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SEEK WISDOM, ELEVATE YOUR INTELLECT AND SERVE HUMANITY !

## **The Application of Rhetorical Arena Theory in International Public Relations Context: Evidence from Ethio-US Relation**

**By**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication Presented In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Relation and Strategic Communication**

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***School of Journalism and Communication***

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Nuru Hassen, entitled "*The Application of RAT in International Public Relations: Evidence from Ethio-US* " and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Relation and Strategic Communication complies with the regulations of the University and notes the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Application of Rhetorical Arena Theory in International Public Relations: Evidence from Ethio-US**

**Nuru Hassen Alemnew**

**Addis Ababa University, 2023**

*Recently, Ethiopia has experienced several crises internally. Some of them also have a negative impact on Ethiopia's relations with other countries. The major goal of this study was to evaluate the applicability of RAT in MFA's foreign public relations strategies for handling tense situations, specifically in the context of US-Ethiopian relation. In this study, a qualitative research strategy was used to gather and analyze data from in-depth interviews with key informants chosen using purposive sample methods. The crisis event was evaluated in this way. The qualitative Three-dimensional Framework (Fairclough, 2010) approach was used to gather pertinent data, and the interview was thematically analyzed in conjunction with discourse analysis. The study goes into great detail about the ideas of international Public Relations, Crisis Management, and International Relation within the applicability of the RAT theoretical framework to analyze the effectiveness of strategic communication used by MFA in addressing the conflict in northern Ethiopia for international communities as the conflict negatively affects the international relation and specifically in managing the strained relation of Ethio-US as well. Despite the fact that Hogg and Doolan (1999) outlined the tasks of PR practitioners, a PR practitioner does research to discover problems, characterize them, and propose solutions to them. If something goes wrong, the practitioner is held accountable. The study discovered that MFA has little place to involve IPR practitioners in managing crises occurring through counseling and creating crisis communication plan. The expert prescriber researches and defines communication difficulties, design programming, and take responsibility for developing programs. As the four variables (context, genre, medium, and text) were insufficient to capture the MFA strategic communication used to manage the strained relationship between Ethiopia and the US, the research was modified to include a strategic communication plan as one variable on the RAT theoretical framework.*

**Key terms:** *Strategic communication, International Public Relations, international relations*

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## **Acronyms**

AGOA -	African Growth and Opportunity Act
DRT-	Discourse of Renewal Theory
EPRDF-	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
IRT-	Image Restoration Theory
IPR-	International Public Relations
MFA –	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PR-	Public Relation
RAT-	Rhetorical Arena Theory
SCCT-	Situational Crisis Communication Theory
TPLF-	Tigray People Liberation Front
US-	United States

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## Chapter One

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Throughout the 20th century, Ethiopia had close ties with a number of Western nations, including Belgium, France, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Sweden, and the United States. Different Western nations have been carefully tapped by succeeding governments for economic, military, and diplomatic support.

Since the EPRDF toppled the Derg regime in 1991 with the help of the Ethiopian people, the United States has forged new, intimate relationships with the Ethiopian government. Ethiopia actually holds a significant position in the unstable and vitally crucial Horn of Africa. It has taken advantage of this location by providing the necessary assistance as a security partner to both the United States and the United Nations, particularly in the fight against the terrorist threat. Lyons (2007) described it as a "frontline state" in the fight against Islamic fundamentalism in the region and a "key strategic partner" in the post-9/11 "war on terror."

Seife (2018) reveals, despite being one of the world's poorest countries and a landlocked state, Ethiopia has been said to have many "selling points" that make it an appealing partner for the U.S. In addition to Lyons' (2007) justification for why Ethiopia becomes a strategic partner of the US in the fight against terrorism. Geographically, Ethiopia affects the stability or instability of the entire region because it is a sizable nation that borders every other nation in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia has significant effect, either negatively or favorably, as an anchor state.

According to Seife (2018), the Horn of Africa's deteriorating security dynamics have made Ethiopia's relative strength essential to the region's stability because, as one commentator puts it, "Somalia is a dangerously failed state, the Sudan and Eritrea are pariahs, and Kenya has troubles of its own." In addition, outside circumstances have increased Ethiopia's prominence in terms of regional U.S. interests. A terrorist attempt to assassinate Hosni Mubarak in Addis Abeba in June 1995 was one of many terrorist operations that were allegedly trained and organized in Sudan and Somalia. The largest al-Qaeda cell in the area at the time was purportedly discovered in Sudan after the explosion in Nairobi, and the Sudanese government was charged with supporting the group with financial support (Seife, 2018).

On the other side, Ethiopia has developed a strong reputation both domestically and internationally from which U.S. policymakers might take inspiration in order to "buttress their security interest not only regionally, but also globally" in terms of political clout. Ethiopia can have a big impact on other countries' policy because Addis Ababa serves as the African Union's headquarters. According to Siaye Abreha (2018), who Seife referenced, any country that wants to have an impact on African policy should employ a top diplomat in Addis Abeba and keep cordial ties with the Ethiopian administration.

Yohannes and Cheeseman (2021) make the case in another piece that Ethiopia is a strategic ally of the US in the battle on terrorism. The greatest donor to Ethiopia is the United States, which

provided US\$969 million in 2008, US\$916 million in 2009, US\$513 million in 2010, and US\$586 million in requested aid for 2011. The main goals of American development assistance to Ethiopia are to fight poverty, promote economic growth, and change social sector policies. Additionally, there are certain monies for military training that include subjects like the laws of war and respecting human rights (Yohannes and Cheeseman, 2021).

Regarding the human rights issues, another form of the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the US encounters difficulties (Yohannes and Cheeseman, 2021). Nowadays, it is challenging to imagine Western diplomacy without the concepts of democracy and human rights. This is partially due to the fact that the American legal and political tradition values freedom and individual liberty, but it's also because this common language serves as a crucial negotiating tactic. The human rights theme is the most "contentious dialogue" in U.S.-Ethiopian relationship, according to David Shinn, a former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia (Yohannes and Cheeseman, 2021).

Yohannes and Cheeseman (2021) noted that the Ethiopian government has recently been under fire for egregious human rights abuses. Human Rights Watch claims that Ethiopia's democracy is being undermined by the misuse of US aid.

Shortly after the crisis in northern Ethiopia started, a study was done to investigate the functions of IPR in managing tense ties between Ethiopia and the US. The researcher employed the paradigm of Rhetorical Arena theory to investigate the situation. The researcher attempted to start by introducing the idea of crisis management and the functions of public relations in international relations before describing the theory.

According to Yeomas and Tench (2009), "Public relations" and "Crisis Communication" have never been more essential topics of study for academics. Crisis, instability, and disasters both typical and problematic are all directly tied to public relations (PR). Only when there is a crisis in the government or institution can the real work of public relations be understood and accomplished in order to function and compete. Crisis communication and public relations go hand in hand as ideas. PRs are a component of communication that deals with the relationships between a public-facing or attention-seeking entity and the many publics who are or might be interested in it. The entity vying for attention could be a corporation, a politician, a performer or author, a government or government agency, a charity, a religious institution, or almost any other individual or group (Yeomas and Tench, 2009).

However, as Yeomas and Tench (2009) contend, there may be a crisis occurrence that interferes with a company's or organizations regular operations and, if improperly handled, has the potential to destroy the latter. Effective crisis public relations (PR) management safeguards businesses, their reputations, and occasionally even has the power to save them from extinction. This was initiated prior to the crisis and continued until it was handled or until things returned to normal (Yeomas and Tench, 2009).

The research design explores the role of public relations practices in crisis communication on international relations in the case of MFA specifically the Ethio-US relations by taking into account the justification provided related to crisis communication and the roles of public relations within international relations. The Rhetorical Arena, a dynamic crisis communication paradigm created by Frandsen and Johansen (2018), is both sender- and receiver-oriented and is guided from a multi-vocal perspective that captures the contextual dynamics of a crisis. Because the details of the key environment and rhetorical variables are more crucial, Frandsen and Johansen do not create a typology of crisis response techniques like Benoit and Coombs do.

To be more precise, "the communicative complexity of organizational crises" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018) is better understood from two perspectives thanks to the rhetorical arena model of crisis communication. It is founded on a multi-vocal methodology that considers a variety of crisis-related reactions in the social setting where senders and receivers interact, compete, work together, or negotiate during a crisis. This method highlights how the connection between communicators is complex, erratic, and chaotic and how the development of a text by the sender and the active interpretation of that text occur in synchronic space.

Frandsen and Johansen (2018) assert that the concept of voice places more of an emphasis on intricacy than on power. Second, this paradigm views crisis management as being mediated by four factors: context, media, genre, and text. These four factors work in tandem to ensure that the study is thorough and includes both textual and contextual analysis. The study of the diachronic aspect of crisis communication, or the times just before, during, and after a crisis, is also aided by these four characteristics. The study then looked at how RAT could be used in international public relations (IPR) to manage tense relations between Ethiopia and the US.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

After the TPLF was expelled from the federal government in 2018, Abiy Ahmed (Dr.) was chosen to lead the ERDF. Ahmed stopped repressing the opposition and freed tens of thousands of political prisoners (George, 2022). He established the 'Prosperity Party' in 2019 and urged opposition parties to join the ERDF. Ahmed was hailed by the West as the leader who will reunite Ethiopia with democracy and peace. The world community also welcomed his foreign policy; he consented to completely implement the peace deal with Eritrea that was reached in 2000, ending the hostilities between the two nations. He was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to the settlement of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. He also made an effort to reduce tensions with Sudan and Egypt (George, 2022).

The peaceful transfer of power in 2018 to the administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inaugurated a new chapter in Ethiopian history as well as a promising new chapter in U.S.-Ethiopian relation, as demonstrated by Ambassador Feltman's (2021) report. The new prime minister wasted no time in announcing his comprehensive plans for political and economic transformation. He embraced U.S. democracy assistance and governance initiatives that the

previous EPRDF administration had vehemently opposed since they were in accord with his vision of a thriving Ethiopian civil society. His bold departure from debunked Marxist ideologies was expected to draw significant international investment, resulting in job creation and economic growth. Our substantial aid and collaboration programs expanded to previously unheard-of heights (Feltman, 2021).

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and pro-government troops have been engaged in a violent civil war in Ethiopia, the most populous and diverse nation in the Horn of Africa, since November 2020. An enormous humanitarian disaster has resulted from this ethnic strife, primarily in the Tigray Region, and it has also had political repercussions on the neighboring nations (Feltman, 2021).

