

Pray for Ethiopia & Tigray

19-25 September 2021



'If you identify a family member amidst the line of corpses and you cry, they kill you. You can't shed one tear – mourning is a crime.' Assefa, an internally displaced person.

Assefa's words underscore the brutality of the war on Tigray region, which has claimed over 52,000 lives and forced millions of people to flee since hostilities began last November. Horrific crimes - including sexual violence, bombings, killings, extensive looting and the suspected use of white phosphorous bombs - have been perpetrated, mainly by militia from the Amhara region and soldiers from neighbouring Eritrea.

Faced with military reversals, the Ethiopian premier hurriedly withdrew his forces declaring a unilateral ceasefire, but maintaining a de facto humanitarian siege. Fighting has now spread into the neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions, displacing thousands more people. Find out more at csw.org.uk/eritrea

Sunday 19 September

Clergy and worshippers have died in their hundreds in attacks on churches and monasteries. These attacks appeared to be timed to coincide with religious festivals, possibly to inflict maximum casualties. Over 300 priests are thought to have been killed so far. Ask God to protect Tigray's religious leaders and communities of faith.

Monday 20 September

Tigrayans are being ethnically profiled across Ethiopia, with arbitrary detentions, including of young children, and seizures of tens of thousands of their businesses. There is also a worrying increase in hate speech, with government officials, including the prime minister, and even some religious personalities, describing them as a 'cancer' or 'weeds' that Ethiopia must get rid of. Pray against the use of language which could incite genocide, and for national reconciliation.

Tuesday 21 September

Starvation continues to be used as a weapon of war, amid reports of aid delivery being blocked. The UN estimates 90% of the Tigrayan population needs humanitarian assistance urgently, including 400,000 people who are 'facing famine-like condition.' Millions are also on the brink of hunger parts of the Afar and Amhara regions. On the International Day of Peace, pray for an end to the fighting, and for humanitarian aid to be allowed to reach all who desperately need it.

Wednesday 22 September

'May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.' Psalm 20:1. Pray this verse over the civilians of Tigray, who are bearing the brunt of the conflict.

Thursday 23 September

Pray for strength and safety for Patriarch Mathias, leader of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church and an ethnic Tigrayan. He was placed under house arrest in May following the release of a video in which he called for international intervention to end the violence in Tigray: 'They want to destroy the people of Tigray. What is happening in Tigray is of the highest brutality and cruelty.'

Friday 24 September

Mass rape has been used not only as a weapon of war but possibly as a component of genocide. Some victims have said their assailants spoke of 'cleansing' their 'bloodline', or of attempting to infect them with HIV. They also attempted to damage their reproductive organs with hot rods and other objects. Pray against stigma, that victims will be able to access treatment and support, and for their physical, mental and emotional healing.

Saturday 25 September

Pray 'Lord, have mercy' over all of Ethiopia today. This ancient, simple prayer (Kyrie, eleison in Greek) is part of the litany of many church traditions, including the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the largest denomination in Ethiopia. The prayer is a cry for help as well as an expression of confidence in God's love.

**CSW everyone
free to believe**

CSW is a human rights organisation advocating for freedom of religion or belief, and as Christians we stand with everyone facing injustice because of their religion or belief.