ETHIOPIA

WHAT HAPPENED?
Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, sworn in on 4 October after his election win, launched a federal offensive in the north. When that sputtered, Tigray forces advanced in eastern Amhara. Clashes between insurgents and government forces spiked in Oromia.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?
Ethiopia’s year-old war has entered a dangerous new phase. Fighting could intensify as Tigray forces advance south and threaten the capital, Addis Ababa. There is potential for thousands more deaths and greater instability countrywide, which could extend beyond Ethiopia’s borders.

SEPTEMBER TRENDS
Tigray forces faced resistance from government troops and their allies in Ethiopia’s north amid a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Violence rose in Oromia, killing dozens, and more federal troops reinforced operations in Benishangul-Gumuz.

WHAT TO WATCH
Tigray forces may seek to control the Djibouti trade corridor, or, alongside the OLA, march on Addis Ababa, to pressure Abiy into accepting their demands or step down. This could fuel widespread resistance, increased intercommunal violence – including attacks on Tigrayans – and further destabilisation.

Tigray forces may also try to push Amhara, federal and Eritrean forces out of western Tigray, which risks aggravating regional tensions, notably between Addis Ababa and Khartoum.