Beginning in November 2020, the unrest in Tigray soon extended to other parts of northern Ethiopia. Amnesty International has documented a number of human rights abuses committed by all parties to the conflict, including massacres, extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, sexual and other gender-based violence, and arbitrary detentions by Ethiopian government forces and allied militias, as well as by Eritrean forces working with them and the Tigray rebel groups.

The ongoing Amnesty International report and the conflict's participants show that thousands of people were massacred in the regions of Aksum, Cheena, Maykadira, and Kobo Afar. Additionally, thousands of women were sexually harassed by the federal government, the Tigray rebel force, the Amhara militia, the Fano, and Eritrean troops in western Tigray. Amnesty International recorded those atrocities in 2022.

As Moses et al (2022) claims, numerous human rights abuses and humanitarian disasters occurred alongside the battle. Both local and international media consistently exhibited bias and selective reporting in their reporting, favoring either the TPLF or the government. Establishing the truth was incredibly difficult due to this reporting style, especially when it came to contentious matters that were marked by disinformation and misinformation trends. Ethiopia needs a fair deal from the international (Western) community and the international media, though, as stated by Abbink (2021).

The U.S. is concerned about the humanitarian catastrophe and reported crimes in Tigray. The US government then imposed severe penalties on Ethiopia that have an impact on their bilateral relations. According to Tibebe's (2022) article in African Press, the Biden administration imposed penalties on persons involved in the northern Ethiopia crisis by denying visas to both the Ethiopian government and the TPLF. The US government has placed restrictions on Ethiopia's ability to import goods duty-free as permitted by the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Aside from bringing Ethiopia roughly \$100 million in hard currency each year, AGOA also directly employs about 100,000 people, largely women in southern Ethiopia who were formerly employed in textile companies that exported to the United States.

According to an article by FDRE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke (2022) in the Ethiopian Herald, the United States must be an open and impartial partner in resolving Ethiopia's internal strife and regional issues. Sanctions or other punitive actions will severely hurt US interests and damage the US's reputation in the Horn of Africa.

According to Teshome's (2021) article, Ethiopian and Eritrean activists created a social media campaign platform called #NoMore and were led by the former Al Jazeera & CBS journalist Hermela Aregawi. This was done despite the fact that some political analysts, such as Felbab-Brown (2021), called the serious sanctions imposed on Ethiopia an Exemplary to stop the war in northern Ethiopia. Its main goal is to combat the continuous Western campaign of media deception, economic warfare, diplomatic propaganda, and military involvement in Africa in general and the "Horn of Africa" in particular. Its present attention is on Ethiopia, where TPLF insurrectionists supported by the US fought a violent conflict that caused millions of Ethiopians to flee and massacred thousands, most notably over 1200 Amhara people in Maikadra town (Teshome, 2021).

According to Elleni's (2015) research, the FORE MFA lacks a public diplomacy and communications strategy as a whole, which is considered a weakness when examining the department's role in the Ministry's public diplomacy efforts. Additionally, the department has only recently begun using the media and little to no work has been done to inform, influence, and engage the Egyptian public. Further evidence of MFA Ethiopia's ignorance of the use of strategic communication, public diplomacy, and national image comes from Mekuanint (2018). The RAT theoretical framework was then used in this research paper to analyze the IPR roles in managing the tense relations between Ethiopia and the US.

Information and information communication technologies have developed into a crucial and important part of international relations, according to research findings by Njabulo (2018). Since information is at the core of political, economic, and military development, nations throughout the world are moving to engage in conflict. Entman (2008), on the other hand, proposes that diplomatic leaders make use of strategic communications to settle international conflicts and establish understanding between people in order to support the negotiation and discussion processes and to foster favorable public perception of solutions.

When it comes to the theoretical issue, Frandsen and Johansen's rhetorical arena theory leaves open the question of why a crisis occurs, develops, and ends even though it explores issues like what/how an organization/institution/individual communicates in a crisis (questions about text) and when/where/to whom their communication takes place (questions about context)(Dong, 2019). The theory aims to address the contextual features of its variable, even if Dong (2019) raised the RAT gap as the cause of the crisis and its stages. The study also discovered that the four RAT variables, context, genre, medium, and text were insufficient to assess MFA's strategic communication. This strategic communication plan should therefore be one of the variables

because it is essential for developing good strategic communication because it serves as the process's parameters.

The purpose of the current study is to close the theoretical and empirical gaps that have not, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, been addressed. Therefore, it is worthwhile to continue the current study on the strained management and the role of IPR in managing strained relations of Ethio-US through the use of RAT in the process of excluding Ethiopia's interests from the global stage.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The main goal of this study was to evaluate the applicability of RAT in MFA's foreign public relations strategies for handling tense situations, specifically in the context of US-Ethiopian relation.

#### **1.3.1. Specific Objectives of the Study**

The following specific goals are also addressed by this research:

1. Analyzing the context of the communication techniques created by MFA IPR
2. Examining the rhetorical strategies used and communicated in the MFA IPR text
3. Identify the message genre that MFA IPR has created to address the stakeholders.
4. Describe the channels that MFA IPR uses and why those channels were selected as its tool.
5. Examining MFA IPR's strategic communication plan for handling tense relations between the two nations.

### **1.4 Research Questions/Hypothesis**

The study develops the following research questions from its particular aims, and then uses data analysis to determine the answers. These are the research inquiries:

1. In what ways was the strategic communication plan designed to handle the tense relations between Ethiopia and the US?
2. In what context did the MFA design its conflict management communication strategy?
3. How are MFA's rhetorical strategies implemented and communicated in the text?
4. What genre did the MFA choose to reach its intended audience?
5. What prerequisites does MFA use when deciding the channel of communication to use to spread its messages?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study's conclusions may be useful to the following people or organizations:

Government, this study offers a foundation for developing or refining policies, guidelines, and laws governing crisis management and communication in international relations. The state government should accept the conclusions and suggestions and put them into practice going forward to lessen the harm and loss brought on by the crisis.

The stakeholders could profit from this study because they would be the final beneficiaries of any laws and regulations the government issues. Stakeholders' active involvement greatly reduces the adverse effects on the environment and stakeholders. As a result, it enables the stakeholders to participate and contribute actively during a crisis.

Research Policy, Training, and Practice, this study also makes progress by evaluating the general MFA IPR practitioners with regard to the Ethio-US relationship with the strategic communication used, and the researcher then develops a scientific analysis that builds the organization in their practice, through its findings to provide training, The study offers one contribution to the roles of public relations in managing strained international relations by suggesting how the IPR formulate an efficient strategic crisis communication plan to manage the crisis that occurred internationally. As a research work, this study also has a role for training and practices. On the other hand, this research paper supports research policy since it provides instances of how those principles and rules are implemented when conducting research. Research policy is a collection of principles and guidelines that govern how research is conducted.

The final research report typically contains a variety of significant. The study may be significant for academics and researchers as a source of knowledge and as a basis or inspiration for choosing study areas, references, or literature. It can also add to the body of knowledge. Additionally, future scholars may use this study as a pertinent source of information, knowledge, and literature on other comparable works on crisis management and communication in international relations.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study was limited to an evaluation of the use of RAT in the 2013–2015 management of tense relations between Ethiopia and the United States in the context of international public relations. The researcher decides to focus on the relationship between Ethiopia and the US Successive U.S.

Administrations have characterized Ethiopia as a crucial partner in regional stability and development, according to Congressional Research Service (2021), while occasionally voicing worry about political space, human rights, and unrest. Relationships have focused on initiatives to reduce hunger and poverty, raise health indicators, and combat terrorism and regional instability.

The connection has been strained by the Tigray conflict. After that, the US government imposed a number of sanctions on Ethiopia that have an impact on its socioeconomic and political

landscape and cast a pall over its standing in international fora. Therefore, by addressing the conflict in northern Ethiopia for international communities generally as well as the US specifically, the researcher was interested in evaluating the roles of IPR in managing the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.1. Overviews of Ethio-US bilateral relation**

According to the sources referenced by Assefa (2014) (Marcus 1995, 174–185; Marcus 2002, 103; Pankhurst 2001, 194), Ethiopia's King Menelik II was renowned for his diplomatic abilities in dealing with the world's leading nations at the time. His choice to accept the enthusiastic invitations from the United States to send its first diplomatic mission to the Ethiopian court in 1903 came as no surprise. After successfully negotiating diplomatic settlements with the two most powerful colonial powers of the time, France and Great Britain, which put an end to European threats against Ethiopia's sovereignty, in 1897, Menelik was confident of his status as a world leader in diplomacy. However, what was interesting about Menelik's diplomatic initiative with the Americans was that it did not begin with them. When a Haitian philosopher named Benito Sylvain persisted in suggesting that Ethiopia and Haiti establish diplomatic ties to King Menelik, it all started in 1897.

According to Assefa's analysis, Sylvain was unsuccessful, but two years later his intense interest in the subject led to William H. Ellis, an African American cotton farmer from Texas who later became a Wall Street stock broker. Ellis, who started a business after visiting Ethiopia in 1899, was so moved by Menelik that he proposed a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. When American authorities failed to take William Ellis seriously, it caused yet another letdown. As a result, Robert Skinner (Skinner 1906; Gebrekidan 2005, 39–41; Marcus 1995, 198–200), the American Council General in Marseilles, France, who shared Sylvain and Ellis' excitement for Ethiopia and the Menilikian court, came into being (Ayele 2003, 41–56). Presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt gave Skinner a sympathetic ear after three years of correspondence with the State Department, allowing him to be appointed Commissioner and command a mission to Ethiopia in 1903 (Skinner 1906; Metaferia 2009, 13–23; Ayele 2003, 45–56).

According to Mehari (2019), Mr. Ellis and Mr. Skinner both gave it their all to see that formal diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and the United States materialized. There was, however, a distinction in how they went about it. This indicates that Mr. Ellis' major connection to his notion was Ethiopian interests. That is how the United States is assisting Ethiopia in the development of its resources. On the other hand, Mr. Skinner strongly emphasized his rationale regarding the American commercial interest, which he believed to be highly fundamental and important to his country's national interest. The third difference between the two people was that Mr. Skinner's endeavor was a private exercise that was motivated by a private interest, but Mr. Ellis' endeavor was an official exercise because he was an American official who represented his government. However, both of them have made significant contributions to the history of ties between Ethiopians and Americans (Mehari, 2019).

