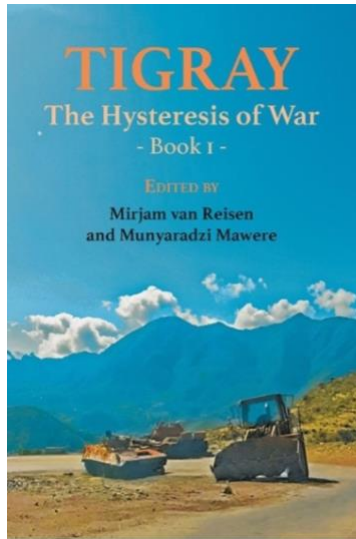


“He had Orders, and His Superiors were Outside”: Strategic Rape as Genocide in Tigray

Gebru Kidanu & A. H. Tefera

Chapter in:

Tigray. The Hysteresis of War. Book 1.



Cite as: Kidanu, G. & Tefera, A. H. (2024). “He had Orders, and His Superiors were Outside”: Strategic Rape as Genocide in Tigray. In: Van Reisen, M. & Mawere, M. (eds.) *Tigray. The Hysteresis of War*, Volume 1. Langaa, Bamenda. Pp. 533-560. Book URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385202452_Tigray_The_Hysteresis_of_War

The Note on Content and Editorial Decisions can be found here: <https://raec.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Note-on-Content-and-Editorial-Decisions-Van-Reisen-Mawere-Tigray-Hysteresis-of-War-Book-1-2024.pdf>

The list of figures in colour can be found here: <https://raec.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Figures-Tigray.-The-Hysteresis-of-War-Volume-1-1.pdf>

Contents

Acknowledgements	xi
Note on Content and Editorial Decisions	xiii
Acronyms	xxii
Timeline of Key Events	xxv
Chapter 1: Yesterday We said Tomorrow: Hysteresis and Panarchy in War	1
<i>Mirjam Van Reisen, Araya Abrha Medbanyie, A.H. Tefera, Daniel Tesfa, Seife Hailu Gebreslassie, Kristina Melicherova, Joëlle Stocker & Munyaradzji Mawere</i>	
Chapter 2: “Game Over”: Key Markers of the Tigray War in Redefining the Region	41
<i>Kristina Melicherová, Mirjam Van Reisen & Daniel Tesfa</i>	
Chapter 3: From Hidden to Open War in Tigray: Structural and Proximate Causes	97
<i>Seife Hailu Gebreslassie & Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	
Chapter 4: Regional War by Design: The Involvement of Eritrea in the Tigray War	141
<i>Daniel Tesfa & Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	
Chapter 5: Weaponising the Media: Exploring the Role of Ethiopian National Media in the Tigray War	191
<i>S. E. Geb & Daniel Tesfa</i>	
Chapter 6: Famine as a Weapon in the Tigray War and the Siege	255
<i>Znabu Hadush Kabsay</i>	
Chapter 7: Bodies for Battle Fields: Systematic Use of Rape as a Weapon of War in Tigray	285
<i>Gebru Kidanu & Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	
Chapter 8: “Vultures were Circling the Areas”: Massacres During the Tigray War	333
<i>Daniel Tesfa, Matteo Bächtold, Rufael Tesfay Gebremichael & Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	

Chapter 9: Throwing Bodies into the Tekeze River: Assessment of Massacres 389
Daniel Tesfa, Matteo Bächtold, Rufael Tesfay Gebremichael & Mirjam Van Reisen

Chapter 10: ‘Followers of the Devil’s Code 666’: The Writing on the Wall of an Intent to Eradicate a People 425
Daniel Tesfa, Mirjam Van Reisen & Araya Abrba Medhanyie

Chapter 11: The Turning Points towards the Unequal Protection of Eritrean Refugees in Ethiopia: From Protection to Abduction 473
Kristina Melicherová

Chapter 12: “He had Orders, and His Superiors were Outside”: Strategic Rape as Genocide in Tigray 533
Gebru Kidanu & A.H. Tefera

Chapter 13: Genocidal Intent in the Tigray War: Establishing Reasonable Grounds Based on Evidence561
A.H. Tefera

About the Authors and Editors 603

“He had Orders, and His Superiors were Outside”:

Strategic Rape as Genocide in Tigray

Gebru Kidanu & A. H. Tefera

ሓቂ ብእግራ እንተቐበርካያ ብርእሳ ትወፅእ።

Any attempt to hide the truth eventually leads to its revelation.

Abstract

This study explores the systematic sexual violence and atrocities against the Tigrayan ethnic group, highlighting deliberate actions such as rape, killings, forced abortions, and the transmission of HIV, perpetrated with strong indications of genocidal intent. These crimes were reportedly executed by the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) and Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) under direct orders. The organised nature of the violence aimed at the long-term destruction of the Tigrayan community’s physical and psychological well-being. In addition to sexual violence, survivors faced other forms of oppression, including restricted access to essential services and destroyed infrastructure, exacerbating their suffering and hindering recovery. The study underscores the severe psychological trauma inflicted, as many witnessed killings and violence, leading to community-wide devastation. It calls for urgent humanitarian intervention, accountability, and justice through international collaboration, emphasising the need for reparations and comprehensive support for survivors. The report criticises the lack of justice in ongoing peace negotiations and stresses the importance of addressing these atrocity crimes under the Rome Statute.

Key words: Tigray war, Ethiopia, Eritrea, strategic rape, sexual violence, genocide, atrocity crimes

Introduction

In war, there are many deadly weapons, but there is one that all men carry with them – their bodies. This weapon is used by forces involved in conflict around the world to attack women and girls and, through them, their communities (Clifford, 2008). When rape is used as a weapon it is random and every woman and other members of the specific group are a target. This is referred to as ‘victim interchangeability’, indicating that the crime is committed against the identity of a person, while no other characteristics matter. Rape is used strategically to install fear, dehumanise a population, undermine communities, break social fabric, and in some cases pollute the bloodline of the victimised population (MacKinnon, 2016).

During genocide and ethnic conflict, women become prime targets because of their cultural position and their importance in the family structure (Seifert, 1993). The experience makes it difficult for survivors to integrate back into society and assume their previous familial and social roles, potentially resulting in societal collapse (Gingerich & Leaning, 2004). Another intention of this violence is to leave women infertile by damaging their reproductive organs and/or ‘purify’ the bloodlines by impregnating the women with babies of the perpetrators, thereby considering them ‘ethnically cleansed’ (French *et al.*, 1998; Baaz & Stern, 2013).

