

African Union

Taking measures to resolve "Green Famine" in Ethiopia



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Introducing Your Chairs

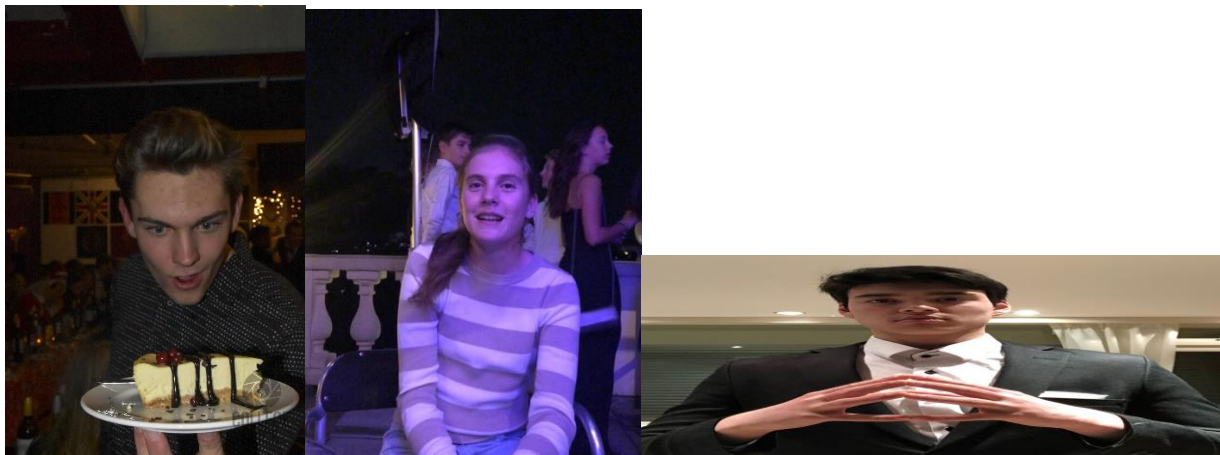
Hello African Union committee members,
We, Vittorio, Silke and Pepijn will be your chairs during FAMUN 2024 and we are excited to meet you to debate topics regarding current issues in the world.

I, Pepijn Cardous, will be one of the chairs for this event. I am 19 years old and currently studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Twente. I am an enthusiastic, open-minded and ambitious person who completed the IB-HL course two years ago. I am honoured and excited to be a part of FAMUN again.

My name is Silke Kabel and I will be the Deputy Chair on Thursday and Friday! I am 16 years old and in my final year at Farel College. I have participated as a delegate in many other MUNs before, and this will be my first time as a chair. I am very excited to participate in FAMUN this year!

Greetings, esteemed delegates,
I, formally known as Vittorio Germano, extend to you my most cordial salutations and extend a warm welcome to this august assembly. In this conference I shall be assuming the distinguished role of your head chair for FAMUN 2024. I myself have enlisted in the proceedings of a total of 7 MUN conferences and have found them to be quite a satisfactory experience. I aspire to impart upon you a comparable sentiment of earnestness and resonance regarding this MUN conference. May you all have a Ravishingly Delectable Conference.

See you soon, and the best of luck for your preparations,
Sincerely,
Vittorio, Silke and Pepijn



An Introduction To The Topic

Ethiopia is a country located in east Africa. It is a large country spanning 1.112 million km² and consisting of 12 regions. Ethiopia is a country very vulnerable to famines due to its geographical location, economic development and conflict within its borders. This has meant that Ethiopia has experienced a large amounts of green and non green famines in its recent history and is currently experiencing one now. Currently a large famine is going on in northern areas of Ethiopia such as Tigray. As of August 2022, there are 13 million people facing acute food insecurity, and an estimated 150,000–200,000 had died of starvation by March 2022. In the Tigray Region alone, 89% of people are in need of food aid, with those facing severe hunger reaching up to 47%.

Definition of Key Terms

Green famine:

A condition in which a country or area is suffering famine even though the fields are green in the absence of drought.

Tigray:

The Tigray Region, officially the Tigray National Regional State, is the northernmost regional state in Ethiopia.

TPFL:

Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, is a left-wing ethnic nationalist, paramilitary group, and the former ruling party of Ethiopia.

Famine:

Severe and prolonged hunger in a substantial proportion of the population of a region or country, resulting in widespread and acute malnutrition and death by starvation and disease.

Indian Ocean dipole:

A climate pattern affecting the Indian Ocean. During a positive phase, warm waters are pushed to the Western part of the Indian Ocean, while cold deep waters are brought up to the surface in the Eastern Indian Ocean. This pattern is reversed during the negative phase of the IOD

Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone

A band of clouds consisting of showers and occasional thunderstorms that encircles the globe near the equator

Sustainable:

The practice of using natural resources responsibly today, so they are available for future generations in the future.

