

# Tigray Threatens to Spark Next Eritrean-Ethiopian War and Plunge the Horn of Africa into Crisis

Data Cutoff: March 13, 2025, at 10 a.m. | Authors: Liam Karr, Kathryn Tyson, Contributors: John Reece

## Key Takeaways

- **Erupting Conflict:** A violent power struggle in northern Ethiopia's Tigray region risks sparking another civil war in Ethiopia.
- **Imminent Escalation:** This may escalate rapidly into a proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- **Regional Instability:** Renewed conflict would generate an economic, humanitarian, and security crisis that would reverberate across Africa and into Europe.

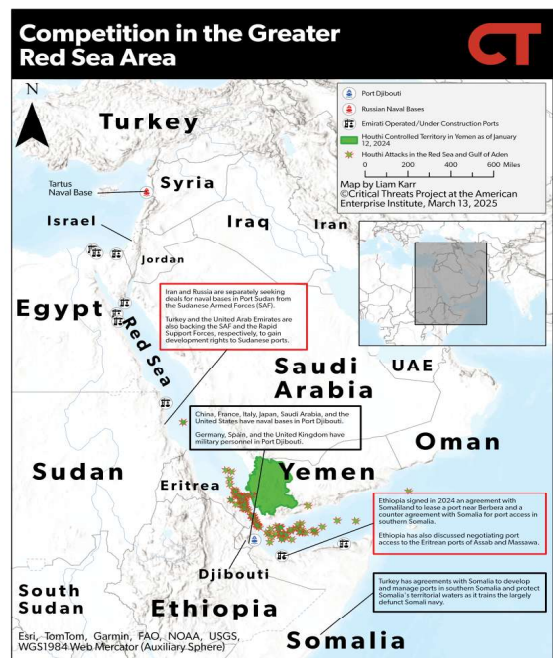
## Implications

- **Great Power Competition:**
  - Iran and Russia have shown interest in capitalizing on regional conflicts to advance their objectives in the Red Sea.
  - China, Turkey, and the UAE could seek to stabilize the situation to preserve their billions of US dollars invested and trade stakes in Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- **Economic:** Destabilization of the Red Sea area could raise already-inflated shipping costs due to Houthi attacks in the Red Sea that have increased insurance rates and logistic challenges.
- **Extremism:** Salafi-Jihadi groups such as IS and al Qaeda use regional instability to recruit and extend influence.
- **Humanitarian:** War would exacerbate the refugee crisis in the region and increase migration flows to Europe and the Gulf States.

## Attacks against Tigray Interim Administration March 11, 2025



Map: Liam Karr • Source: Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute • Created with Datawrapper



## Potential Courses of Action

- **The TIA, a faction of TPLF led by Getachew Reda,** has called for the international community and Ethiopian federal government to “exert all necessary pressure” on anti-TIA forces.
- **Eritrea** will likely use its ties with the anti-TIA TPLF faction led by Debretsion Gebremichael to weaken and fragment the TPLF and Ethiopia.
- **Ethiopia** may use allegations that Eritrea is aiding anti-TIA forces to escalate to a proxy or regional war and pursue much-sought Red Sea access through Eritrea.



Map: Critical Threats Project • Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Conflict Index, as of December 2024 • Created with Datawrapper