



ETHIOPIA

WHAT HAPPENED IN MARCH?

Tigray's peace process advanced as the federal parliament removed the Tigray People's Liberation Front's (TPLF) terrorist designation and federal authorities dropped criminal charges against TPLF leaders. Prime Minister Abiy announced a committee to negotiate with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA).

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The continued progress toward consolidating Tigray's peace reveals the **speed and depth of reconciliation** between Tigray and federal leaders after two years of catastrophic war. Abiy's announcement improved prospects for peace talks in Oromia.

FEBRUARY TRENDS

Prime Minister **Abiy met Tigray's leaders** for the first time since before war erupted in 2020. In Oromia, an Orthodox Church split fuelled deadly intercommunal tensions, while authorities and the **OLA signalled interest in a truce**.

1 → Federal parliament voted to remove TPLF's terrorist designation

Tigray leaders agreed on the composition of an **Interim Regional Administration (IRA)** in early March. On 17 March, the TPLF selected the peace deal's chief Tigray negotiator, Getachew Reda, to head the IRA.

In another major step toward consolidating peace, authorities **removed the TPLF's terrorist designation** on 22 March, and on 30 March dropped criminal charges against Tigray leaders.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced on 20 March that the U.S. had determined all sides committed "war crimes" in Tigray and that federal, Eritrean and Amhara forces committed **crimes against humanity**.

2 → Abiy announced committee to negotiate with OLA

Hostilities between the OLA and security forces continued in Oromia. Fighting flared in West and East Wollega Zones, North and East Shewa Zones, and in Benishangul-Gumuz region's Kamashi and Metekel Zones.

On 28 March, Abiy renewed **hope for peace talks** by announcing the formation of a committee to negotiate with the OLA, who noted "positive signs" for peace talks but continued to insist on international mediation.

3 → Oromo-Amhara tensions deepened

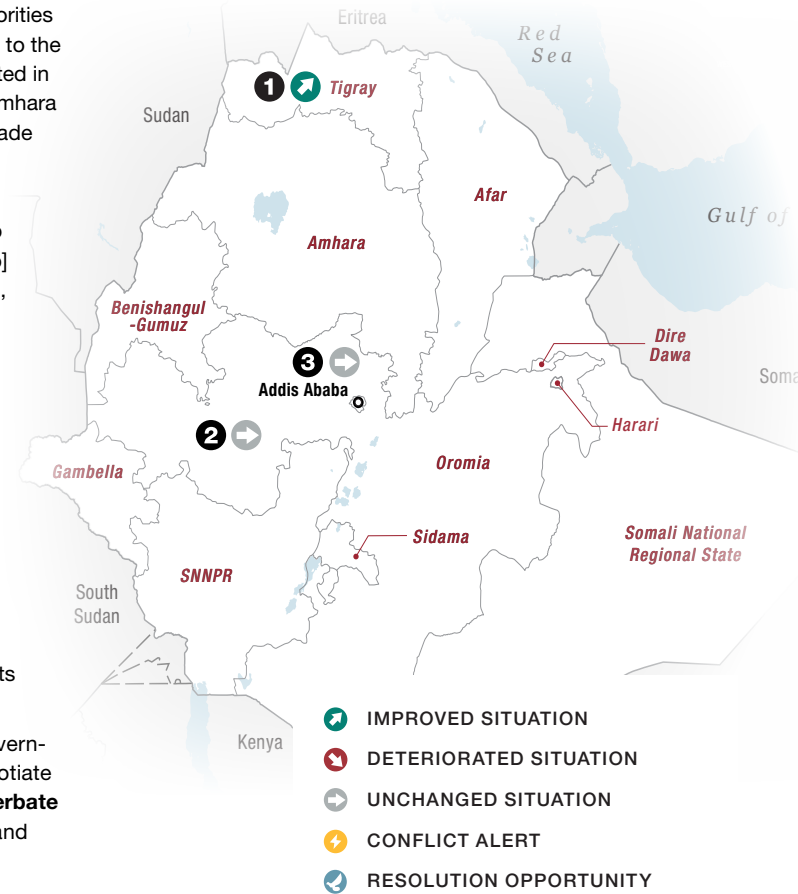
In late February-early March, Oromia authorities **restricted transport from Amhara** region to the federal capital Addis Ababa, which is located in Oromia but self-governing. On 6 March, Amhara President Yilikal Kefale declared the blockade "unconstitutional".

On 14 March, Addis Ababa's mayor, an Oromo, accused individuals of "flocking to the capital from some regional states... [to] overthrow the legally elected government", implying the **blockade was for security purposes**. The National Movement of Amhara opposition party condemned the remark as "genocidal incitement".

WHAT TO WATCH

Federal leaders may release **Tigray's 2022/2023 budget**. The TPLF could start engaging with regional leaders to improve relations, including in Amhara and Afar. A federal plan could be devised to tackle the **issue of Amhara-controlled disputed territories**, which the TPLF wants returned to Tigray's administration.

Notwithstanding progress, the federal government and OLA don't appear ready to negotiate a truce in April. The conflict will likely **exacerbate friction** within the ruling party's Oromo and Amhara factions.



- IMPROVED SITUATION
- DETERIORATED SITUATION
- UNCHANGED SITUATION
- CONFLICT ALERT
- RESOLUTION OPPORTUNITY

TRENDS TIMELINE