A General Overview of the Issue

Ethiopia is a country largely reliant on agriculture. Agriculture contributes 40% of Ethiopia's national GDP and 80% of the country's work force. This means that most people in Ethiopia make their income, and get their food from subsistence farming. Recent droughts and conflict have destroyed harvests in the Tigray region leaving many in a state of famine.

Green famines:

Green famines are famines that occur due to faulty crop harvests, often caused by droughts. There is access to water and rainfall is seasonal, however the lasting effects of the drought means there is a lack of food. Often crops can take around 2 months to grow and harvest meaning families are left with no access to food for an extended period of time even with rainfall and optimal conditions for crop growth. This is especially relevant to Ethiopia due to its fluctuating weather. Ethiopia is also under pressure of having structural deficiencies, scarcity of land, overpopulation and lack of development leading to difficulty managing green famines.

Geography:

Ethiopia has experienced as many as 6 droughts since 2000, each placing Ethiopia in a perilous situation. This is largely due to its geographical location near the equator, meaning it relies on the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) for rainfall. The ITCZ has increasingly shifted and narrowed due to climate change making it a highly unreliable source for rainwater. Ethiopia's geographical location in east Africa also means that rainfall is brought by the Indian Ocean dipole, which has been affected by rising ocean temperatures also caused by climate change, reducing the rainfall in Ethiopia. These reductions in rainfall is especially impactful on agriculture and crops as Ethiopia only has two seasons, a dry season and a rainy season, meaning if there is not enough rainfall and harvest in the rainy season the people are left without food for the rest of the year. Additionally, Ethiopia is a landlocked country with scarce access to open water sources with the exception of groundwater, making irrigation difficult. All these factors mean that Ethiopian harvests are often poor due to drought potentially causing famines.

Conflict:

In the 3rd of November 2020 a war between the Ethiopian state and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) began after a dispute concerning regional elections. This war lasted 2 years ending in November of 2022. During this period, fighting in the Tigray region meant that many farmers were unable to plant crops as well as 48% of farming tools being looted or destroyed. Government support also stopped in the region. This, in combination with a drought, caused mass famine as there were little harvests, and humanitarian aid was cut off by the government as well as the TPLF. Mass displacement of people and destruction of infrastructure means that there was difficulty in transportation and a severe economic decline. This caused a famine that extended past the time of conflict into present day as the Tigray region struggles to rebuild infrastructure and get



the humanitarian aid it needs.

Government:

The Ethiopian government, particularly under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, has faced criticism for its role in exacerbating the Tigray famine. The conflict with the TPLF has led to widespread displacement, disrupting agricultural activities and causing economic decline. The government's actions, including restrictions on humanitarian aid and a blockade, have impeded access to essential resources. Allegations of human rights abuses, including atrocities against civilians, have not been adequately addressed. The government's downplaying of the severity of the crisis and insufficient measures to address the allegations further contribute to the ongoing humanitarian challenges in the Tigray region. International attention and pressure persist for the government to facilitate humanitarian access, address human rights concerns, and acknowledge the gravity of the situation to ensure effective relief efforts.

Historical Background

As mentioned previously, Ethiopia has a history marked by recurrent famines, often attributed to a combination of natural and human-made factors. The country's susceptibility to food crises is influenced by its geographical features, including highlands and lowlands, as well as the reliance on seasonal rainfall patterns. Throughout the 20th century, Ethiopia faced significant famines, such as the Great Ethiopian Famine of the 1880s, marked by droughts and locust plagues, and the devastating green famine of the 1980s, which garnered international attention. Political instability and economic mismanagement during different periods, including the Derg regime in the 1970s and 1980s, contributed to the severity of these crises despite minor drought conditions. Traditional agricultural practices, population pressure, and deforestation played roles in exacerbating vulnerability to food shortages causing green famines. While efforts have been made to address the root causes, including initiatives for sustainable agriculture and development, famines in Ethiopia underscore the ongoing challenges of balancing environmental factors, agricultural practices, and socio-economic conditions to ensure food security for its population.

Major Parties Involved

Ethiopia: As the epicenter of the conflict, Ethiopia has been a major player in the Tigray famine. The Ethiopian government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, has faced criticism for its military actions and its handling of the humanitarian situation. Allegations of human rights abuses, restrictions on humanitarian aid, and the overall management of the conflict have drawn international attention and concern. Humanitarian aid has been cut off significantly due to allegations of corruption and embezzlement of aid.