Rape inflicts long-lasting and potentially irreparable psychological trauma on survivors. In the context of ethnic conflict, mass rape not only affects individuals, but also contributes to collective trauma, effectively serving to dismantle and destroy an entire ethnic group (Sharlach, 2000). This rape also takes place in public, in front of family members and the community, with loved ones forced to witness the incident or participate in the act, affecting the social structure and cohesion of family and community (Gingerich & Leaning, 2004; Gottschall, 2004, Van Reisen *et al.*, 2017; Kidanu & Van Reisen, 2024). These incidents have happened in Bosnia, where family members were compelled to commit acts of rape against each other or forced to witness the rape of a family member (Diken & Laustsen, 2005).

The transmission of HIV/AIDS through rape is used to reduce the number of the targeted population. It can also be unintentional, when violent attacks lead to the exchange of bodily fluids (Reid-Cunningham, 2008; World Health Organization (WHO), 2000; Harvard Humanitarian Initiative & Oxfam International, 2010).

Sexual violence in the Tigray war

Since the war in Tigray started on 3 November 2020 (ICHREE, 2023), there have been several reports published stating that rape was used as a weapon of war. The evidence lists the perpetrators as members of the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF), Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), Amhara Militia, and Special Forces (Kidanu & Van Reisen, 2024; Varia, 2021; Fisseha *et al.*, 2023; Physicians for Human Rights, 2023). During this time, Tigrayan women were the primary targets, including young girls, elderly women, and pregnant and lactating women (Dyan, 2021; Amnesty International, 2021; Varia, 2021; Mcveigh, 2021; United Nations Human Rights Council, 2022).

No place was safe for the women of Tigray, they were attacked in their homes, on the road, and on the way to school. They were exposed to multiple forms of violence (Dyan, 2021). Women and girls were gang raped, used for sexual slavery, and forced to perform anal and oral sex, which are taboo in the culture bringing them shame and feelings of guilt. Women had foreign objects including hot metal, nails, and socks logged into their vaginas. These acts were performed in front of family members, neighbours, and even in public. This led to trauma among both survivors and their families and communities, leading to the destruction of the social fabric (Dyan, 2021; Amnesty International, 2021; Varia, 2021; Kassa, 2021; Mcveigh, 2021). Family members, including young children, have tragically been victims of sexual violence as well. They have been forced to witness the rapes and assaults of their mothers or other female relatives. The consequences of these incidents are far-reaching, causing long-term harm and trauma not only within generations but also between different communities (International Commission of Human Rights Experts in Ethiopia, 2023).

Survivors also endured emotional abuse. Ethnic slurs were used; perpetrators told them that they were traitors and unworthy. Other descriptions from survivors indicate that rape was used to humiliate and dehumanise with a special intent to destroy the ethnic group, indicting genocidal intent (Sela, 2021; Dyan, 2021). They reported being told by the perpetrators “[we will] clean you all” we will “cleanse your identity”, and that no one would hold them accountable as they were ordered by their superiors to do so (Dyan, 2021). Aljazeera interviewed a woman who had hot metal inserted into her vagina and was told “A Tigrayan womb should never give birth” (Kassa, 2021; see also Amnesty International, 2021; Varia, 2021).

Traces of intent were also hidden in the dark of the inside body. A Tigrayan doctor treating a rape survivor found a piece of paper held in a plastic sheet from within her womb. The rape was allegedly perpetrated by Eritrean soldiers. The message written on the piece of paper is translated as follows:

Deki Erena [‘we Eritreans’] are always Heroes.

That is how we do! And we will still keep doing this. We want the wombs of Tigrayan women to be infertile.

We are still seeking to revenge you for what you did to us in the 1990s.

On the backside of the piece of paper, the message reads:

We Eritreans, people from Asmara are Heroes

How on Earth can you forget what you have done to us in 09. Even if you do forget it, we will not forget. From now onwards any Tigrayan will not give birth, will not have a baby from a Tigrayan.

We shall make sure you know and we will show you how unforgiving we are. So, don’t leave any [Tigrayan] woman alive from now onwards: just kill them all.

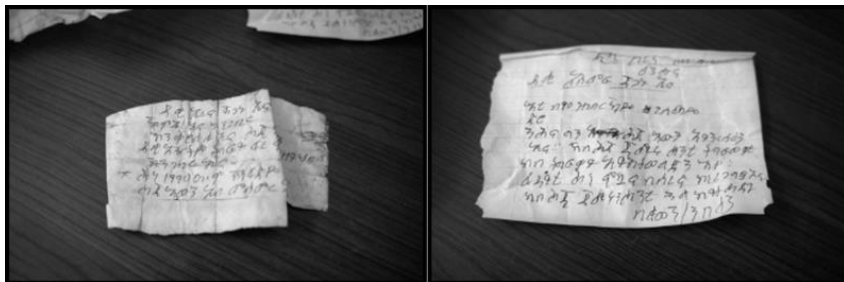


Figure 12.1. Messages found wrapped in plastic in a woman’s womb

(First published by

<https://x.com/XimenaBorrazas/status/179542778393570968>) (Retrieved from patient’s file, saved under special protection) (Van Reisen *et al.*, 2024)

The message carried in the womb of the woman is a clear message of intent. The statement “We want the womb of Tigrayan women to be infertile” speaks to an intent of genocidal proportion.

The womb of this survivor, who carried this message, had also been stuffed with stones, which the doctor removed. In addition to the pain of the rape, survivors were subjugated to further hurdles, as they were not able to access services and did not receive adequate support to deal with their trauma and pain, as health facilities were damaged, and the blockade and siege stopped support from coming into Tigray. They were effectively closed off from the world due to the communication blackout (Human Rights Watch, 2021; Mcveigh, 2021; International Commission of Human Rights Experts in Ethiopia, 2023).

Women who were able to visit hospitals came with bruises, stab wounds, burns, and cuts on their bodies because of the physical violence that accompanied the rape. Others came with psychological and reproductive health issues. After the rape, women suffered from fistula, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and miscarriages (Human Rights Watch, 2021; Dyan, 2021).