Additionally, when discussing the development of such a significant diplomatic connection between the United States of America and Ethiopia, it is vital to keep in mind the role played by Emperor Menelik II, a trained diplomat. The emperor's efforts were closely related to his ambition to modernize and advance the nation. Getachew (2009:20) describes the Emperor's function as, "Because he desired to modernize and safeguard his nation, Emperor Menelik played a crucial role in forging a relationship between Ethiopia and the United States."

In Addis Ababa, the US first established a consulate in 1906. Ethiopia sent its first formal delegation to the US in 1919, and in 1943 it established a consulate there.

When President Theodore Roosevelt invited the Ethiopian King to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Lewis in 1904, it increased Menelik's standing as a diplomat and the perception among Americans that Ethiopia was an African "El Dorado" (Assefa, 2014). Even though Menelik was unable to travel to America, the invitation was regarded as a remarkable show of goodwill and reverence for Ethiopia and the King in particular. Governor Francis of Missouri, who served as the Exposition's president, had the invitation's words etched in the center of a huge, attractive silver salver (ibid). Accordingly, from those perspectives, the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the United States under Emperor Menelik has a strong foundation in working together for mutual gain.

### **A. Emperor Haile Selassie and the US**

The United States' closest ally in Africa was Ethiopia, which was ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie. Lemmu (1991) cites the following reasons as to why Ethiopia is America's closest ally: One was that following World War II, the US supported a decolonization agenda in Africa and Asia. Haile Selassie enthusiastically supported this approach, with Ethiopia serving as the only native autonomous state in Africa. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which adopted a pro-Western attitude and a conservative position on inherited boundaries, was founded in large part thanks to the Emperor. Ethiopia's strategic location next to the Red Sea and control of the communications hub at Kagnaw, close to Asmara, were further factors. The Kagnaw facility served as the most significant "listening post" in the Middle East for more than 10 years after the US agreed to a 25-year lease on it in 1953.

The US was a strong proponent of Eritrea and Ethiopia's union due to the strategic importance of Ethiopia's Red Sea coastline, which was entirely within Eritrea's borders, as well as Kagnaw station. In a now-famous speech to the UN Security Council in 1952, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said:

*The views of the Eritrean people must be taken into account from a just perspective. However, the country must be connected to our friend, Ethiopia, due to American strategic interest in the Red Sea region as well as concerns for global security and peace.*

Contrarily, Assefa (2014) argues that Haile Sellassie outlived the terms of U.S. Presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Richard Nixon, but that his 1954 American visit was the first and most significant to securing American involvement in the modernization of Ethiopia. This was the beginning of a new marathon era between the United States and Ethiopia.

In addition to the aforementioned assertion, Assefa (2014) goes into more detail on the emperor's perception of the high level of American advances in agrarian technologies. It therefore came as no surprise that the Point Four program's "low modernist" and soft-power goals formed the foundation of the initial push of the Ethiopian-American collaboration for progress. Emperor Haile Sillase and Henry G. Bennett, the president of Oklahoma University at the time, signed the "Point Four Agreement for Technical Cooperation" in 1951 to work together on related projects aimed at promoting the balanced and integrated development of Ethiopia's economic resources and productive capacities.

To make Ethiopia the breadbasket of the area and to "build up Ethiopia's major potential contribution to the economic strength of the free nations of the world," according to the "Point Four Agreement for Technical Cooperation" of 1951. In order to meet Ethiopia's needs, the Ministry of Education has created a modern educational program and school system, to improve the Ethiopian military's overall image and create an Ethiopian air force as well to improve Ethiopia's infrastructure, such as its airlines and highway construction.

Emperor Haile Selassie I visited the US in 1954, 1963, 1967, 1969, and 1973, according to Melaku (2021). The Emperor spoke at a joint session of the US Congress during his visit in 1954. When numerous Ethiopian soldiers also received training in the US throughout the 1960s, the relationship between Imperial Ethiopia and the US reached its pinnacle. Mengistu Hailemariam (Col.), who eventually ousted the Emperor and formed the military government and aligned with the communist doctrine of the then-Soviet Union against the capitalist ideology of the US, was one of the trainees in the US. According to Melaku's generalization of his article, the two countries' relations were in good shape from 1931 until 1974, when Ethiopia was a monarchy.

## **B. Derg Regime and US**

The US and the Derg regime's relationship deteriorated beginning in 1976. The worst relationship between the military administration and the US government came to a head, specifically with President Mengistu Hailemariam's trip to the Soviet Union in December 1976 and the ensuing arms deal. As a result, the Derg started looking for other potential sources of military support. China and the Soviet Union were two nations Ethiopia resorted to (Melaku, 2021).

According to Melaku (2021), the Kagnew station was shut down and the Americans left the nation in 1977 as a result of the ideological divide and the aforementioned issues. However, the Soviet Union and a few other East European nations started to back the military dictatorship.

Charges d'Affaires took the position of ambassadors between the US Embassy in Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Embassy in the US beginning in 1980.

The military regime that President Mikhail Gorbachev abandoned his support for in the second half of the 1980s suffered as a result of his glasnost ("openness") and perestroika ("restructuring") initiatives. The Derg Regime, which at the time was also a communist nation, could no longer rely on its previous friends for military and other economic aid when communism fell in the Soviet Union and East European nations. Additionally, Ethiopia's ideological allies Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) withdrew from all military arrangements with the Ethiopian government as a result of the drastic upheaval that occurred in Eastern Europe in 1989 (Melaku, 2021).

As a result, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Israel were two countries that the Derg Regime of Ethiopia was looking to for alternative sources of military support. Parallel to this global transformation, the opposition to the regime grew stronger than ever, resulting in the military government's collapse in 1991.

### **C. EPRDF Regime and US**

The diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and the US were elevated to ambassadorial status in 1992 following the overthrow of the military dictatorship in May 1991. With this event, the US government's support to Ethiopia restarted. The United States currently supports Ethiopia with a focus on health (HIV/AIDS), humanitarian aid, bolstering democratic institutions, and good governance.

Both Ethiopia and the US have mutual understandings on security issues especially anti-terrorism in the Horn of Africa. The late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi visited the US in 1994 and 1995. However, except for foreign ministers and senators there is no visit to Ethiopia by presidents of America while they were in office. Many American presidents visited Ethiopia after they finish their terms as president. For instance, former presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and George Bush (Jr.) visited Ethiopia after finishing their terms in office (Melaku, 2021).

"Ethiopia is an important regional security partner of the United States," the American administration claims. The statement "Ethiopia has good relations with the United States and the West, especially in responding to regional instability and supporting counterterrorism efforts" is included as well. The US has been assisting Ethiopia in stabilizing the region due to the security interests of both nations.

The aim of Ethiopia's foreign policy, according to Melaku (2021), is national security, or survival. The government thinks that only by guaranteeing national existence can other national issues be brought up. The US "plays a decisive role in the world in matters relating to peace and stability," according to Ethiopia's foreign policy toward the US, and "securing the political and

diplomatic support of the US has a great bearing on the success of our efforts to achieve peace and security." The strategy emphasizes the significance of economic ties with the US, particularly in terms of trade, investment, and other forms of aid (Melaku, 2021). The strategy statement also takes into account the large population of people of Ethiopian descent and origin living in the US and makes use of them to improve bilateral ties between the two nations as well as to tap into their potential for the nation's economic growth. A 2003 survey estimates that there are one million Ethiopian Americans living in the country (Melaku, 2021).

The US being attacked by Al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, marked a turning point in the administration of George W. Bush's foreign policy. Following this incident, Africa was considered to be one of the most crucial strategic regions in the fight against global terrorism. Many African nations, like many others throughout the world, had expressed support for the so-called "Global War on Terrorism." A stronger alliance between the US and Africa resulted from the sympathy and backing of African leaders (Melaku, 2021).

Somalia became a breeding ground for both international terrorism and pirate activities because the international community chose to disregard the country's problems. Al-Shabaab, an Islamic militant organisation, eventually appeared in the Horn of Africa country. Al Qaeda and the extremist group made their allegiance known. Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya ("the Islamic Union"), the forerunner of the Islamic Courts Union, was founded in the 1980s and aimed to construct a vast "Islamic Republic of Greater Somalia" before Al-Shabaab appeared (Melaku, 2021). The simultaneous 1998 attacks by Al-Qaeda on the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, were crucial warnings that caused the US government to reevaluate its approach to Africa. The militants who assaulted the embassies were thought to have fled to Somalia. As a result, the US administration focused its attention to the Horn of Africa in order to ensure its security and safety (Melaku, 2021).

As a result, the US expressed interest in cooperating with Ethiopia, which has a similar anti-terrorist strategy. For instance, on June 26, 1995, while Hosni Mubarak was traveling to Addis to attend the Organization of African Unity Summit, there was an attempt on his life in Ethiopia. Even though terrorists were shooting at him, Ethiopian security forces were able to save him. Ethiopia's approach to combating terrorism is consistent with US foreign policy. The late Prime Minister Meles and President Bush had a conversation on worldwide terrorism in 2002 and came to an agreement on how to combat it (Melaku, 2021).

The electrification of African nations is the other area of convergence in foreign policy. Ethiopia's foreign policy places a strong emphasis on producing hydroelectric electricity and exporting it to other African nations. The strategy document names Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, and Eritrea as recipients of the electrification policy. In this vein, the Obama Administration recently made clear that it will fund electrification initiatives in Africa. Currently, we can see that Ethiopia and the US share similar foreign policies (Melaku, 2021).

According to Melaku (2021), Ethiopia's electrification program will benefit both the nation and the region as a whole financially and peacefully. Ethiopia has already started selling power to Sudan and Djibouti as part of the implementation of the foreign strategy. Ethiopia will soon export goods to Kenya as well. In my earlier piece, "Democratic peace theory vs "energy peace theory," published in The Reporter newspaper, I thoroughly examined the connection between the electrification project and peace in Africa.

According to this policy, the US has committed a sizable sum of money to financing electrification initiatives in Africa. The harmful use of fuel energy will be reduced by this effort. Similar to the US, other affluent nations ought to fund electrification initiatives in Africa that contribute to the continent's sustainable development.

