarian intervention were eager to support.

Getting Ethiopia Dead Wrong

Danish journalist Rasmus Sonderriis published an [online book](#) entitled *Getting Ethiopia Dead Wrong*, which concluded that Western media, academia and humanitarian aid organizations “demonized a friendly people and fueled a big war with dire mispredictions and shocking lies.”

Central to these lies was the use of the g-word (genocide), which the Holocaust Museum warned about in October 2022.

Sonderriis wrote that “the media-borne narrative that Ethiopia’s motivation was to commit genocide was concocted to confer legitimacy on the violent pursuit of power [by the TPLF].”

A key media influencer promoting the genocide narrative and demanding Western military intervention was World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, a go-to media source who hid his own background as part of the TPLF ruling elite in Ethiopia.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus ✓
@DrTedros

...

The warning signs are there for genocide in (Tigray) Ethiopia – the world must act to prevent it: Helen Clark, Michael Lapsley and David Alton | The Guardian |



theguardian.com

The warning signs are there for genocide in Ethiopia – the world must act to p...
The country has been scarred by violence on all sides, but there may be much worse to come as Tigrayan civilians are targeted

2:36 PM Oct 23, 2022

3,106 Retweets 251 Quotes 2,367 Likes 20 Bookmarks

Source: rsonderriis.substack.com

Alex de Waal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation and professor at the Tufts University's Fletcher School near Boston was another prominent media fixture misrepresenting the conflict, according to Sonderriis, who urged the Biden administration to take a tougher line in *The Guardian* and other left-of-center publication for which he writes.

De Waal ironically penned an [article in The Boston Review](#) in 2016 in which he wrote that "the West likes morality plays with clear heroes and villains, in which we play the role of savior."

That is exactly what Sonderriis accuses him of doing for Ethiopia.

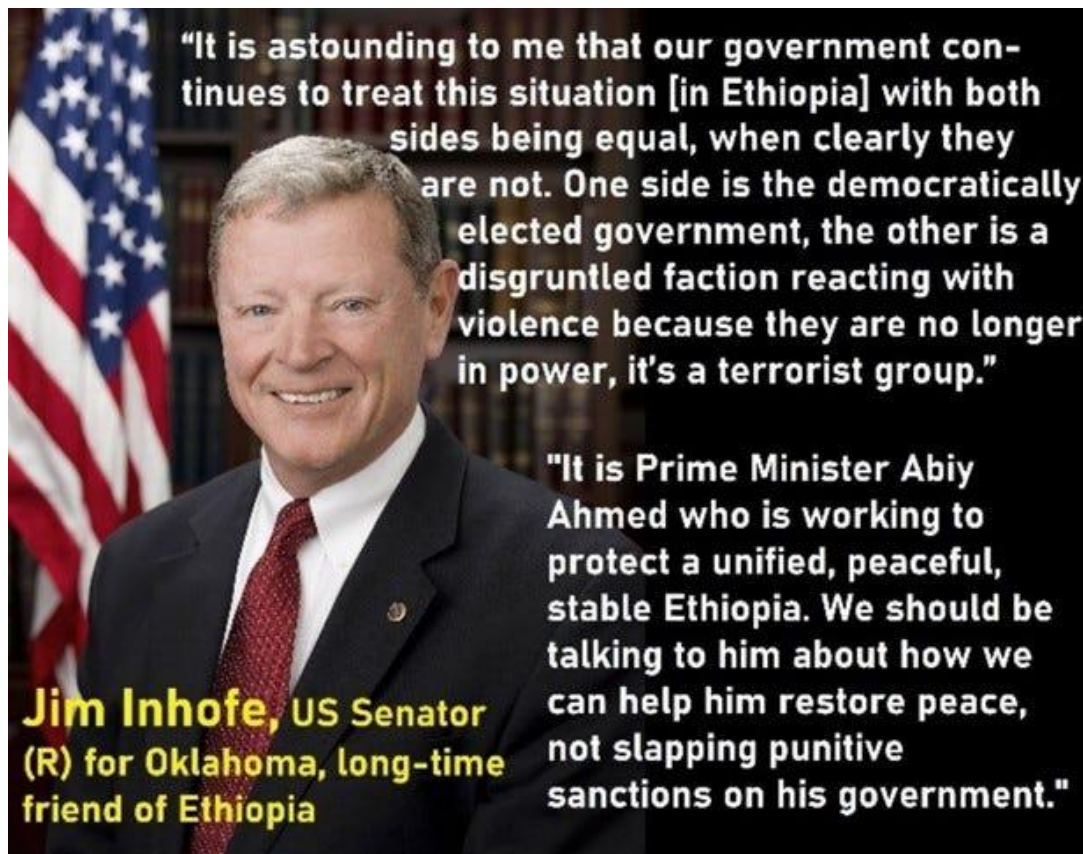
A [founder of the Save Darfur movement](#), which historian Mahmood Mamdani called a "humanitarian arm of the War on Terror,"^[5] de Waal previously [cast the story of "genocide" in Sudan](#) as an "Arab-African affair devoid of Western interests," according to journalist Keith Harmon Snow.

Further, de Waal [depicted](#) the Hutu as the bad guys and Tutsis as the good guys in Rwanda

despite the fact that Tutsi leader Paul Kagame triggered the April 1994 Rwandan genocide by [invading Rwanda illegally](#) and [shooting down the airplane of Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana](#).^[6]

Sonderriis writes that de Waal and other Western journalists falsely reported on the defeat of Ethiopian forces and often advanced the stereotype of “dark continent savagery” that lent support for U.S. foreign policy intervention.