Survivors were subjected to threats of additional sexual and gender-based violence, coerced impregnation, intentional HIV transmission, and warnings of reproductive harm by the perpetrators (International Commission of Human Rights Experts in Ethiopia, 2023;

Gebremichael *et al.*, 2023). Gang rape was reportedly used to hinder women from giving birth in Tigray. Due to the extent of rape that took place in Tigray and considering the fertility rate of four in five generations, it was estimated that there would be a loss of 3.2 million offspring (Gebremichael *et al.*, 2023).

A concerning aspect is that only a small percentage of survivors received the necessary medical and psychological care. This lack of access to healthcare services is attributed to the destruction and looting of most health facilities in the region. This indicates the dire situation faced by survivors of sexual violence, leaving many without the essential support and care needed to address their physical and mental health challenges. The victims of sexual and physical violence were not limited to a specific age group or gender, as underage girls, elderly women, and men were also targeted. (Fisseha *et al.*, 2023).

EDF, ENDF, Amhara Special Forces, Afar Special Forces, and Fano militias employed dehumanising and derogatory language before, during, and after engaging in acts of sexual violence. Survivors were singled out based on both their ethnicity and gender, reflecting a systematic strategy to instil fear, displace, and inflict punishment upon the Tigrayan community. Certain statements from the perpetrators hinted at a potential intention to harm the Tigrayan population (International Commission of Human Rights Experts in Ethiopia, 2023).

Although the weaponised rape that took place in the region has been the most talked about aspect of the war, there is not much evidence coming from academic researchers on the ground. There have been news articles, books, and reports written on the subject, but only a few scientific research papers from academic researchers on the ground have been published. This is understandable, given the most sensitive nature of it, the importance of not harming survivors again, and the issue of having the trust of the survivors. The siege that was imposed over the two-year period of the war presented an almost insurmountable challenge to (safe) travel for academic researchers and anyone belonging to the Tigray community.

This research builds on the documentation of the modus operandi of sexual violence perpetrated in the Tigray war (Kidanu & Van Reisen, 2024) to further investigate the intent behind the sexual violence in the region and the consequences it had for survivors. This study presents important documentation on the subject; the data of this study was collected during the active period of war, and the additional elongated siege and blockade.

The main research question investigated was: *What patterns can be identified in sexual violence and rape perpetrated on Tigrayan women during the war in Tigray and could these constitute genocide?* The general question was split into two sub-questions:

Sub-Q 1: *Were there systematic or widespread instances of rape targeting Tigrayan women during the war in Tigray?*

Sub-Q 2: *To what extent do these patterns of rape align with the legal definitions and criteria for genocide, as outlined in international conventions and jurisprudence?*

Rape committed with genocidal intent

During the Rwandan genocide of 1994, a significant number of women experienced sexual violence, with estimates ranging from 250,000 to 500,000 cases. Systematic rape was a strategic component of the Hutu extremist plan to exterminate the Tutsi minority population. This involved collective and repeated sexual assaults with brutal violence, public humiliation, and torture (Mukamana *et al.*, 2018). The rape in Rwanda was designed to kill Tutsi women through transmission of sexually transmitted infections like HIV/AIDS, using sharp objects as a weapon for rape, public humiliation, collective and repeated sexual violence (Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

Similarly, the first Yugoslavian genocide in the early 1990s resulted in the rape of approximately 10,000 to 60,000 Muslim and Croatian women. In the 1971 civil war in Bangladesh, it is believed that Pakistani soldiers raped between 200,000 to 400,000 Bangladeshi women (Sharlach, 2000). In Darfur, a militia group called Janjaweed has been accused of committing systematic attacks against civilians in Sudan, with rape being one of the violence committed against women

survivors. Witnesses said that rape was used against them in hopes to destroy their bloodline, impregnate them with babies and extinguish their bloodline from Sudan, humiliate the men making them feel weak as they could not defend their women and leave long term trauma because they believed in having been raped for multiple reasons and sustain long-lasting trauma among families and the community. Children born out of this rape are labelled as Janjaweed babies or Arab babies and stigmatised in the community (Abdullahi, 2016). Women are exposed to multiple consequences post-rape. They are stigmatised, because culturally rape is seen as taboo, and because of the notion of virginity and purity, these women are seen as damaged and are disowned by their husbands or family, especially those with children born out of rape (Abdullahi, 2016).

Correspondingly, in recent incidents, Sudanese women and girls in Darfur were highly vulnerable to violence. Additionally, migrant and refugee women and girls from Eritrea and South Sudan, are also severely impacted. The experts from the United Nations report identified the perpetrators as men associated with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the former Janjaweed, who are allegedly employing rape and sexual violence to punish and terrorize communities. Additionally, some of the documented incidents of rape appear to have ethnic and racial motivations (UN experts alarmed by reported widespread use of rape and sexual violence against women and girls by RSF in Sudan.).

Physical and psychological consequences follow this violence. In a study conducted by International Alert, 91% of participants were found to have been suffering ongoing impacts of rape (Ohambe *et al.*, 2004). Women and girls who survive these horrific acts are left with physical effects, like gynaecological problems, haemorrhages, rectal injury, and sexually transmitted infections like HIV (Clifford, 2008). The violent nature of the attacks, and the use of foreign objects to perform them, lead to multiple physical disabilities like fistula, internal bleeding, incontinence, and other life-threatening conditions (Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

Recognising rape with genocidal intent

One of the most visible long-term effects of war rape is the number of children that are born due to the rape. Tens of thousands of children around the world are born because of rape (Gettleman, 2007). The mother carries lifelong pain in the decision to keep the child or not. Some mothers have a continuous love-hate relationship with her child, which can leave her with feelings of guilt. The children also view themselves as the source of suffering to their mother and hate what their father did to them (Rimmer, 2006). Women can also be seen as traitors in their communities and left out of the social, political, and economic spheres. These consequences leave a lasting scar on the community (Clifford, 2008).

It is only recently that rape has been recognised as a tool for genocide, during the prosecution of Jean-Paul Akayesu in the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda. (Human Rights Watch, 1998). The wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda were characterised by systematic mass rape of women (Shanks & Schull, 2000). Sharlach finds that the Genocide Convention does not explicitly address sexual violence as a distinct crime of genocide, that the intent to destroy a population based on gender should hold the same legal status under international law as the intent to destroy a population based on ethnicity, nation, or religion (Sharlach, 2000).