The outbreak of the northern Ethiopia Conflict, however, has recently caused a deterioration in US-Ethiopian relations. The peaceful transfer of power in 2018 to the administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inaugurated a new chapter in Ethiopian history as well as a promising new chapter in U.S.-Ethiopian ties, as demonstrated by Ambassador Feltman's (2021) report. The new prime minister wasted no time in announcing his comprehensive plans for political and economic transformation. He embraced U.S. democracy assistance and governance initiatives that the previous EPRDF administration had vehemently opposed since they were in accord with his vision of a thriving Ethiopian civil society. His bold departure from debunked Marxist ideologies was expected to draw significant international investment, resulting in job creation and economic growth. Our substantial aid and collaboration programs expanded to previously unheard-of heights (Feltman, 2021).

Moreover, a violent civil war between pro-government forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has been raging in Ethiopia since November 2020, the most populous and diverse nation in the Horn of Africa. An enormous humanitarian disaster has resulted from this ethnic strife, primarily in the Tigray Region, and it has also had political repercussions on the neighboring nations (Feltman, 2021). As a result, tensions between Ethiopia and the US increase. Successive U.S. Presidents are true, according to the Congressional Research Service (2021). Administrations have referred to Ethiopia as a crucial partner in regional security and prosperity while occasionally voicing concern over the country's political environment, human rights situation, and turmoil. Relationships have focused on initiatives to reduce hunger and poverty, raise health indicators, and combat terrorism and regional instability. The connection has been strained by the Tigray conflict.

This research article generally aims to investigate the application of the RAT theoretical framework in the roles of IPR and MFA in managing the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US since the outbreak of the north Ethiopian conflict.

## **2.2. Overviews of North Ethiopia Conflict**

The researcher used Moses, et al.'s study on Political and media analysis on the Tigray war in Ethiopia as a source to highlight the important incidents of the northern Ethiopia war since the conflict negatively affects the Ethio-US relationship. To make the war easier to grasp and by combining several sources, Moses et al. (2022) divided the conflict into four phases.

### **A. The first phase of the conflict**

As Moses, et al. (2022) noted, on 3 November 2020, the TPLF attacked the Northern Command and allegedly tried to intrude on the Kirakir area of the Amhara region. These events were the immediate circumstances that turned the conflict into a military clash. The "massive" deployment of Amhara, the federal government, and Eritrean soldiers that were preparing an offensive against Tigray, according to the TPLF, made the attack preemptive. Following the peace accord that put an end to the two nations' 20-year war, the TPLF suspected that the federal government and Eritrea were planning an attack against Tigray as early as 2018. The TPLF, on the other hand, was thought to have started planning for war as soon as it lost control, according to the authorities. Whoever controlled it would have a disproportionate military advantage because the Northern Command possessed more than 70% of the nation's military capacity (Moses, et al., 2022).

According to Moses et al. (2022), the TPLF claimed that the United States government intended to utilize the Northern Command in the alleged attack against Tigray. The aim of the TPLF's attack on the Northern Command and seizure of its arsenal was to thwart what it believed to be an impending invasion on Tigray. The federal authorities, however, asserted that the attack was unjustified and carried out with the intent to seize the weapons and forcibly overthrow the federal government. Additionally, it stated that throughout the attack, many locations, including army bases, banks, gas stations, airports, and communication offices, were simultaneously attacked or taken. The TPLF asserts that the federal authorities inflated the narrative, and the nature and severity of the attack are still under debate. Long before the attack on the Northern Command occurred, both sides were gearing up for war, so it's possible that they misread one another's motives.

The federal government commanded a military operation against the local forces in Tigray on November 4, 2020. The Afar and Amhara Special soldiers and militias were also called into action, along with Eritrean soldiers. On November 9, 2020, TPLF-affiliated soldiers slaughtered more than 200 Amhara residents in Mai Kadra as they marched into Western Tigray. On November 28, 2020, Eritrean forces carried out another murder of civilians in Axum, which resulted in the deaths of over 100 Tigrayans. The conventional conflict ended in early December 2020, and guerrilla warfare began to take shape. Despite being driven from Mekelle, the TPLF persisted in its conflict in other regions of Tigray (Moses et al., 2022).

## **B. The second phase of the conflict**

On November 28, 2020, the government said that the ENDF had taken over control of Mekelle and that an interim government would be in charge of the Tigray area. Several TPLF leaders were either murdered or captured over the course of the following two months, while many others went unnamed. During this time, efforts were made to win the support of the Tigray people for the interim government, distribute humanitarian supplies, rebuild infrastructure, and resume services that had been cut off. The TPLF was first depleted, but it progressively recovered thanks likely to two significant events. Second, the Amhara administration's occupation of the disputed territory between Amhara and Tigray and the displacement and retaliatory attacks committed in the process made it difficult for the interim administration to garner popular support or to act as a cohesive force (Moses, et al., 2022). First, the role of Eritrean forces and the atrocities they committed appeared to have ignited Tigrayan support for the TPLF.

The TPLF was designated a terrorist group by the federal government on May 8, 2021, in accordance with the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes Proclamation (2020). The reenergized Tigrayan forces, who announced a new onslaught to retake territory taken by the Ethiopian government at the end of June 2021, were not deterred by this, though. They achieved astounding success. The government unilaterally called a cease-fire and withdrew from Tigray on June 28, 2021. This action was likely motivated by a mix of military losses, external pressure, and mounting humanitarian concerns. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rejected the unilateral cease-fire and requested that a number of criteria be met, including the removal of all soldiers from Tigray, access to an aid corridor, and responsibility for human rights abuses. The second phase of the battle came to an end a few days later when the TPLF leadership arrived in Mekelle, the regional capital (Moses et al., 2022).

Humanitarian conditions continued to worsen throughout this second phase of the conflict. After over a month of escalating hostilities between the government and Tigrayan forces, rumors of substantial internal and external population displacement started to emerge. By June 2021, the UN predicted that nearly two million people would have been uprooted from their homes and living in various parts of Ethiopia. Eastern Sudan was being invaded by 63,000 people (Moses et al., 2022).

## **C. The third phase of the conflict**

The TPLF expanded its war operations into Western Tigray, Amhara, and Afar districts in July 2021 when the federal government rejected the ceasefire requirements it had set. The ENDF and its allies successfully repelled its initial offensive toward Afar and Western Tigray. The TPLF then continued its push into the Amhara region's North Wollo, North, and South Gondar. By September 2021, however, its attempts to approach Gondar from two directions had been thwarted; yet, they had been successful in pushing into South Wollo and subsequently into a portion of Afar and North Shoa.

The strategic cities of Dessie and Kombolcha, located around 350 kilometers northeast of Addis Abeba, were taken by Tigrayan fighters toward the end of October 2021 with the help of the OLF-Shene, an illegal organization. They kept moving closer to Addis until they got as close as Debre Sina, which is around 190 kilometers from the capital. At this point, it appeared likely that Addis would be taken, thus on November 2, 2021, the federal government issued a proclamation extending the state of emergency for six months. Once more, as the conflict widened, civilians were displaced in large numbers, lost their lives and means of subsistence, had their property destroyed, experienced sexual violence, had their communications cut off, and had their humanitarian supplies interrupted (Moses et al., 2022).

#### **D. The fourth phase of the conflict**

Following Abiy's decision to withdraw the troops from the front lines in late November 2021, the conflict entered its fourth phase. The TPLF had no choice but to flee to Tigray. Before making this choice, it appeared to be facing a devastating defeat in the Afar and an impending loss on the Gashena front. Drone attacks destroyed its supply line for its men, who had advanced as far as Debre Sina, 190 kilometers from Addis Abeba. According to the TPLF's announcement, the "territorial re-adjustment" was being made to "give peace a chance." The TPLF leader, Debretsion Gebremichael, sent a letter to the UN to put pressure on the Ethiopian government to prevent its forces from reentering Tigray (Moses, et al., 2022).

The central administration initially stated that it would decide on its next move only after the liberation of the Afar and Amhara areas. When this was accomplished, it made the decision not to enter Tigray. This choice, according to the administration, was motivated by two factors. First, the lessons from the previous operation, in which the Tigrayan populace was organized against the ENDF, were applied. It was necessary to deny the dictatorship a justification because, second, the world community was looking for one to accuse the regime of committing genocide. The federal government changed its storylines to focus on the reconstruction of the Amhara and Afar areas at the beginning of December 2021 when it announced the creation of a commission for national discourse. A window of possibility for peace opened on January 7, 2022, with the beginning of national discussion and the release of some TPLF leaders (Moses, et al., 2022).

This important development was covered by local media. In contrast to the government's decision not to enter Tigray, which was hotly contested even by official media, the TPLF's claim that their retreat was meant to "give peace a chance" was thoroughly debunked in local media coverage. Others claimed that if the government feels that Tigrayans are its citizens and that the TPLF was a terrorist group, it must invade Tigray, disarm the TPLF, and restore the services that were interrupted. Some analysts agreed with this argument. Others were concerned that by choosing not to enter Tigray, the TPLF could have the opportunity to reform (Moses et al., 2022).

According to Moses et al. (2022), the question of whether the conflict might be resolved by discussion was also hotly debated. Many others argued that it was already too late when the

ruling Prosperity Party distributed a letter to its members emphasizing the necessity for a negotiated settlement. After all these abuses and devastations, calling for discussion was seen as inappropriate, and the government was accused of ignoring the suffering of the populace. Although the release of some of the TPLF leaders appeared to imply a move towards their inclusion in the national dialogue process, the administration was eager to clarify that the dialogue would not include armed movements after probably reading this popular feeling. The national dialogue's specific format is still up for debate.

On the other hand, international news highlighted the failure of diplomatic measures to stop additional crimes. The US Government, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, and Olusegun Obasanjo, a former Nigerian president and AU ambassador in the Horn of Africa, were said to have made little to no progress in the de-escalation and cease-fire efforts. Foreign Policy magazine published an article calling for the US to change course in a piece that was generally sympathetic to the Ethiopian government and critical of the US decision to expel Ethiopia from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), presumably acknowledging this failure and the US role. This could indicate a shift in how the war is analyzed and covered internationally (Moses et al., 2022).

Moses, et al. (2022) also claimed that around this time, the TPLF's abuses and destructions in Amhara and Afar were still being recorded, frequently with victims and witnesses interviewed and scenes of destruction shown. A few international media outlets covered these atrocities, and some of them, like Reuters, gave Ethiopians what they perceived as the first instance of impartial reporting. Looting and assault were recorded by the AFP at Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition, they extensively covered the third-phase reports of violations by the local media, citing the findings of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The UN's assertion that a record number of civilians were killed in the strike was referenced in international media reports on the air strikes that killed civilians in the Tigray region (Moses et al., 2022).

