

Adi Hageray Massacre

Tahtay Adiyabo, Western Tigray, Ethiopia

14° 27' 10.7994" N, 37° 58' 51.6" E

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Incident Date: November 12-18, 2020

Fatalities: 200+

Injured: UNK

Aggressor(s): Ethiopian and
Eritrean soldiers

Victim(s) Profile: Village civilians

This report details the events of the Addi Hageray massacre in Tigray, Ethiopia, from 12th to the 18th of November 2020. We use open source intelligence and satellite data from google maps and earth to collect information on the details of the massacre.

On the 12th of November 2020, Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers attacked the village of Addi Hageray which is located in the Tahtay Adiyabo region of Tigray.

- This attack was part of the western military offensive by Eritrean troops.
- Troops went house to house, shooting unarmed civilians.
- It is estimated 200 people were killed.
- The bodies of those killed were burnt, leaving the location of their burial unclear.

On November 12th, Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers opened fire on the village of Addi Hageray. Like many other massacres during the Tigray War, soldiers reportedly went from house to house, shooting and assaulting civilians. Including young children and the elderly. It is estimated that more than 200 people were killed in this offensive. Eritrean troops occupied Addi Hageray for six days, preventing families from burying their loved ones. As a result, many bodies were left exposed, becoming unrecognisable due to decomposition and being scavenged by animals. In a video uploaded to both Facebook and X, one witness recounts that 126 civilians were killed on the first day alone, leaving the remaining residents in a state of fear and trauma.

Due to the limited availability of verified information, we have been unable to identify any potential grave sites. Open-source intelligence suggests that many of the bodies were burnt, indicating that there may be no formal burial point for many of the victims. In previous massacres across the region, bodies have been buried at nearby churches. Figure 1 shows the

St George Church. Satellite imagery of the surrounding area does not reveal clear ground disturbances consistent with mass graves. However, due to the quality of satellite images and tree cover the site warrants further investigation.



Figure 1: St George's Church – possible burial location. 14° 27' 10.7994" N, 37° 58' 51.6" E

Context analysis

The Tigray war was one of the most severe conflicts occurring at this time. However, due the media blackout imposed by officials, there is not much information or footage from this war. The Tigray war started in November of 2020 when tensions between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the federal government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed¹.

The TPLF were the dominant party in Ethiopia's ruling coalition for nearly 30 years and in 2018 Abiy Ahmed became prime minister, pushed to dissolve the EPRDF and form a new party. The TPLF refused and accused him of centralising power and marginalising Tigrayans. This led to the TPLF retreating to Tigray, where they held local power. In September 2020, the TPLF held its own regional elections, which defied the federal government. The TPLF allegedly attacked a federal army base in Tigray to seize weapons. In response, the federal government launched a military offensive. Joined by Eritrean forces and regional militias, millions of people from both sides were raped, killed and displaced. In November 2022, a ceasefire was signed, but tensions are still high in the region.

Conclusion

This report corroborates reports of large-scale massacres in Addi Hageray between the 12th and 18th of November carried out by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces. These findings indicate high confidence in the occurrence of a targeted civilian massacre and moderate likelihood that St. George's church was used for burials. We recommend further monitoring of the area with high resolution and where possible, interviews with survivors to discover if there is a burial site.

¹ BBC, "Ethiopia's Tigray war: The short, medium and long story," BBC News, June 29, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-54964378>.