**ETHIOPIA**

**WHAT HAPPENED?**
Ethiopia’s eleven-month civil war is intensifying. Tigray forces faced resistance from government forces 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.

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?**
Since July, the war has entered a dangerous new phase. With the rainy season ending, fighting could increase and expand further outside of Tigray, likely leading to thousands more deaths and greater instability countrywide and potentially beyond its border.

**AUGUST TRENDS**
The war in Ethiopia’s northernmost region, Tigray, continued as Tigray forces maintained offensive positions across the country’s north, particularly in Amhara region. In parallel, the federal government intensified its war rhetoric and mobilised reinforcements.

**TRENDS TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tigray conflict, risk of escalation</th>
<th>Escalation of intercommunal clashes</th>
<th>Expansion of Tigray conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of conflict in Tigray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tigray forces faced resistance**
The federal government said on 9 September that federal troops and local forces from the Afar region had compelled Tigray forces to withdraw from Afar. Tigray leaders denied this and said that the forces had redeployed to neighbouring Amhara. Federal mobilisation continued, with the military graduating tens of thousands of new recruits.

In late September, Addis expelled seven senior UN officials, citing “meddling”. The UN reported that 1.7 million people were food insecure in Afar and Amhara due to the war.

**Violence increased in Oromia**
The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), allied to Tigray forces since August, claimed in late August-early September that they were fighting in Afar and Amhara despite the rainy season.

In late September, Addis expelled seven senior UN officials, citing “meddling”. The UN reported that 1.7 million people were food insecure in Afar and Amhara due to the war.

Delayed parliamentary elections were held on 30 September in Somali and Harari regional states. A referendum also took place in the Southern Nations region on whether or not to form a South Western regional state.

**WHAT TO WATCH**
In Afar, Tigray forces may try to cut the Djibouti trade route to force Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed into accepting their ceasefire terms. They may also try to push out Amhara forces that control western Tigray. This might allow supplies to enter from Sudan, which would help ease Tigray’s humanitarian crisis, but risk aggravating tensions between Khartoum and Addis Ababa.

Federal forces are set to intensify counteroffensive operations now that the rainy season has tapered off.

**Federal reinforcements to Benishangul-Gumuz**
Federal troops deployed to the Benishangul-Gumuz region on the Sudanese border after regional authorities on 9 September accused ethnic Gumuz rebels of killing five security forces and one Chinese national in the Metekel Zone. Attacks in Metekel have displaced hundreds of thousands since September 2020.

Since July, the war has entered a dangerous new phase. With the rainy season ending, fighting could increase and expand further outside of Tigray, likely leading to thousands more deaths and greater instability countrywide and potentially beyond its border.

**WHAT TO WATCH**
In Afar, Tigray forces may try to cut the Djibouti trade route to force Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed into accepting their ceasefire terms. They may also try to push out Amhara forces that control western Tigray. This might allow supplies to enter from Sudan, which would help ease Tigray’s humanitarian crisis, but risk aggravating tensions between Khartoum and Addis Ababa.

Federal forces are set to intensify counteroffensive operations now that the rainy season has tapered off.