### **2.3. International Public relations**

The majority of authors and academics who have studied the issue tend to agree on the definition of international public relations, despite the fact that definitions of public relations can vary widely depending on the viewpoint of the person describing it.

Nwosu (1996) defined international public relations (IPR) as the consciously planned, systematic, and research-based actions of a person, marketing organization, or nation that are intended to maintain good, productive, and international relations with the global public, such as clients, agents, governments, business organizations, and others.

In order to improve international relations and a company's reputation, Ekeanyanwu (2008) defines international public relations as effective, pro-active, and fruitful public relations in

multinational organizations and countries. These efforts are purposefully made to maintain the trust of their international public.

According to the criteria given above, international public relations aims to make friends and gain support or sympathy for international relations by gauging how others feel about one's conduct. Additionally, it seeks to win over corporate, governmental, and other audiences while fostering understanding.

Comparative public relations, which looks for both similarities and contrasts between the practice in one or more countries and in the other platforms, is another name for international public relations. Comparative public relations' main goal is to pinpoint issues that are broadly applicable and somewhat universal (Culbertson, 1996).

The practice of public relations in an international or cross-cultural setting could be summed up as international public relations (Culbertson, 1996). Culbertson (1996) asserts that international public relations entail using public relations techniques in at least four different contexts:

International agencies including the UN, World Bank, and IMF, Relations between governments, such as diplomatic recognition, alliance formation and dissolution, and sanctions and embargoes, transnational economic activities include finance for international firms and investment trade, Interactions between inhabitants of many nations, such as, sports, travel, the arts, movies, and other forms of entertainment.

### **2.3.1. Objectives of International Public Relations**

Regarding the IPR's strategic objectives Ekeanyanwu (2008) said as follows: The goals of international public relations involve convincing people to support our activities and policies in the international community of nations, Winning and maintaining allegiance, good citizenship, and respect for governments and leaders of independent nations is another important goal of international public relations, International Public Relations aids in fostering a sense of patriotism among local and expatriate populations, The goal of international public relations is also to counter and discredit erroneous propaganda that is directed against one's government and state, International Public Relations makes ensuring that there is a constant, two-way flow of communication between different countries, The promotion and maintenance of media collaboration among participants and stakeholders in the international arena is another distinctive goal of international public relations, Additionally, international public relations strives to pinpoint more or less common issues that confront many or all countries and look for overarching guidelines that hold true for all situations, A greater level of collaboration, tolerance, and understanding amongst those who hold various fundamental views, values, and ways of thinking can be maintained with the aid of international public relations, which also helps to forge new ties that handle impending and emergent crises, With the help of international public relations, we can win over new allies for our country and keep those allies and connections strong, Gaining favorable laws, opinions, and perceptions of your nation, institutions, or

organizations is. Another strategic goal of international public relations is to influence legislation, opinions, and perceptions in favor of your nation, institutions, or organizations. Additionally, international public relations aids in your country's ability to draw in new companies, institutions, and organizations. In multinational corporate connections, international public relations aids in striking a balance between the local and the global.

Ekeanyanwu (2008) also offers the following IPR methods, programs, and approaches to accomplish the aforementioned objectives: Establishing Cultural Centers, Hosting Seminars Locally and Abroad, and Scheduling Periodic Press Conferences Are All Ways Of Managing Crisis Communication, Application of effective community relations Effective media relations, Mass Reorientation of Film and Documentary Film Production.

### **2.3.2. Public Relations Publics**

Grunig proposes a situational theory of the public that categorizes audiences into active and passive audiences based on the kinds of situations that might elicit a response (Grunig 1983) in order to identify the issues that might cause a public reaction. He distinguished four categories of the public:

1. **All-issue publics:** -. These folks frequently have a laser-like concentration on the injustices committed by or via organizations. Deforestation, child labor, animal testing, and nuclear weapons may all provoke the same rage in them, and they may act against businesses that engage in any one of these practices.
2. **Apathetic populace:** uninterested in any matters. The most of the time, these people are either unaware of or uninterested by occurrences in their surroundings. They are egocentric and highly unlikely to participate in any protests or petition drives to voice their opinions.
3. **Single-issue publics:** -These people may have made the decision to focus all of their efforts on a single cause, such as helping refugees and asylum seekers, and to be extremely active, but only in this one area.
4. **Hot-issue publics:** - engaged on a single problem with high visibility and widespread societal impact (such as domestic violence). These people frequently seize on a topic that is trending in the media (such as the rights of fathers in divorce and family separation cases) and become extremely active in this one area, but only for a brief time.

### **2.3.3. Functions of Public Relations**

There are many tasks related to public relations work. According to Seitel (2007), these functions consist of: Writing: Speeches for the organization's top executives must be prepared and written by the public relations department. For the organization, public relations must also write news or press releases, one of public relations' main responsibilities in every organization is media relations. On behalf of the organization, public relations must communicate with the press or media about business-related issues. The department of public relations plans special events, media events, and any other management tasks that have been given the green light,

**Counseling:** The department of public relations also offers management advice for all of its interactions and dealings with others. **Research:** The department of public relations is supposed to do research on the beliefs, values, and behaviors that are influenced by opinions, attitudes, and behaviors, **Publicity:** The organization's public relations department must produce favorable coverage and attention, **Marketing Communications:** Public Relations play a critical role in marketing communication. In accordance with this arrangement, Public Relations also handles tasks connected to marketing, such as developing sales materials, setting up meeting displays, and planning sales promotions, **Community Relations:** The Public Relations division recognizes and aids the internal and external difficulties of the host community. This aids in preserving a friendly relationship between it and the host community.

**Consumer Relations:** The Public Relations division communicates verbally and in writing with consumers, **Employee Relations:** The Public Relations division fosters goodwill among the company's staff members, **Government Relations:** On behalf of the organization, the Public Relations division engages with each branch of the state's government system, **Investor Relations:** To ensure the desired outcomes are realized, the Public Relations department also interacts with the company's owners and stockholders, helps package communications materials intended for them, etc., **Public Affairs and Issues Management:** Dealing with public policy and its effects on the organization is another key duty of the Public Relations division, **Web interface design and development:** The department of public relations sets up a connection between the organization and its many publics.

**Website Development and Web Interface:** Through the organization's website, which it builds and operates, the Public Relations department establishes an interface between the organization and its many publics.

#### **2.3.4. Challenges of International Public Relations**

The use of worldwide public relations in multinational corporations and other smaller companies that engage in international business and relations has a number of difficulties. However, four of these challenges are described based on Maureen Taylor (2001), and Ekeanyanwu (2008) adds a fifth.

The following is a discussion of these issues: One of the toughest problems may be societal culture. According to Sriramesh and White (1992), who were quoted by Taylor (2001), international public relations must take into account the host country's cultural and socioeconomic standards. Every civilization will experience varied PR issues as a result, with clear distinctions in various settings. For professionals in international public relations from other nations, the language will also provide a distinct issue. Corporate jingles, marketing and advertising themes, as well as the translation of original materials, will all need to be double-checked for audiences and markets outside of the United States (Taylor, 2001).

Because governments continue to control media ownership and content in many parts of the world, Taylor (2001) also listed the media as one of the key variables that will pose specific problems to practitioners of public relations. As a result, organizations may have to pay to have stories published, which will alter the media and public relations landscape. Public relations professionals will continue to face ethical challenges on a global scale. Different approaches to the practice will be necessary due to cultural diversity, various social and political development levels, and various conduct norms (Taylor, 2001).

According to Ekeanyanwu (2008), concerns with pedagogies and the establishment of curriculum are significant hindrances to the practice of international public relations in most nations. Teaching international public relations has consistently revealed striking variations across a range of settings and nations. Likewise, with curriculum development. The US served as a model for most countries' public relations, but European PR has developed beyond what the US provided. US practitioners still face difficulties with PR in the Middle East, and there is a fine line between lobbying, covert bribery/manipulation, and PR in Nigeria. These obvious disparities hold true in additional societies not covered here. When one starts to think about curricula and teaching styles that are widely acknowledged around the world, they continue to be enormous problems for the twenty-first century.

## **2.4. Concept of Crisis**

### **2.4.1. Definition of Crisis**

There are numerous interpretations of the word crisis. To decide what to do in a crisis, crisis managers and leaders are guided by these meanings. Since we talk about "managing" crises while they are all extremely different from one another, it is also an intriguing applied field (Zamoum & Gorpe, 2018). A crisis, in the opinion of Timothy Coombs (2007, p. 2), is the perception of an unanticipated incident that imperils significant stakeholder expectations, has a negative impact on an organization's performance, and results in unfavorable outcomes. This term combines many viewpoints on the problem.

Although unpredictable, a crisis is not unexpected; prudent companies are aware that they will experience one at some point; they simply do not know when. According to Simola (2014), the complexity of the notion of crisis management and its nature are the causes of the debate over a single definition. The crisis is notable for its rarity, relevance, significant effect, ambiguity, urgency, and high stakes, according to Simola. In essence, a crisis has four defining traits that define it. Simola agrees that, due to the aforementioned qualities, what a crisis is to one organization may not be to another. When attempting to define a crisis, Kayes et al. (2013) state that it involves a time of discontinuity, a circumstance in which the organization's or system's essential values are at danger, and that this calls for important decision-making.

When evaluated in this perspective, we can see that a crisis has both positive and negative valences and performs as a change agent or factor in organizational management. Nwosu (1996) defines a crisis as "any event, issue, occurrence or situation that could be described as a turning

point, for better or for worse." A crisis is one of the main factors that can affect an organization, and it is a proud chapter in any organization's history. This indicates that an organization has not clearly moved away from the idea of a crisis. The crisis is unusual or typical and predicted.

In other words, it is dysfunctional and a disruption of the organization's regular operations. It is sage to point out those crises and conflicts happen because they serve as a catalyst for effective change and organizational change at a particular moment. This is due to the fact that a crisis can strengthen a company internally, and relationships between departments and units may improve and grow, for instance, in the face of challenge and rivalry from other companies in the same industry. Similar to a fire engine or a lifeboat responding to an SOS, crisis public relations, also known as crisis management, is used when a tragedy, whether minor or severe, calls for rapid and effective action (Black 1989:31). The two main public relations crises that can occur are described by Black. As follows:

**Known unknown:** This explains the kind of tragedy that could happen due to the nature of your product or service. A "product recall" is always a possibility if you manufacture automobiles or other type of capital equipment. A radioactive or fatal discharge could be dangerous if you are in the chemical or unclear field. It is known that a disaster might happen in each of these situations, as well as many other domains, but it is unclear whether or when it will happen.