The acknowledgment of rape as a form of genocide holds significance in the pursuit of justice, reparations, and reconciliation among the communities involved – comprising victims, survivors, and perpetrators. This recognition not only serves as a preventive measure, but also establishes the gravity of rape as both a war crime and a tool for genocidal intent. Categorising such acts as atrocity crimes falling under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court reinforces the commitment to accountability and the deterrence of such heinous acts in conflicts.

Sexual violence and rape as genocide

The Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, established by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948, defines genocide as the intentional commission of any of the

following acts to destroy, either wholly or partially, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group:

- (a) Killing members of the group
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

Rape, in the absence of fatal consequences, can potentially be categorised as a crime of genocide. It is not the crime as such, but the intention of the crime, that critically defines it as genocide. As stated in the Genocide Convention of 1948, the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental harm upon members of a group and/or deliberately subjecting the group to conditions of life that aim to physically destroy it, either partially or entirely, falls under the definition of genocide (United Nations General Assembly, 1948; Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998).

‘Genocidal rape’ is rape inflicted to destroy people and their culture (Jelínková, 2018). Catharine Mackinnon said:

...this is not rape out of control. It is rape under control. It is also rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape to kill, and to make the victims wish they were dead. It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, rape to make you leave your home and never want to go back. It is rape to be seen and heard and watched and told to others, rape as spectacle. It is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people. (MacKinnon, 2007)

This study adopts the criteria of genocide as its framework. It aims to analyse whether the acts of rape that occurred during the Tigray war were carried out with the specific intent of genocide. By using this framework, the study aims to explore the evidence and circumstances surrounding the instances of rape to determine if they were part of a systematic pattern to destroy the Tigrayan population.

Methodology

This study was conducted in Mekelle and Shire, Tigray: a region located in the northern part of Ethiopia, known for its historical significance, and is characterised by its high-plateau terrain, with elevations typically ranging from 5,000 to 11,000 feet (1,500 to 3,300 meters). The region is drained by the Tekeze and Gash (Mareb) rivers. To the east, you find the Denakil Plain, which includes the Kobar Sink, reaching a depth of approximately 380 feet (116 meters) below sea level.

This study was conducted as explorative ethnographic research with a phenomenological design, aiming to understand how women who experienced rape during the Tigray conflict perceived the phenomenon. The primary data was collected through 20 interviews, including 19 survivors of rape and one male caregiver. The interviews took place from June 2022 to December 2022, during the war in Tigray. Only female survivors of rape were interviewed (this is not an indication that there were no male survivors, but it was not feasible under this study, although it is still an area that needed), and all participants were adults except for one child who had consent from her guardian to participate. This study targeted exclusively survivors of rape.

The study was conducted in multiple sites, including two sites in Mekelle and one in Shire, Tigray. The initial interviews were conducted in Shire with eight women living in camps for internally displaced people (IDP) in 2022. An interview guide was used for these initial interviews, but was later modified after analysing the first eight interviews. An additional 12 survivors were interviewed in Mekelle at two locations: Ayder Comprehensive Specialized Hospital's one-stop centre and a safe house that provides services to survivors of rape.

The participants for this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The Regional Health Bureau and Women's Association Tigray were contacted for support and coordinators. The researcher (KGGK) had worked at the one-stop centre for over a year, providing psychosocial support and making observations. The safe house is a highly secure area, and only authorised personnel are

allowed to enter. Therefore, a female psychiatric nurse working at the safe house, supported with conducting interviews within the safehouse.

In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data, ensuring its quality by preparing a field guide based on the literature and previous interview experience of the researcher. The guide was translated from English to Tigrinya and back to English for consistency checking. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: sociodemographic data of the survivor and information about the sexual violence incident and its consequences. Audio recording devices were used for data collection, which was transcribed simultaneously during collection.

The confidentiality of information was maintained by not using personal data, survivors' data was deidentified by not using the survivor's name, and not mentioning the specific 'woreda' or 'kebele'¹ where the incident took place. Data completeness was checked daily, with assistance from a trained professional on interview techniques. The collected data was transcribed, coded, and categorised using Atlas Ti software, thematically analysed, and presented through narrative descriptions.

Ethical clearance was obtained from Mekelle University College of Health Sciences before conducting the study MU-IRB 1978/2022. Despite challenges due to regulations put in place after Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) regained control of Mekelle in June 2022 to protect survivor data, ethical clearance and support letters allowed for the continuation of interviews.

Detailed information about the study was explained to all participants before starting data collection. The study process was based on the careful consideration of basic ethical principles of, respect for a person's autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, confidentiality, and justice. Verbal and written consent was obtained from each participant before starting the data collection after carefully explaining and making sure participants understood the objectives,

¹ Administrative units of Ethiopia (woreda = district; kebele = ward).

risks, and benefits of the study. Participants were told that they could withdraw consent and stop the interview at any time.

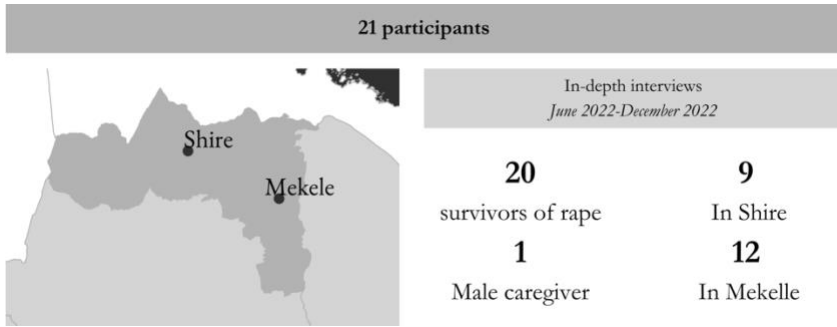


Figure 12.2. Data collected and used in this study

The study acknowledges limitations in terms of data availability and the challenges of conducting research in conflict-affected regions. These factors may have influenced the completeness and accuracy of the findings. Future research should focus on expanding the scope of the study to include a larger sample size and exploring the long-term consequences of sexual violence and rape on survivors.

