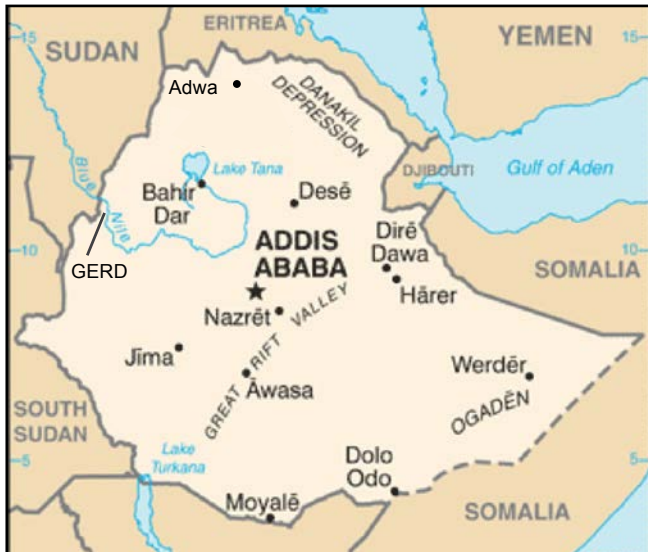# Towards the modern Ethiopian state

1914: Ethiopia was the only country in Africa that was not colonised by the European powers. This followed the Battle of Adwa in 1896, where Ethiopian forces routed an invading army sponsored by Italy.

1936: The Italian fascists, having invaded Ethiopia from their neighbouring colony of Eritrea with an army of 600,000, forced Emperor Haile Selassie to flee into exile.

1941: Ethiopia was liberated by Ethiopian patriots alongside the British and other allied forces and Haile Selassie returned as Emperor. He abolished the practice of slavery in 1942.

1962: Ethiopia formally annexed Eritrea (which led to a 30-year-long independence struggle).

1963: Haile Selassie presided over the formation of the Organisation of African Unity, the precursor of the African Union, and served as its first chairperson.

1974: The monarchy was overthrown in the 1974 revolution and Haile Selassie was later killed.

1991: The Derg was overthrown when the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and other armed groups, with US support, marched into Addis Ababa, toppling the Derg, and introducing ethnocentricism.

1993: Eritrea formally separated from Ethiopia as an independent state after a referendum. But there were ongoing violent border disputes with Ethiopia.

1991-2019: Ethiopia was ruled by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of ethnic based political parties dominated by TPLF, imposed an ethnic federalist system in Ethiopia. Parties in Ethiopia were banned from organising on a national basis, but instead only an ethnic basis.

2012: Meles Zenawi, charismatic (and authoritarian) Prime Minister suddenly died.

2012-2018: Hailemariam Desalegn became Prime Minister, and Chairman of the EPRDF (Abiy Ahmed was a member of the EPRDF executive and a Minister of Science and Technology during this time).

2018: Desalegn resigned after widespread protest. Abiy Ahmed was elected Chairman of the EPRDF, and became Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

2019: The EPRDF ruling coalition approved the formation of the Prosperity Party in a merger with five other parties. The TPLF refused to join this merger. Abiy retained his post as Prime Minister.

2019: Abiy was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for ending the 20-year territorial stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and for releasing political prisoners and adopting liberal governance within Ethiopia.

2020 May: Abiy controversially postponed scheduled national elections, due to Covid-19. Elders and mediators engaged with the TPLF committee leadership to avoid escalating tensions with the central government. TPLF rejected all these interventions, and proceeded to hold elections.

2020 November: Long-standing tensions and disagreements with political leaders in Tigray province (on the border with Eritrea) escalated into war, after TPLF soldiers attacked federal troops. Civilians caught up in the violence. NA