**Unknown Unknown:** These are abrupt, catastrophic catastrophes that no one could have predicted. An illustration of this was the "Tylenol" event in the USA in 1982, in which someone injected cyanide.

## 2.4.2. Element of Crisis

Public relations crisis management identifies four components, namely:

**Trigger:** a crisis-related unanticipated event that significantly alters how the public views the organization. An excellent example is when five outbreaks occur in a company and fully burn down all pertinent records, leaving no other way to recover. This kind of incident will bring about or set off unanticipated effects, which will lead to an issue or the creation of an inquiry panel.

**Threat:** A threat is a circumstance that requires a public relations professional to be alert, paying attention to everything around them, including other people's sensory features, in order to determine whether or not it could ever put human lives in danger, the environment in danger, or the organization's finances or reputation at risk. The existence of any organization could be in jeopardy from this.

**An uncontrolled situation:** Public relations professionals tend to think or feel that a crisis will always provide a challenging position and a disruption to the organization's environment, placing the situation temporarily outside of management's control.

**Urgent attention needed:** There will be a lot of pressure after the first three positions is undirected, and this will require immediate care. This is either done to prevent damage or to reduce it as much as feasible. To safeguard itself, the target public, and those who will undoubtedly be impacted by the crisis, management will need to act quickly (Solu 1994).

Prepare a crisis management strategy for public relations The first need is a documented assessment of potential catastrophes and an evaluation of the business' capacity to handle a significant catastrophe. The required preparation measures can then be taken based on this report, which must be submitted to and authorized by management. Black (1989:32) states that, three essential components—agreed business policy, tried-and-true communication channels, and trained key personnel—are necessary for effective crisis management.

### **2.4.3. Stage of Crisis**

The five stages of a crisis according to Fearn-Banksy (derived from Fearn-Banks, 2002)

The first stage is Detection; the organization keeps an eye out for prodromes, or warning indicators, as Barton (1993) has coined the term, the second, Preparation/Prevention: The organization pays attention to the warning indications and develops proactive or reactive measures to deal with the crisis, as needed, the third is Containment; Taking action to shorten the crisis' duration or its repercussions, the fourth Recovery is the phase in which efforts are made to restore the organization's "normal" operational conditions or effectiveness, finally When an organization learns from an experience, it reflects on it, evaluates it, and considers both its bad effects and any potential future benefits.

### **2.4.4. Public Relations Strategies for Conflict Management**

International public relations helps people and companies understand one another, which gives our diverse, complex society a competitive advantage and improves performance. Its goal is to reach consensus on public and private policy. It provides help to a wide range of organizations, including hospitals, charities, enterprises, marriage institutions, government agencies, and educational and religious institutions. For instance, in accordance with their aims, these organizations develop close contacts with a variety of stakeholders, such as decision-makers, staff members, patrons, shareholders, and local communities (Igben, 1997; Igben, 2009). Several public relations strategies used in dispute resolution were covered by the author.

The following are only a few of them: dialogue, bargaining, mediation, community relations, arbitration, and many more (Yusuf, 2012; Aworinde, 1993; and Awojobi, 2011). Public relations have continued to be an effective technique for resolving disputes.

Negotiation, mediation, investigation, conciliation, arbitration, mass media, public opinion and propaganda tools are among the public relations tactics used in managing or resolving conflicts, according to Ogbuoshi (2011).

**Negotiation:** Conflicts are resolved through negotiation, a public relations tactic in which the disputing parties debate and come to an agreement on how to settle their disputes. Only the participants from either side of the disagreement are participating in this technique, so there are no third parties. Negotiation entails conversations, arguments, and counterarguments, but always with the goal of settling the problem, according to Ogbuoshi (2011). The conflict's immediate and distant origins are uncovered during the debates, arguments, and counterarguments, and remedies and paths ahead are proposed.

**Meditation:** This tactic requires the involvement of a third party, which is typically composed of public relations specialists and key players from opposing sides of such conflicts as political, religious, or traditional leaders. The parties engaged in meditation use public relations to resolve disputes through persuasion, which may lead to negotiations between the disputing parties

**Inquiry:** In order to analyze the root reasons of a conflict and provide comprehensive recommendations that would help the issue be resolved, this technique employs a commission of inquiry made up of public relations specialists and other pertinent parties. As an illustration, a judicial commission of inquiry was established to look into the deaths of about fourteen (14) people at Fr. Mbaka's Adoration Ground while Chimaroke Nnamani served as governor of Enugu State.

**Conciliation:** Conciliation entails the use of both inquiry and mediation techniques in an effort to identify the conflict's root causes as well as the mediation of a settlement between the parties. Additionally, ideas for how to address the issue are written up and submitted to the relevant authority.

**Arbitration:** In this type of litigation, disputes are settled by a neutral body, tribunal, panel, or traditional court with appropriate jurisdiction. The body in question may be made up of attorneys and public relations specialists who work to sway and persuade parties to participate in procedures, the results of which will be binding on all parties involved in the conflict.

**Mass media:** The mass media's function of fostering integration or solidarity is one of its functions. Conflict can be settled through the media's tools, including magazines, radio, television, and newspapers. It is the responsibility of public relations professionals to create stories and features that are compelling and work to resolve a contentious situation. Additionally, journalists and editors should produce interpretive, convincing, and incisive editorials that are targeted toward settling the issue in addition to reporting objectively on every facet of it.

**Public Opinion:** This is used to describe the majority's views and opinions on a topic of general interest. Public relations professionals analyze public opinion to determine how people feel and act toward an issue and to suggest solutions.

**Propaganda devices:** There are several propaganda strategies that can be applied in conflict management, including name-calling, glittering generalization plain folk, bandwagon, card

stacking, testimonial, and rebuttal. Regardless of which one the public relations specialist opts to utilize, it should be supported by facts, not by lies and truths. For instance, the late Sen. Uche Chukwumerije used propaganda strategies to prevent Nigeria's collapse when the nation was on the brink of collapse following the annulment of the presidential election on June 12, 1993.

## **2.5. The Convergence of Public Relations and Diplomacy**

Several aspects of public relations and diplomacy are compared in L'Etang's article "Public Relations as Diplomacy" from 1996. She says that while protecting the reputation of their clients, public relations and diplomacy both deals in trust and employs negotiating and impression control methods. Thus, it can be observed that public relations and diplomacy are similar professions with some parallels in their disciplinary evolution (L'Etang, 1996). She notes that they both "attempt to manage communication about issues" and have "interpretive and presentational roles" as part of their "occupations" (p. 16). Furthermore, both parties place equal weight on their connection with the media. In her statement, she claims that "both diplomats and public relations practitioners conduct much of their business via the media and are media-trained to provide appropriate'sound-bites' on the issues of the day" (L'Etang, 1996, p. 16). Additionally, there are many similarities between the two in terms of their operations and methodologies. L'Etang (1996) adduces as follows:

The current public relations literature can be used to track a number of related diplomatic and public relations activities, including rhetoric, oratory, lobbying, negotiation, and peacemaking, counseling, and intelligence collection. There seem to be three orders of function at play in this situation: advisory (counseling), dialogic (negotiation, peacemaking), and representational (rhetoric, oratory, advocacy). The research and environmental scanning that support the issues management function are described by the intelligence collecting function. This is a really intriguing job since it suggests that a military job is being done, at least in part, covertly. The representational functions recognise egoism and offer promotion and persuasive techniques. They also entail preparation and impression-management procedures, as well as maybe some rigidity in terms of preserving one's stance.

Government public relations and public diplomacy, on the other hand, are in charge of institutional communications with organizations as well as contacts with larger groups, and they both need to be receptive to the general public and media coverage (L'Etang, 2009). Both agree that communication across social borders is essential since every nation and government has a distinct history that has been molded through social interactions (L'Etang, 2009; Signitzer & Wamser, 2005). However, because each subject is prone to this fault, academics in each field have taken pains to distinguish each phrase from propaganda (L'Etang, 2009). Since there is a greater need for both in particular locations, it is not surprising to find each field concentrated there (L'Etang, 2009). Both must be aware of social change, particularly the fact that social ties are constantly changing (L'Etang, 2009). There will always be those who disagree with social

change in these areas (Signitzer & Wamser, 2005). As a result, divergent factions can be brought together through negotiation using both public diplomacy and government public relations (Kovacs, 2001). Both fields must concentrate closely on their target audiences inside these social domains, whether they are a company, non-governmental organization, or constituent group (L'Etang, 2009).

In conclusion, the objectives of public diplomacy and government PR are comparable. To establish their media agendas, each makes an effort to control the information coming from different sources (L'Etang, 2009). Each person can choose how to frame public issues to best achieve the eventual goal of influencing public debate after the media agenda is in place. The organization has a considerable organizational political advantage when the public is disseminating information that is consistent with the strategic communication aims of either public diplomacy or government public relations (L'Etang, 2009).

### **2.5.1. International Public Relations as an Extension of Diplomacy**

Inter-state contacts and engagements at the diplomatic level in international relations are referred to as diplomacy in the conventional sense. It is the direct expression of a state's opinions and views to the decision-makers of the other state on certain subjects.

In the modern meaning, diplomacy refers to relationships developed between nations through peaceful means. According to this perspective, diplomacy is the control of the global stage through interpersonal communication (Cull, 2009: 12). Foreign policy professionals who work as diplomats or communication officers manage it. The following are the global players in diplomacy: governments, government officials, multinational corporations, various organizations, non-governmental organizations, media and the Public.

In international relations, the idea of "soft power" was regarded as a diplomatic tool that encompasses tactics for "agenda setting and attracting" as an alternative to the use of military or economic strength. As an alternative to more forceful methods like military action and economic sanctions, diplomacy has thus been romanticized as "meeting in common values" centered on conversation. By fostering understanding between the nations, it seeks to improve their international standing. An international public relations based on two-way communication is the most practical tool of strategic diplomacy.

Foreign public relations are notable for; organizations for special events, event management, and social communication External relations campaigns in diplomacy provide as special possibilities for fostering goodwill and presenting a positive image.

## **2.6. Roles of Strategic Communication Plan for Effective Strategic Communication**

Let's define strategic communication first before discussing the functions of a strategic communication plan. The majority of academics also divide official and non-official meanings of

strategic communication. Christian Paul asserts that national government reports, doctrines, and other government publications are intimately tied to the official definition of strategic communication. The non-official term, on the other hand, relates to academic papers, research, journals, and publications.