Results

Based on the in-depth data analysis from the study, the following results were identified in the following thematic areas:

- Acts committed with intent to destroy
- Killing of members of the Tigrayan ethnic group
- Serious bodily or mental harm to survivors of sexual violence
- Deliberately blocking access to essential services
- Measures intended to prevent births within the Tigrayan community

The results are described below.

Acts committed with the intent to destroy.

From the experiences narrated by the participants in this study, all of them describe that this happened to them because of their identity.

They described being told this during the act. One survivor shared the following:

One of them came to me and said that he doesn't want to do this, but he had orders, and his superiors were outside, he said if I pretended that I was raped then he doesn't have to do it too. But then two other soldiers came in and it happened. (Interviewee II10, interview with KGK, in-depth interview face to face, June 2022)

Another survivor said soldiers apologised for her attack after she told them she was not Tigrayan:

The next day I was so furious, I just wasn't thinking straight. I went to their superior who was residing nearby and told him what happened. He didn't seem to care so then I lied and told him I wasn't Tigrayan. My husband had an Ambara Identity and we lived in the Ambara region, so I have the ID my name also doesn't give me away. After I showed him that he got mad and got them all in a line and asked: 'Who did this to our own? He asked them to identify the perpetrators. He even gave me some cash after I told him they had destroyed my belongings. But I did not want that money. I knew it would be the end of me. The Eritreans who were jointly occupying the area saw this and came to my house and raped me again (crying). (Interviewee II05, in-depth interview with Kidanu, face to face, 15 June 2022)

A similar experience is recorded by another interviewee, showing that the identity of some of the women was checked before the act:

They inquired about my ethnicity, questioning if I was Tigrayan. Feeling compelled to tell the truth, I admitted to being Tigrayan. Their reaction was anger, leading to the horrific act of rape. (Interviewee II20, in-depth interview with Kidanu, face to face, 3 December 2022)

In a distressing account, a survivor who questioned the soldiers regarding the reasons for her rape was callously instructed to attribute it to the unfortunate circumstances of her Tigrayan ethnicity. Another survivor, displaying remarkable courage, pleaded with her assailant to use a condom. Shockingly, the soldier responded by revealing their purposeful intent in the act of rape – to impregnate her and contribute to the proliferation of their racial group.

Another survivor was forced to abort her child during the rape despite begging them to stop when she started bleeding excessively.

They refused to stop and told her that was what they had wanted from the start. Many women said: we are unaware of the actions that caused them to harbour such intense hatred towards us. One survivor describes her experience this way:

They gathered us in our neighbourhood and told us that we would have to gather our things and leave, they said: we don't belong here. So, everyone went home to collect what we could carry, it was clear that we didn't have a choice in the matter. My friend, who knew about what had happened to me came along to help me pack my things. She was in the back, packing when four soldiers came to the house. Right away, they started to mock me they said, 'You are a brave junta, you are not scared.' I started to beg them, to please leave me alone but they started beating me. They didn't stop, they even pulled out their knife and gun. I felt so helpless. And then three of them started to take turns raping me, and later left me there to die.
(Interviewee II09, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 23 June 2022)

Many of them said that the EDF told them that they were there to seek revenge, to destroy them. They said that they were told Tigray would be taken back over 20 years and would suffer as they had:

Why did you Tigrians wait for us in your homes and not on the battlefields? We are here to take everything you own and take you back 22 years. (Interviewee II03, interview with Kidanu, face to face, June 2022)

Another participant described a similar experience:

We are here to bring you back 20 years, just as you did to us. (Interviewee II06, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 17 June 2022)

From the experience narrated by the participants in their story, 19 survivors described in the interview that the violence happened to them because of their Tigrayan identity – because they were told so during the act.

Killing members of the Tigrayan ethnic group

While all 20 participants in this study experienced sexual, physical, and emotional violence, that was not the end of their suffering, they also witnessed traumatic events and experienced loss. They saw family members killed and found bodies of loved ones:

My older brother, brother-in-law, and husband's brother-in-law were all mercilessly killed in a single night. The sight of their lifeless bodies drenched in their blood is

etched in my memory forever. However, despite our grief and the instinct to give our loved ones a dignified burial, we were cruelly denied this basic human right. For two agonizing weeks, we were forced to endure the heart-wrenching experience of keeping watch over their remains, ensuring that they were not desecrated by wild animals. The pain and sorrow we felt were unbearable. It was a constant battle between our desire to honour our family members and the oppressive forces that sought to strip us of our dignity. Eventually, with the support of our resilient community, we were granted permission to finally lay our loved ones to rest. It was a bittersweet moment to provide them the final farewell they deserved. (Interviewee II09, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 23 June 2022)

The study found evidence of killings targeting members of the Tigrayan ethnic group. These killings may be part of a broader strategy to diminish or eliminate the group's presence. A burial is of the most important (religious) order in Tigray and the denial of a burial left deep marks on the relatives who felt they had failed in their duty, even if this was beyond their control. The resulting consecration is a serious undermining of the social and religious fabric of Tigrayan society.

Serious bodily or mental harm to survivors of sexual violence

Some women described being raped while family members were present to witness the incident or in proximity so they could hear:

I told everyone that we had to leave somewhere safe and secure, but my husband wouldn't listen. He insisted on staying behind and looking after the house. My children didn't want to leave either, so I left with other family members. Hours later I returned to the house – it just didn't feel right to be without them. The first thing I saw was my husband's dead body lying on the floor. I was so afraid; I was sure they would come back so I got my children and started running when we ran into Eritrean soldiers. They raped me in front of my 18-year-old son, he tried to break himself free so he could try to help, but they were just too strong. He watched them rape me one by one. He kept screaming, asking them to leave me alone, but I think this just added to their pleasure. (Interviewee 17, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 25 August 2022)

Reports of sexual violence would also include incidents of physical torture like beating, cutting, and caustic burns:

I was raped by three Eritrean soldiers. But that was not all, they put hot metal on my skin and repeatedly hit me on the head. I have burn scars all over my back, my head, and between my thighs and vagina. And then they poured some type of chemical on my head, I can't explain to you what it was, but I've been bald ever since. My hair hasn't been able to grow back, that's why I cover it this way. (Interviewee II08, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 15 June 2022)

The study uncovered evidence of serious bodily or mental harm inflicted upon survivors of sexual violence. This suggests that sexual violence was used to cause significant physical and psychological suffering within the Tigrayan community.

