

Tigrayan refugees

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In News: Recently, TheTigrayan refugees suffered atrocities who were sheltered by the thousands within sight of the homeland they fled in northern Ethiopia.

Immediate cause of the crisis

- Conflict between Tigrayan and Ethiopian government escalated when Tigrayan forces in northern Ethiopia fired rockets across the border into Eritrea, claiming that the Ethiopian government was using an Eritrean airport to attack Tigray.

Why is there animosity between Tigray and Eritrea?

- The animosity between Tigrayans and Eritrea goes back to the Ethiopian-Eritrean war that occurred between 1998 and 2000.
- Many veterans from the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) who participated in the Ethiopian-Eritrean war between 1998 and 2000 are now part of the Tigray region's paramilitary forces. The animosity between these TPLF veterans and Eritrea continues till date.
- War that occurred two decades ago was extremely brutal and resulted in the deaths of thousands of soldiers.

What is the issue?

- In 2019, Abiy won the Nobel Peace Prize because of his efforts that resulted in peace with Eritrea's leadership, but despite their improvement in relations with Addis Ababa, Asmara continues to remain hostile to Tigrayans and their leaders because of the war.



Humanitarian Concerns

- After the conflict started , thousands of Ethiopian civilians were displaced.
- The UNHCR reported that thousands of refugees had been crossing over the border and arriving in Sudan after fighting began and the international organisation anticipated many more arriving as the conflict escalated.
- There have been reports of blocked roads, with internet and communication lines being cut off in Ethiopia.
- Prior to the start of this conflict, there were already several thousand civilians who were internally displaced in Tigray, aftermath of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war.
- This latest conflict has only increased the number of displaced people and may lead to a humanitarian crisis.

Impact of this conflict on the Horn of Africa region

- With Ethiopian civilians escaping in large numbers to Sudan, the country may find itself inadvertently drawn into the war.
- Ethiopia's long-standing conflict with Egypt over the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam over the Blue Nile, Sudan had already found itself forcefully involved in the spat.
- The conflict has the potential to destabilise the Horn of Africa region.
- The US and China have several strategic military bases in that region, the closest being Djibouti.
- President Vladimir Putin had approved the creation of a Russian naval facility in Sudan that would be "capable of mooring nuclear-powered surface vessels, clearing the way for Moscow's first substantial military foothold in Africa since the Soviet fall.
- If these military bases and facilities were to be impacted in any way, it may cause foreign powers to get militarily involved in the region's conflict.
- The stability of Ethiopia is important for the entire Horn of Africa region.