Afety (2014) writes in his study that "strategy is a collection of ideas, preferences, and methods that explains the activity and gives it purpose by connecting it to a desired effect or a stated goal." Planning communication activities enables many communication professionals and governments to have a diverse impact on nation-building goals. Simply put, strategic communication is the process of determining what a nation stands for and conveying that message through the most effective channels while being aware of the ramifications and potential results of such communications. A working definition of strategic communication is also provided by Christopher Paul (2011), who defines it as "coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives." Paul continues by saying that efficient communication

A strategic communications plan's objective is to coordinate all of the organization's initiatives in public education and advocacy. Instead of always responding to the environment, you will be in a better position to be proactive and strategic if you create a long-term strategy for your efforts. By identifying synergies and common opportunities in your many programs and work areas, the strategic plan will assist you in allocating resources more strategically and efficiently (SPIN, 2005).

Pre-planned, goal-oriented, and well-managed are listed by Onat (2012) as the multidimensional and distinctive aspects of communication strategy. All of the communication's components and tools have been carefully thought out so that their combined efforts can support the desired outcome. The process of communication has a higher objective or target. The communication needs to be handled carefully. Controlling how the message is perceived, decoded, and understood by the target audience is equally crucial.

Onat also explains how effective strategic communication requires a variety of plans and techniques to realize the desired outcomes, a methodology to successfully choose and implement the communication's tactics and approaches, and a messenger to effectively deliver the message to the intended audience. Technology is employed in communication as well to speed up, simplify, and increase audience accessibility.

Ekşi (2014) emphasizes the significance of strategic communication and how effective management of it may be in ensuring that the state's communication policies, vision, and practices are integrated and cohesive. This can be achieved by identifying clear key concepts and words that are repeatedly used, figuring out how to design the communications, communicating the style, organizing the brief and important messages, operationalizing the messaging, and using

tools and procedures. The three stages of strategic communication's involvement in seeking to inform, influence, and persuade are planning, operationalizing, and evaluating.

The most important part of strategic communication is planning what to tell, how to persuade, and how to influence. In deciding on communication policies and particular strategies, the function of strategic communication or public diplomacy serves as a road map. Planning calls for thorough research and audience identification, the formulation of concise messaging, the selection of the most appropriate media and channels, and the methods of gathering feedback. The planning stage is followed by the implementation of the communication tactics. During this phase, the communicator's job is to inform, persuade, and influence target audiences by delivering information using carefully chosen medium that can help the speaker reach them. The last stage involves reviewing the communication activities from the level before. In order to solve the more complex mass media process and play the role of the "decoder," strategic communication has become extremely important. Strategic communication management assesses how well communications are received by the target audiences, determines the perception level, and modifies the conversation right away if there is a misinterpretation or a lack of efficacy. Therefore, strategic communication management avoids target audiences being misunderstood (zkan, 2015).

Building successful, good relationships between individuals, organizations, economies, and governments requires strategic communication. Good strategic communication is facilitated by the use of newsletters, manuals, emails, memos, official announcements, word-of-mouth, media broadcasts, and other sources. Effective communication with people, governments, and other communication players around the world helps a nation develop a positive reputation. Shayna Englin, a professor of public relations and corporate communications, claims that strategic communication entails using the best message and the appropriate media while adhering to organizational communication-specific goals. The best message being delivered to the target audience aids in enhancing the organization's reputation and creating a positive public perception.

Therefore, based on the arguments made above regarding strategic communication and strategic communication plans, it can be concluded that in order to develop effective communication in any context, but particularly in the context of crisis communication, a strategic communication plan serves as a roadmap that directs overall communication practices toward the desired outcome. The RAT framework could then include the strategic communication plan as one variable in addition to the context, medium, genre, and text in order to evaluate the success of MFA's strategic communication in resolving tense US-Ethiopian ties.

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

An organized, systematic body of information that describes a natural occurrence is called a theory. The act of applying a theory's postulates, presumptions, and principles to describing and assessing a research problem is known as the theoretical framework. In addition to describing,

analyzing, interpreting, and predicting a phenomenon, it also entails associating or linking the study's problem. It also aids in supporting and enhancing the legitimacy and justification of the research by giving the research work a focus and direction.

The study of crisis communication employs a number of theories, including situational crisis communication theory, issue and crisis management theory, image restoration theory, apology theory, attribution theory, contingency theory, situational theory, and organizational theory. It also uncovers theories like the excellence theory, diffusion and innovation theory, self-disclosure theory, chaos theory, commodity theory, and stakeholder theory.

The researcher uses the rhetorical arena model as a theoretical framework to examine the US-Ethiopian bilateral diplomatic relationship crisis based on the aforementioned theories used in crisis communication.

The focus of rhetorical arena theory shifts from isolated organizational discourses or media discourses to "patterns of interaction" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). The viewpoints of the many stakeholders and the methods they employ to advance their interests and concerns during a crisis are the main topics of this theory. Rhetorical arena theory, which is related to strategic communication, examines how the discourses created during crises lead to various interpretations of the crisis and incorporates the interpersonal components of communication. The widespread digitalization of media systems today has made it more clear than ever that traditional planning paradigms and the idea of a sender-recipient framework in general are under threat. The most important communication takes place between people, in various cultural contexts, which results in various perceptions.

As a result, companies and communication professionals are shifting from being planners and senders to being facilitators or strategic improvisers. The typical crisis communication technique should therefore be reviewed before this approach is suggested.

### **2.7.1 Rhetorical Arena Theory**

The Rhetorical Arena by Frandsen and Johansen (2007) is both sender and receiver-oriented and directed from a multi-vocal perspective incorporating the contextual dynamics of a crisis. It serves as a dynamic crisis communication model. Because the details of the key environment and rhetorical variables are more crucial, Frandsen and Johansen do not create a typology of crisis response techniques like Benoit and Coombs do. The Rhetorical Arena, which represents the third phase in crisis communication study, tries to explore and define the dynamic and complex processes of crisis communication, while Benoit and Coombs represent the first two steps, according to Frandsen and Johansen (Frandsen and Johansen 2007).

In order to effectively communicate during crises, RAT employs a multi-vocal approach, which "includes the multiple voices of the many senders and receivers that start communicating when a crisis occurs" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2016). These voices could come from the news media,

customers, specialists, legislators, trade associations, workers, and a company's management. When a crisis develops, a rhetorical space is established where the different voices can converse. This communication complexity is addressed by RAT, which seeks "to identify, describe, and explain patterns within the multiple communication processes taking place inside the arena" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2016).

According to RAT, crises are actualized conflicts for definitional hegemony in which opposing viewpoints contend over how to perceive both the crisis itself and the appropriateness of the crisis response. Each communication activity can be viewed as a "intervention in or a contribution to the crisis," which forms a component of the rhetorical arena (Frandsen & Johansen, 2016). The many voices can enter and exit the arena as the crisis develops.

An incident or scenario that an organization and/or other voices in the arena understand as a crisis will result in a complex and dynamic configuration of communication processes that emerge before, during, and after the event or situation. The relationship between diverse players, situations, and discourses (as expressed in certain genres and texts) is another aspect of crisis communication. 2017 (Frandsen & Johansen)

The "arena" metaphor, which refers to a setting where several players compete, argue, and negotiate in front of an audience, serves as the foundation for the rhetorical arena theory (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010, 2017). The viewpoints of the many stakeholders and the methods they employ to advance their interests and concerns during a crisis are the main topics of this theory. Rhetorical arena theory, which is related to strategic communication, examines how the discourses created during crises lead to various interpretations of the crisis and incorporates the interpersonal components of communication. The focus of rhetorical arena theory shifts from isolated organizational discourses or media discourses to "patterns of interaction" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017).

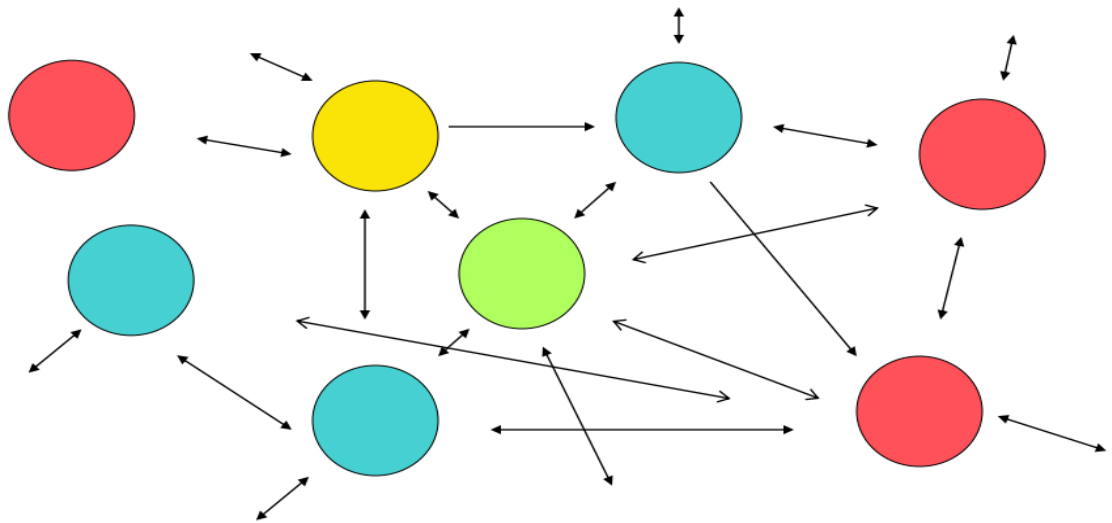
The internal and external parameters of the crisis communication process are represented by the two components of the two-layered, two-component Frandsen and Johansen rhetorical model. The context model, which introduces the multi-vocal method to communication, is the first part. The text model, which operates within the constraints of context, medium, genre, and text, is the second element and is of a rhetorical or socio-discursive nature (Ibid). Frandsen and Johansen, however, refer to the two components as the macro and micro components in more recent presentations of The Rhetorical Arena model (Frandsen and Johansen 2012).

### **A. Macro Component: The Multi-vocal Arena**

The metaphorical arena of communications that develops after a crisis-inducing event and encompasses all the influenced actors, whether they be stakeholders or the company itself, is represented by the macro component of The Rhetorical Arena. All actors act and communicate within the confines of the crisis; hence, the arena is termed closed. Publicly exhibited communications are oriented towards the particular crisis, albeit other actors may arrive during

the crisis. The most important feature of the arena is that understanding the message of just one sender is insufficient because everyone involved in a crisis has a voice that could be relevant and that needs to be understood (Frandsen & Johansen, 2007).