Deliberately blocking access to essential services

Interviews conducted with survivors indicate that their physical and mental condition continued to deteriorate significantly following their attack due to other compounding factors. These factors included displacement, witnessing other violent incidents, and the lack of access to post-rape care services mainly because of the systematic attack on the region's health system; resulting in survivors not being able to access basics like medical care, psychosocial support, and legal services. This was exacerbated by the siege on the region that discontinued basic services such as banking, and telecommunication and a blockade on aid and other basic items such as fuel.

The IDP site is not safe for us. The sleeping corridors are not separate for women and men. We are at risk for further violence, we are not able to access our accounts because the banks are closed. I am still wearing the cloth I was wearing the night they raped me (crying). It reminds me of what happened to me every day, but I can't even get a change of clothes. I can't feed my children. And as a woman you know I need things to clean up with. Pads, soap, water but they are all inaccessible. (Interviewee II03, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 11 June 2022)

Survivors were very stressed due to the circumstances of the siege, and the lack of basic items as safe places for them to look after themselves, their children, and relatives and care for their health and recovery. Survivors whose families were separated suffered from further anxiety and stress due to the communications blackout that

had made it impossible to trace missing family members. Many could not find means of transport to reach health centres and those that managed the long and difficult journeys would not be able to get sufficient care due to the destruction of the facilities, lack of supplies, and displacement of professionals.

The study documented deliberate actions to block access to essential services for the Tigrayan population/women. This included limiting or denying access to healthcare, humanitarian aid, and other necessary resources.

Measures intended to prevent birth within the Tigrayan group.

A survivor who was pregnant at the time of her assault said that the attack resulted in a miscarriage and described how she was left to bleed to death in the forest before her son finally found her and took her to a health facility:

I told them I was pregnant; they did not care. I was four months pregnant, and I miscarried. I was drenched in blood while they continued to take turns raping me, I lost my husband and my unborn child that day. (Interviewee II17, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 25 August 2022)

While others were told that they wanted the survivors to contract HIV:

They were raping me in a group. I think I heard one of them say “Get the one with the disease”. I begged them to use protection at least, but they refused and said I didn’t know what they had planned for me and laughed. (Interviewee II13, interview with Kidanu, face to face, 20 August 2022)

These narratives demonstrate a systematic and targeted approach to inflict harm on Tigrayan women, including intentional transmission of HIV and causing miscarriages. The level of violence and disregard for the survivors’ well-being suggests a calculated effort to undermine and dehumanise them physically and psychologically. Such actions not only cause immediate harm but also have long-lasting physical, emotional, and societal consequences for the survivors and the community.

Discussion

In this study, the objective was to investigate patterns of sexual violence and rape perpetrated on women during the war in Tigray and to determine if these incidents could constitute genocide. The findings of the study strongly relate to the framework of genocide as defined by the United Nations. The acts of violence perpetrated against the Tigrayan ethnic group align with several elements of the definition, demonstrating a deliberate intent to destroy the group, either partially or entirely. Sexual violence was one tool used to perpetrate the intent and this was communicated to the victims. The only element which the study did not find was the forcible transfer of children from the Tigrayan group to another group.

The results demonstrate a systematic targeting of women during the Tigray war, with deliberate actions aimed at causing severe harm and trauma. These findings are in line with reports from Amnesty International and the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia. The reports describe the systematic nature of the violence that took place in Tigray (International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia 2023; Amnesty International, 2021). These results confirm the findings published by Kahsay *et al.* (2024), who collected individual experiences of victims of rape in the Tigray war. These narrations also pointed to the mental state of genocidal intent.

The destruction of property, denial of resources, and displacement further exacerbated the physical and mental well-being of survivors. Survivors' testimonies highlight the presence of a systematic and strategic approach to rape, with genocidal intent. They have reported being subjected to dehumanising language, such as being labelled as threats and unworthy, and told that their wombs should never give birth again. These accounts shed light on the deliberate intention to not only inflict physical harm, but also to target the reproductive capacity, affecting future generations of Tigrayan women (Sela, 2021; Dyan, 2021, Kassa, 2021). The generational loss is estimated at 3.2 million people (Gebremichael *et al.*, 2023).

The testimonies reveal instances of killings and violent deaths among the Tigrayan population. This aligns with the first element of the definition of genocide, indicating the intentional targeting and killing of individuals based on their ethnic identity. The interviewees reported that the perpetrators were Eritrean troops of the EDF and Ethiopian troops of the ENDF. Both the EDF and ENDF were operating under military command structures and the consideration of the intent expressed in the acts of sexual violence committed cannot be divorced from the instructions under which the military was sent into the arena of the war in Tigray (Kidanu & Van Reisen, 2024, Fisseha *et al.*, 2023; Gebregziabher *et al.*, 2022; Physicians for Human Rights, 2023; International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, 2023).

The study reveals severe physical and mental harm, including rape, physical abuse, intentional starvation, verbal assault, and emotional abuse inflicted upon Tigrayan individuals. These acts of violence contribute to the serious bodily and mental harm experienced by the group, fitting the second element of the genocide definition. This aligns with findings of studies done in South Sudan, where survivors of sexually experienced similar acts leading UN experts to be alarmed by the reported widespread use of rape and sexual violence against women and girls by RSF in Sudan (OHCHR, 2023).

Multiple researcher and reports on Tigray contain findings supporting those of the current study, that alongside the physical and psychological pain of rape, survivors in Tigray faced additional suffering due to limited access to services and inadequate support caused by the siege, blockade and destruction of essential infrastructure. The deliberate siege, blockade, and destruction of essential infrastructure in the Tigray region contributed to conditions of life aimed at physically destroying the group. The closure of banks, communication blackout, lack of transportation, and destruction of health facilities hindered access to essential services and contributed to the deterioration of the population's well-being. This aligns closely with the third element of the genocide definition: deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about their destruction, in whole or in part. The damage of health facilities

and the blockade imposed on the region prevented necessary assistance. Communication blackouts further isolated survivors from outside aid. Disturbingly, only a small percentage of survivors received essential medical and psychological care, as most health facilities were destroyed or looted. This lack of access highlights the critical challenges faced by survivors in addressing their physical and mental health needs. The victims of sexual and physical violence spanned various age groups and genders, with underage girls, elderly women, and men also being targeted (Varia, 2021; Mcveigh, 2021).