Eritrea: Eritrea, a neighboring country to the north of Ethiopia, has been involved in the conflict by supporting Ethiopian government forces. There have been reports of Eritrean troops committing human rights violations in Tigray, contributing to the overall humanitarian crisis. The involvement of Eritrean forces has complicated the situation and raised additional challenges for relief efforts as well as damaged the agricultural system within Tigray.

Sudan: Sudan, to the northwest of Ethiopia, has been directly affected by the Tigray conflict as it received a significant influx of refugees fleeing violence and famine in Tigray. The Sudanese government, along with international humanitarian organizations, has been involved in providing assistance to the displaced populations. Sudan is already under strain from its own internal conflict with the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces, meaning it is difficult to house displaced people from Ethiopia.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Currently there are multiple humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF, EU Civil protection commission and the World Food Program (WFP) working in the Tigray region in Ethiopia, providing humanitarian services. The conflict in Tigray has also been resolved thanks to diplomatic pressure on the TPLF and Ethiopian government by nation's such as the USA and organizations such as the UN and African Union. Resolution of the conflict has allowed for the beginning of restoration of the agricultural sector in Tigray. This, however, has not resolved the blockage of humanitarian aid and resources into the Tigray region meaning many are still left with little access to food. Most aid in Ethiopia has focused on providing immediate relief to food shortages. While this is essential and very much needed, there have been little external efforts placed in finding a long term solution to the repeated droughts and green famines experienced in Ethiopia. Internally however, Ethiopia has invested into things like Climate-smart agricultural practices and a Sustainable Water Management Program which have had varying levels of success.

Possible Solutions For The Issue

Ethiopia is a nation in a constant state of change as the weather and political state of the country can be unpredictable. Ethiopia needs a long term solution in combatting it's degrading soil and constant drought like weather. For this, more funding can be allocated to already existing programs such as the Sustainable Water Management Program in Ethiopia in order to bolster it's effect and provide irrigation needed for agriculture to thrive, even during times of drought. Sustainable farming practices also need to be introduced and reinforced so that Ethiopian land stays fertile and doesn't degrade any further. Additionally, resolving the conflicts within Ethiopian borders is vital for the proper distribution of humanitarian aid during green famines as current tensions between the TPLF and Ethiopian government are not allowing for the proper aid to be provided to the people of Tigray. There also needs to be an investment in healthcare and rural infrastructure, as currently getting healthcare for most people is very difficult with 80% of people living in rural areas. This means transport links need to be constructed for the proper help to be accessible for all people. Some sort of measures also need to be taken place in order to reduce corruption in Ethiopia as it had a score of 38 on 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index which meant a lot of aid intended for victims of green famine to be embezzled and not sent to the correct locations. Better tracking of external aid is needed. Overall, investments need to be made in multiple different sectors of Ethiopia and tensions need to be reduced for the proper humanitarian aid to arrive. This problem needs to be tackled in the long and short term.

Timeline Of Key Events

1888-1892: Great Ethiopian Famine:

Widespread drought, locust infestations, and land disputes led to a devastating famine resulting in a significant loss of life. This famine is often considered one of the deadliest in Ethiopian history.

1973-1974: Wollo Famine:

The failure of the seasonal rains and poor harvests in the Wollo region led to a severe famine. Widespread food shortages and starvation prompted international humanitarian responses.

1983-1985: Ethiopian Famine (Derg Famine):

A combination of factors, including drought, political instability under the Derg regime, and forced resettlement policies, resulted in widespread famine. The Live Aid concerts in 1985 raised global awareness and funds for famine relief in Ethiopia.

2000-2002: Horn of Africa Famine:

Prolonged drought and erratic rainfall affected the Horn of Africa, including parts of Ethiopia. Famine conditions prevailed, leading to food shortages, malnutrition, and humanitarian interventions.

2011: Horn of Africa Famine:

Drought, coupled with conflict and rising food prices, led to a severe famine in the Horn of Africa, affecting Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. The United Nations declared famine in several regions, prompting international aid efforts.

2015-2016: El Niño-Induced Drought:

El Niño contributed to drought conditions in Ethiopia, affecting crop production and food security. The government declared a state of emergency, and humanitarian assistance was mobilized to address the impact on vulnerable populations.

2019: Southern and Eastern Ethiopia Drought:

Drought conditions in southern and eastern Ethiopia led to crop failures and water shortages. The government initiated relief efforts to address food and water insecurity.

2020-Present: Tigray Conflict and Famine:

The effects of conflict in the Tigray region has exacerbated food insecurity, leading to famine conditions. The conflict has restricted humanitarian access, hindering the delivery of aid to affected populations.

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