One of the main critics of Western media narratives, ironically, was conservative Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe, a notorious war hawk who characterized the TPLF as a terrorist group and called for a rollback of U.S. sanctions targeting the Ethiopian government.



Source: rsonderriis.substack.com

Edward Hunt, a Ph.D. in American Studies from the College of William & Mary, wrote [an article in The Progressive](#) depicting the TPLF as leftist in favoring more of a statist model of development and presenting the overthrow of Abiy Ahmed's government—which purged Tigrayan officials and allegedly favored the Amhara—as something positive. He said that it would reverse the neo-liberal and pro-American political agenda of Abiy Ahmed who Hunt blamed for starting the war, though Sonderriis says that most Ethiopians saw things differently.^[7]

One Ethiopian commenting on Hunt's story tellingly [wrote](#) that “TPLF is a tiny, regional, ethnic party drunk with regionalism, wounded by inferiority complex, a left over Commie mess from the 60s. The West put them in power in 1991, the other 95% kicking & screaming. They butchered, tortured, & looted 27 yrs. Abiy was elected by 40m votes, only the Ethiopian people can remove him. It's easier for the apartheid regime to return to power in South Africa than sadist TPLF in Ethiopia.”

Another reader [wrote](#) that “[t]he war was not started by the Ethiopian gov. The TPLF thugs went at night and surprise attacked & killed the soldiers in North Ethiopia army base. They attacked the army base that was protecting the Tigrayans for 20 years. They went at night and slaughtered the soldiers & stole weapons. That is why the Ethiopian gov. went North and retrieved the weapons & war resumed. So, the 20 year liar TPLF is the one that started the war.”

One reason the U.S. may have opposed Abiy Ahmed and imposed sanctions on his government was because Ahmed forged [closer cooperative relations with China](#), which [supported Ethiopia in the Tigray War](#), and favored regional integration which could undercut U.S. influence in the Horn.

A sign that a covert operation was afoot was the creation of a [Twitter hashtag](#), “Tigray Genocide,” that appears to have originated from the State Department, CIA or another U.S. government agency.



Source: rsonderriis.substack.com

Another hashtag promoted justice for Tigray women and girls allegedly subjected to mass rape though the scale of these rapes was grossly inflated, according to Sonderriis, and [many rapes were committed by the TPLF](#) along with other atrocities that went unreported in the Western media.



Source: rsonderriis.substack.com

The Twitter campaigns seemed reminiscent of the 2014 campaign supported by Michelle Obama to [save Nigerian girls kidnapped by Boko Haram](#), and “Kony 2012 campaign” in which the atrocities of Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony were played up in order to justify a covert U.S. military operation in support of the Museveni government to hunt down Kony and protect U.S. military bases.

Yoweri Museveni was, like the TPLF, a loyal U.S. ally who, for years, had been used as a key anchor to help the U.S. access Central Africa’s vast mineral riches. Thus, history appears to be repeating itself, with the Western intelligentsia playing a key role once again in the perpetuation of Western colonialism.

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Notes

1. General Norman Schwarzkopf noted that “the Red Sea, with the Suez Canal in the north and the Bab-el-Mandeb in the south, is one of the most vital sea lines of communication

and a critical shipping link between our Pacific and European allies,” hence the U.S. interest in securing a strategic foothold in the Horn of Africa region, cited in David N. Gibbs, “Realpolitik and Humanitarian Intervention: The Case of Somalia,” *International Politics*, March 2000.

2. For the role of Amnesty International and other human rights groups in playing up the Eritrean atrocities, see Ann Garrison, “Amnesty International pushes regime change in Eritrea with dubious, unverifiable report,” *The Grayzone Project*, September 21, 2023, <https://thegrayzone.com/2023/09/21/amnesty-international-regime-change-eritrea/>
3. See Mawi Asgedom, “[Why the U.S. should call the famine and violence in Tigray a genocide](#),” *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2021. On the pattern of biased Western reporting on Africa, see Milton Allimadi, *Manufacturing Hate: How Africa Was Demonized in Western Media* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2021).
4. [According to Ann Garrison](#), when the TPLF invaded Ethiopia’s Amhara and Afar Regions, the Western press generally looked the other way, giving Amhara and Afari victims only occasional mention. From April to June 2022, Garrison said that she traveled through Ethiopia’s Amhara and Afar Regions and saw immense suffering in many overcrowded IDP camps, where deeply traumatized Amharas and Afaris told her that the TPLF had murdered their family members and taken all they had until they fled.
5. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (New York: Crown, 2010).
6. De Waal’s view conveniently was exactly how the U.S. State Department/Pentagon and CIA wanted the Rwandan conflict to be presented since they were supporting the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) while France was supporting the Hutu. De Waal was a [contemporary of John Prendergast](#), a State Department employee who worked closely with current USAID Administrator Samantha Power at the Harvard Kennedy School’s Carr Center for Human Rights and was similarly a strong proponent of “humanitarian intervention” in Africa. [According to Keith Harmon Snow](#), Prendergast worked with Susan Rice to create the Pentagon’s prized African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI)—a euphemistically named entity created to project U.S. power in Africa run by U.S. Army Special Forces Command (SOCOM).
7. Hunt emphasized that Abiy pushed through major [economic reforms](#) that began the process of dismantling the country’s state-controlled economic system, opening the country’s markets to foreign investors, which earned him the favor of the U.S. ruling elite. *The Nation* magazine published a story by Daniel Volodsko characteristically titled “There’s Genocide in Tigray, but Nobody’s Talking About It.” <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/genocide-in-tigray/>

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