This study also found that there were measures intended to prevent births within the Tigrayan group, including the deliberate use of rape and the intentional transmission of HIV, forced abortions during the act of rape, which aligns with the fourth element of genocide and with various research across the globe and in Tigray. There is documented evidence worldwide showing that the transmission of HIV/AIDS through rape is used to reduce the number of the targeted community (Reid-Cunningham, 2008; WHO, 2000; Harvard Humanitarian Initiative & Oxfam International, 2010). In the Rwandan genocide, there were experiences designed to kill Tutsi women through the transmission of sexually transmitted infections like HIV/AIDS (Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

The findings of this study align with existing literature on the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and genocide. Studies have documented similar instances in other conflict-affected regions, highlighting the devastating impact on women and their communities. The research questions were answered by uncovering the deliberate targeting of women through sexual violence and rape. However, limitations exist due to the challenges of accessing comprehensive data in conflict zones, limited study areas, and participants. The findings highlight that there is an urgent need for comprehensive support systems, including healthcare, psychosocial services, and legal assistance, for survivors. The study also contributes to the broader field of research on sexual violence in conflict zones.

Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the widespread sexual violence and other atrocities committed against the Tigrayan ethnic group during the conflict in the Tigray region. The acts described include systematic rape, killings, and serious bodily or mental harm, all of which are framed as part of a deliberate and coordinated campaign with genocidal intent. This campaign aimed to destroy the Tigrayan community, as evidenced by forced abortions, the intentional transmission of HIV, and other acts of brutality targeting Tigrayans specifically for their ethnic identity.

Survivors reported that perpetrators, including members of the Eritrean military (EDF) and the Ethiopian military (ENDF), carried out these acts under orders from their superiors. The violence was not random, but highly organised, with the explicit goal of inflicting long-term damage on the Tigrayan community's physical and psychological integrity. In addition to sexual violence, the report details other forms of oppression, such as blocking access to essential services, enforcing a communication blackout, destroying healthcare facilities, and closing banks. These actions exacerbated the suffering of the victims, making recovery and accessing help exceedingly difficult.

The findings highlight the psychological and social consequences of these atrocities. Many survivors witnessed the killing of family members and were often forced to participate in or observe acts of (sexual) violence, leading to profound trauma. This has severely damaged the social fabric of the community, causing immense psychological trauma and feelings of guilt and helplessness among the survivors.

This chapter concludes with a call for immediate humanitarian intervention in Tigray. It urges international organisations, governments, and NGOs to collaborate in providing emergency aid, establishing support systems for survivors, and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable through thorough investigations and fair trials. The document also emphasises the need for preventive measures against future gender-based violence, promoting gender

equality, and ensuring the active participation of women in peacebuilding processes to achieve sustainable peace and justice. It stresses the importance of bringing perpetrators to justice, offering reparations to victims, and ensuring a comprehensive approach to supporting survivors, including medical, psychological, and legal aid.

In conclusion, the lack of accountability and justice after the Tigray war is remarkable, particularly noting that ongoing peace negotiations have failed to address the role of the Eritrean military and have not included provisions for addressing these atrocity crimes. Rape, as committed with both the intent and actions to commit genocide, constitutes a severe violation under the Rome Statute and calls for international intervention.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the women who entrusted us with their stories, as well as to our colleagues and friends for sharing their valuable input and perspectives. Special thanks to Mekelle University for providing a supportive research environment. We thank the colleagues of the Research Network GAIC for comments received following a presentation.

Authors' contributions

The first author designed the research and implemented the study. This work has been carried out as part of a PhD study. The second author contributed on the legal argumentation of the chapter.

Ethical considerations

This research was carried out under ethical clearance obtained from Mekelle University, reference number MU_IRB 1978/2022. Tilburg University has also provided ethical clearance. This research was carried out under ethical clearance obtained from Tilburg University Identification code: REDC 2020.139 titled “Cultural Dimensions of Meaning-making and Agenda-setting”.

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the ‘Note on content and editorial decisions’ (Book 1).

References

- Abdullahi, F. (2016). *Rape as a weapon of war in Darfur*. [Master's Thesis, University of San Francisco].
- Amnesty International. (2004). *Sudan, Darfur: Rape as a weapon of war: Sexual violence and its consequences*.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/076/2004/en/>
- Amnesty International. (2021, August 21). *Ethiopia: Troops and militia rape, abduct women and girls in Tigray conflict*.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/ethiopia-troops-and-militia-rape-abduct-women-and-girls-in-tigray-conflict-new-report/> (Accessed in February 2024).
- Baaz, M. E., & Stern, M. (2013). *Sexual violence as a weapon of war?: Perceptions, prescriptions, problems in the Congo and beyond*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Clifford, C. (2008, May 5-7). *Rape as a weapon of war and its long-term effects on victims and society*. [Paper presentation]. 7th Global Conference Violence and the Contexts of Hostility, Budapest, Hungary.
- Diken, B., & Laustsen, C. B. (2005). Becoming subject: Rape as a weapon of war. *Body & Society*, 11(1), 111-128.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X05049853>
- Dyan, M. (2021, August 10). What rape as a weapon of war' in Tigray really means. *World Peace Foundation*.
<https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2021/08/10/what-rape-as-a-weapon-of-war-in-tigray-really-means/> (Accessed in February 2022).
- Fisseha, G., Gebrehiwot, T. G., Gebremichael, M. W., Wahdey, S., Meles, G. G., Gezae, K. E., Legesse, A. Y., Asgedom, A. A., Tsadik, M., Woldemichael, A., Gebreyesus, A., Abebe, H. T., Haile, Y. A., Gezahegn, S., Aregawi, M., Berhane, K. T., Godefay, H., Mulugeta, A. (2023). War-related sexual and gender-based violence in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia: a community-based study. *BMJ global health*, 8(7).
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2022-010270>
- French, S.G., Teays, W., & Purdy, L.M. (eds). (1998). *Violence against women: Philosophical perspectives*. Cornell University Press.
- Gebregziabher, M., Amdeselassie, F., Esayas, R., Abebe, Z., Silvia, H., Teklehaimanot, A. A., Korte, J.E., Pearce, J. L., & Cochran, J. J. (2022). Geographical distribution of the health crisis of war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. *BMJ Global Health*, 7(4), e008475.
<https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/7/4/e008475.full.pdf>
- Gebremichael, M. W., Gebremariam, B., Mitiku, M., Hadush, Z., Tesfay, B., Gerezgiher, A., & Alemu, M. G. (2023). Rape survivors' experience in Tigray: a qualitative study. *BMC Women's Health*, 23(1), 372.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-023-02502-0>

