**Research Report**

**General Assembly 4**

***Ensuring the safety of civilians in Ethiopia and Eritrea***

*Student officers:*

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**Introduction**

The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea is one of the most prolonged disputes in modern African history, caused by the aftereffects of colonialism, territorial disputes, and political rivalries. Following years of conflict, Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993, but unresolved border issues—especially the ownership of the town of Badme—led to the eruption of a two-year war from 1998 to 2000. Despite a peace agreement in 2000 and a ruling by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) awarding Badme to Eritrea, Ethiopia's refusal to implement the decision prolonged a "no war, no peace" deadlock for nearly two decades.

In 2018, a historic peace deal initiated by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed formally ended hostilities between the two nations and earned international praise, including the Nobel Peace Prize for Abiy. However, the alliance unravelled in the wake of Ethiopia's Tigray conflict (2020–2022), during which Eritrean forces were accused of injustices, reigniting tensions between the neighbours. Today, the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict symbolizes the challenges of achieving lasting peace in a region characterized by political instability and strategic competition.

**The Committee**

General Assembly 4 is a fairly ordinary committee, meaning there are no special Rules of Procedure specific to this committee. In MUNA, General Assembly 4 deals with matters of special politics and decolonization, which can include an immense number of topics. In this General Assembly, nations come together to discuss important global issues and collaborate to find solutions in a peaceful and respectful manner. When debating an issue during MUNA, one should be aware of the fact that money is never an issue. Therefore, a delegate should never vote or speak against resolutions because of financial reasons.

**Keywords**

The 2000 Algiers Agreement: Is an agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea that was signed on 12 December 2000 to formally end the war between the two nations.

Tigray war: It was a civil was that lasted from 3 November 2020 to 3 November 2022. It was primarily fought in the Tigray region in the north of Ethiopia with the Ethiopian and Eritrean forces on one side and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) on the other side.

**Overview**

The United Nations (UN) has emphasized the need to ensure the safety of both Ethiopian and Eritrean citizens due to the severe human rights violations and war crimes committed by both nations' forces during the conflict and Tigray war. Both governments, have engaged in widespread abuses. These violations include indiscriminate attacks on civilians, forced displacement, sexual violence, and other forms of collective punishment against civilian populations. In addition, both Ethiopian and Eritrean forces have been accused of obstructing aid deliveries, complicating efforts to address the humanitarian crisis that has occurred. Given these ongoing violations and the devastating impact on civilian populations, the UN's call to safeguard Eritrean and Ethiopian citizens reflects a broader international effort to prevent further atrocities, support the peace process, and hold those responsible for war crimes accountable.

**Arguments**

Implementing Humanitarian Intervention

The safety of civilians in both Ethiopia and Eritrea is crucial, as the ongoing conflicts have led to severe human rights violations and injustices that cause excessive harm to civilians. International bodies like the United Nations (UN) and Human Rights Watch have reported widespread abuses, including indiscriminate killings, sexual violence, and forced displacement of civilians, particularly in conflict zones like Tigray.

Given the scale of these injustices, there is an urgent need for a coordinated international response, including humanitarian aid, conflict resolutions, and diplomatic pressure on both governments. Without such intervention, the civilian population will continue to suffer. Ensuring civilian safety is not only a moral imperative but also a legal one under international law, as human rights protections must be upheld regardless of the political or military situation.

Long-term peacebuilding and accountability

While immediate humanitarian aid is essential, a long-term strategy focused on peacebuilding and accountability is crucial for ensuring the safety of civilians in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The root causes of the conflict such as historical territorial disputes and political rivalries have resulted in cycles of violence that affect civilian populations on both sides. The 2020–2022 Tigray conflict, for example, brought Eritrean forces into Ethiopia, leading to widespread violations of human rights and complicating efforts for lasting peace between the two nations.

A sustainable solution requires addressing these underlying causes through dialogue, reconciliation, and the establishment of mechanisms for accountability. By adressing these issues, civilians will not only be safeguarded from immediate harm but will also have the chance to live in a more stable, peaceful environment for the future.

Please note that these points are intended as a general framework to guide your preparation for the debate. Delegates are encouraged to tailor their arguments to align with their assigned country’s policies and unique context. Replicating these points directly is discouraged to ensure a constructive and engaging discussion.

**Timeline of events**

* **1952-1962:** Eritrea was unified with Ethiopia under a UN resolution, whilst maintaining their right to be self-governing state. However, Emperor Haile Selassie annexed Eritrea which resulted Eritrea to lose their self-government. This led to Eritrea enduring a 30-year struggle to achieve independence.
* **1991:** Eritrea achieved de facto independence after the Ethiopian civil war ended.
* **1993:** Eritrea's independence was formalized following an UN-backed referendum
* **1998-2000:** A war broke out over disputed border areas, heavily influencing the Eritrean town Badme. Resulting in tens of thousands of casualties. The 2000 Algiers Agreement officially brought an end to the active fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but it failed to resolve underlying tensions. Ethiopia rejected the boundary commission's findings which prevented a full implementation of the peace agreement.
* **2000-2018:** A "no war, no peace" situation persisted, with periodic clashes along the border.
* **2018:** Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed accepted the boundary commission’s ruling, leading to a peace agreement with Eritrea. This move won him the Nobel Peace Prize.
* **2020-2022:** Eritrea's military involvement in Ethiopia’s Tigray conflict reignited tensions. Eritrean forces were accused of committing injustices during the Tigray War, further complicating relations​.
* **2022-2024:** Although efforts for reconciliation continued, challenges remained. Both countries reportedly worked on defining and implementing demilitarized zones but encountered setbacks due to mistrust and regional instability.

**Resolution**

A delegate should carefully consider their country's perspective and opinion on the matter when writing a resolution. This research report is a good starting point for your investigation. Consider ways to debate on the independence of the non-self-governing territories that benefit the most countries involved. Remember to pay attention not only to the less-developed countries involved in the issue, but also to the developed countries. Goals should be realistic and attainable. Furthermore, keep in mind that different countries have different policies, as well as global differences. These differences may be economic, but they are also primarily cultural. Make sure to thoroughly research your country and remember that you are speaking as if you are representing that country. Therefore, before attending the conference, do some research on your country’s policies.

For more information on resolution writing, please refer to the MUNA booklet on our MUNA site: <https://munalfrink.nl/>.

**Links and sources**

* <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/international-community-must-ensure-accountability-and-protection-civilians>
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigray_war>
* <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia>
* <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/12/taking-ethiopia-eritrea-tensions-seriously>
* <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/11/07/ethiopia-eritrea-war-tplf/>
* <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/eritrea/>
* <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ethiopia/>
* <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/ethiopia>
* <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/eritrea/>