- Gettleman, J. (2007, October 7). Rape epidemic raises trauma of Congo war. *New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/07/world/africa/07congo.html>
- Gingerich, T., & Leaning, J. (2004). The use of rape as a weapon of war in the conflict in Darfur, Sudan. Boston, MA: *Program on Humanitarian Crises and Human Rights, François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health*.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/use-rape-weapon-war-conflict-darfur-sudan>
- Gottschall, J. (2004). Explaining wartime rape. *Journal of Sex Research*, 41(2), 129–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490409552221>
- Harvard Humanitarian Initiative & Oxfam International. (2010). *Now the World is Without Me: An Investigation of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*. https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/DRC-sexual-violence-2010-04_2.pdf
- Human Rights Watch. (1998, September 2). *Human Rights Watch applauds Rwanda rape verdict*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/1998/09/02/human-rights-watch-applauds-rwanda-rape-verdict> (Accessed on 16 February 2024).
- Human Rights Watch. (2021, November 9). “I always remember that day”: Access to services for survivors of gender-based violence in Ethiopia’s Tigray Region”. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/11/09/i-always-remember-day/access-services-survivors-gender-based-violence-ethiopia> (accessed 16 February 2024)
- International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE). (2023). Comprehensive investigative findings and legal determinations. A/HRC/54/CRP.3. Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. Human Rights Council.
- Jelínková, E. (2018). *The strategic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in genocide and in ethnic/religious conflicts and a case study on the use of sexual slavery by ISIL within the context of the most recent Yazidi genocide in Iraq* [Master’s Thesis, Utrecht University].
- Kahsay, R., Kahsay, R. & Keeble, S. (2024) *In Plain Sight. Second edition: Women seeking justice*. Eleanor Press.
- Kassa, L. (2021, April 21). A Tigrayan womb should never give birth’: Rape in Tigray. *Aljazeera*.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/21/a-tigrayan-womb-should-never-give-birth-rape-in-ethiopia-tigray> (Accessed on 1 May 2023)
- Kidanu, G. & Van Reisen, M. (2024). Bodies for battle fields: Systematic use of rape as a weapon of war in Tigray. In: Van Reisen, M. & Mawere, M. (eds.) *Tigray. The Hysteresis of War*, Book 1. Langaa, Bamenda.
- MacKinnon, C. A. (2007). *Are women human?*. Harvard University Press.

- Mcveigh, T. (2021, May 14). Rape is being used as a weapon of war in Ethiopia, say witnesses. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/may/14/rape-used-as-weapon-war-tigray-ethiopia-witnesses> (Accessed in February 2022)
- Mukamana, D., Collins, A., & Rosa, W.E. (2018). Genocide rape trauma: A conceptual framework for understanding the psychological suffering of Rwandan survivors. *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice*, 32(2), 125–143. <https://doi.org/10.1891/1541-6577.32.2.125>
- Ohambe, M.C., Galloy, M.R., & Sow, N. (2004). Women's bodies as a battleground: Sexual violence against women and girls during the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo: South Kivu (1996–2003). *Paris: International Alert*.
<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/adcd4113-ade4-4d78-b6e9-55e1f613ab59/content>
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2023, August 17). *UN experts alarmed by reported widespread use of rape and sexual violence against women and girls by RSF in Sudan*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/08/un-experts-alarmed-reported-widespread-use-rape-and-sexual-violence-against> (Accessed in January 2024).
- Physicians for Human Rights. (2023, August 24). *Broken Promises: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Before and After the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Tigray, Ethiopia*. <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/medical-records-sexual-violence-tigray-ethiopia/>
- Reid-Cunningham, A.R. (2008). Rape as a weapon of genocide. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 3(3), 279–296.
- Rimmer, S.H. (2006). Orphans or veterans: Justice for children born of war in East Timor. *Texas International Law Journal*, 42(2), 323–344.
<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/4cef7a27-fea3-4cbb-8cc9-1492358eb07b/content>
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. (1998). United Nations.
- Seifert, R. (1993). *War and rape: Analytical approaches*. Geneva: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.
- Sela, M.M. (2021). Genocidal rape? The Tigray conflict and women's bodies as a battlefield. *Kujenga Amani*. <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2021/05/26/genocidal-rape-the-tigray-conflict-and-womens-bodies-as-a-battleground/> (Accessed in February 2021)
- Shanks, L., & Schull, M.J. (2000). Rape in war: The humanitarian response. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 163(9), 1152–1156.
- Sharlach, L. (2000). Rape as genocide: Bangladesh, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda. *New Political Science*, 22(1), 89-102.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/713687893>
- United Nations General Assembly. (1948). Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. *United Nations, Treaty*

- Series, Vol. 78, p. 277.
<https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1948/en/13495>
- United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). (2022). *Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia*. (A/HRC/51/46). Human Rights Council.
- Van Reisen, M., Kidane, S. & Reim, L. (2017). The trauma of survivors of Sinai trafficking. In Van Reisen & Mawere, M. (eds.), *Human Trafficking and Trauma in the Digital Era: The Ongoing Tragedy of the Trade in Refugees from Eritrea*. Bamenda: Langaa.
- Van Reisen, M., Medhanyie, A. A., Tefera, A. H., Stocker, J., Equar, S., Kidanu, K. G., Tesfa, D., Mawere, M. (2024). In: Van Reisen, M. & Mawere, M. (eds.). *Tigray. The Hysteresis of War*, Book 1. Langaa, Bamenda.
- Varia, N. (2021, November 9). "I always remember that day": Access to services for survivors of gender-based violence in Ethiopia's Tigray Region. *Human Rights Watch*.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/11/09/i-always-remember-day/access-services-survivors-gender-based-violence-ethiopia>
(Accessed on 16 February 2024).
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2000). *Reproductive health during conflict and displacement: A guide for programme managers* (No. WHO/RHR/00.13).
https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/66784/WHO_RHR_00.13.pdf?sequence=1