The actions, expressed accusations, rumors, and anger of stakeholders towards an organization are also considered crisis communication, so it is not just the communication used by an accused organization in a crisis to defend its reputation and image. The number of participants in the arena fluctuates depending on how complicated the issue is, but each one of them serves as both a sender and a receiver (Ibid). The players' ability to interact with, against, in the past with, about, and/or with each other, depending on their level of influence, is what gives the arena its complexity, as seen in the following model.



*Figure 1: The Rhetorical Arena: Macro Component (Frandsen and Johansen)*

Various factors that distinguish the stakeholders from one another, including their level of authority, communicative access, strategic advantage, and social and economic capital, establish the various influential standing of the many actors within the arena. An organization can target its crisis communication at the most prominent actors or stakeholders based on their influence capital, arguably improving the effectiveness of the communication used and its image and reputational defense (Ibid).

### **B. Micro Component: Inside the Rhetorical Arena**

The socio-discursive or rhetorical features of communication inside the arena are represented by the micro component of the rhetorical arena. The current crisis response tactics of Benoit and Coombs, where the context, medium, genre, and text parameters and choices influence the application of the specific strategies, are considered as a supplement by this model component.

Context: The context dimension, which includes the psychological, sociocultural, organizational, and situational circumstances of each communicative activity, is the most complicated of the four, Frandsen and Johansen distinguish between three primary categories of media: new media (the internet and social media), electronic media (television), and printed media (newspapers). Genres include tweets, blogs, videos, press conferences, and press releases, Text: which encapsulates the actualization and expression of rhetorical strategies, Specifically verbal and visual rhetorical techniques.

Because other theories rely on theories and test studies rather than case studies, the researcher preferred the RAT model. This theory tackles the three stages of crisis, including pre-crisis, during crisis, and post-crisis. It also relies on static data in a created framework and stakeholders' causal attributions. In addition, compared to previous theories of crisis communication management, this approach is very new. Although the IPR MFA practitioner's roles in managing the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US are examined using the RAT model application, the research concluded that the RAT model should add a fifth variable since this research amended the theory by including a strategic communication strategy.

### **2.7.2. Situational crisis communication theory**

W. Timothy Coombs, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Eastern Illinois University, created this idea. He has a doctorate in issues management and public affairs from Purdue University. For more than 20 years, Dr. Coombs has been active in the study and practice of public relations. His main area of study is crisis communication, specifically the creation and evaluation of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs 2007).

Since maintaining or reestablishing a positive company reputation and image is the primary goal of the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), Coombs' theory is often applied in public relations research Sellnow and Sheger (2013). Because SCCT offers a prescriptive system for effectively matching reaction techniques with the particular scenario, Coombs claims that its use helps save an organization's reputation during a crisis (Coombs and Hollady 2002).

The factor of "attribution," which is defined as the level of blame stakeholders are likely to place on a company after a crisis based on the company's prior reputation, is introduced by situational crisis communication theory (SCCT; Coombs, 2007), which redirects attention from company strategy to public perception. According to the SCCT, the company's perceived acceptance of responsibility must line up with the perceived crisis responsibility that stakeholders have placed on the institution.

SCCT was motivated by earlier research on crisis response techniques, in which the specified strategies (Benoit et al.) were arranged according to the attribution theory. The assumption that stakeholders of an organization will assign blame for a crisis based on the facts available is typically integrated within attribution theory. This strongly affects how a crisis plays out since it

establishes the level of perceived accountability to the organization or other actors (W.T. Coombs 2009). Furthermore, the SCCT is designed with the hope that it can "alter attributions about the crisis, or change perceptions of the organization in crisis" (Ibid), where both of them, alone or collectively, can safeguard the organizational reputation.

Four "postures," including Denial, Diminishment, Rebuilding, and Bolstering, are used by SCCT to reformulate Image Restoration Theories (IRT) techniques (Coombs, 2014). In order to assess stakeholder reactions to actual or imagined crises, survey research is frequently used in SCCT work (Claeys, Cauberghe, & Vyncke, 2010; Ki & Nekmat, 2014).

The three main components of SCCT, according to Kyhn (2008), are the crisis, crisis response methods, and a mechanism for matching crises and response strategies. It is thought that a crises' characteristics determine how effective a communication strategy will be. A crisis manager can select the best reaction by comprehending the problem. The SCCT makes an effort to comprehend, clarify, and offer directive steps for crisis communication.

In order to assess the threat of a crisis, Coombs (2007) outlines a two-step methodology for crisis managers. Finding out who is responsible for the issue and to what extent stakeholders hold the organization accountable is the first step. Finding the consistency and distinctiveness of the organizational conduct in past crises is the second phase in the process. Consistency refers to the organization's history of crises and the chance that it has encountered situations comparable to these in the past. The organization's distinctiveness reflects its history, reputation, and how well it has handled its stakeholders during prior crises. Coombs (2007) distinguishes between three basic sorts of response tactics: denials, diminish, and reconstruct. When there is a low crisis responsibility (such as a rumor), denial should be used. When there is proof of crisis responsibility, diminish should be employed. In order to safeguard its reputation, the company makes an effort to lessen criticism. Finally, when there is a high crisis responsibility, reconstruct should be applied.

### **2.7.3 Discourse of Renewal Theory**

DRT and SCCT may be replaced by the discourse of renewal theory (DRT), which was created by Ulmer and Sellnow in 2002 and expanded by Ulmer, Seeger, and Sellnow in 2007. DRT is based on a number of presumptions, chief among them being that a crisis offers an organization chances that might not otherwise reveal themselves. DRT "describes, explains, and prescribes how crisis communication should emphasize learning, growth, ethical communication, transformation, and opportunity" (Heath, 2013), as opposed to emphasizing post-crisis communication intended to protect or insulate the organization. Organizational learning, ethical communication, a future vision for the organization, and successful rhetoric are the four theoretical goals that Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2009) define as being important to the discourse of renewal.

The chance to rearrange the organization to focus on its core purpose after a crisis is created by DRT, a higher stage of organizational renewal (Seeger et al., 2005). According to Ulmer, Seeger, and Sellnow (2007), "image restoration focuses on explaining and interpreting what has happened and who is at fault, while renewal is concerned with what will happen and how the organization will move forward." Additionally, DRT places more emphasis on the chief executive officer of the company than other members of the communication team. DRT advises organizations to communicate positively while focusing on the organization's future while they deal with the problem. By focusing on a brighter future for the organization as a result of the crisis, DRT stresses getting beyond the immediate nature of the issue (Hu, 2012).

According to the discourse of renewal theory (DRT), the focus is now on how an organization improves its image for the future rather than how it justifies and explains its crisis-related activities (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003; Seeger & Ulmer, 2002). According to DRT, an organization needs to reevaluate its identity and social position in order to manage a crisis efficiently. DRT researchers concentrate on the organization's future goals and the adjustments it must do to revamp its image and reposition itself within its social environment and sector. The most "optimistic" theory, it encourages businesses to look for possibilities during a crisis. In order to identify recovery strategies, it primarily uses rhetorical and discursive text analysis techniques (Griffin-Padgett & Allison, 2010; Seeger & Griffin Padgett, 2010). Ineffective policies and practices are eliminated, and new ones that are better suited to a refreshed, forward-looking approach are created.

It should come as no surprise that the earliest DRT cases were natural disasters, accidents, and other unavoidable crises that did not permanently damage the organization's reputation and allowed it to recover more quickly (Seeger & Ulmer, 2002). More subsequent studies (Reierson, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2009; Veil, Sellnow, & Wickline, 2013) pushed the boundaries of DRT by using it to address preventable or more complicated catastrophes. Therefore, post-crisis communication is the main focus of this approach.

#### **2.7.4 Image restoration (repair theory)**

One of the most extensively used theories of post-crisis communication, the image restoration theory (IRT) by Benoit (1995), is acknowledged (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Benoit's notion of image restoration was originally referred to as image repair in later studies. Two presumptions underlie the possibility of image restoration. The first presumption is that communication is an activity with certain goals. Benoit (2015) argues that "image repair messages are purposeful, intended to deal with threats to the communicator's image." The second presumption is that preserving a positive reputation is one of communication's core objectives. When an institution's reputation and image are in danger, communicators should work to resolve the situation as soon and with as little harm to the organization as feasible. These two premises form the basis of IRT and suggest planned measures to preserve and/or restore the organization's reputation and image.

Crisis communication managers must take into account the type of crisis the business is facing and choose the best course of action from a variety of tactical options (Benoit & Dorries, 1996).

Five general communication strategies are possible, according to Benoit (1995), including denial (rejecting the accusation or shifting blame), evading responsibility (claiming a lack of responsibility), reducing the offensiveness of the event (boosting the audience's positive affect; minimizing the unpleasantness of the offensive act; attacking the accuser; favorably comparing the act to similar but more reprehensible acts; placing the act in a larger, more despicable context), attacking the accuser, and attacking the accused. The organization's specific problem would determine the best course of action. In many crisis communication scenarios, research on Benoit's IRT has shown to be helpful (Reiersen, 2009).

Benoit contends that following a crisis, image restoration techniques can be utilized to recover reputations. He also contends that open, ethical dialogue is essential for successful crisis resolution. The notion of image restoration suggests numerous methods for handling crises. There are a number of options from which to choose, ranging from "denial" to "evading responsibility" and to "reducing offensiveness." Over time, William Benoit's hypothesis underwent changes. The theory's central idea is that an attack might put the reputation (image) in danger. The theory employs communication to defend its reputation from an offensive behavior or a claim of responsibility for the act.

### ***2.7.5. Critical Reflections on the Approaches of Global Crisis Communication***

It has long been a demand of crisis communication researchers to investigate "the dynamics, complexity, and in some cases, conflictual created by the ongoing process of globalization" and "the effects of the international context on crisis communication" (Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, & Johansen, 2010). Because they are "more receiver oriented" (Coombs et al., 2010), or in other words, "focusing on a single organization," the dominant theories, such as Benoit's Image Restoration Theory, Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory, or Shin and Cameron's Contingency Theory, have shortcomings that make them "less useful if we wish to include the inter-organizational dimension" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). These theories also don't "pay enough attention to the high degree of complexity and dynamics characterizing most crises" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2007). In contrast to performing contextual crisis communication research in one country, Coombs and Laufer (2018) argue that studies of global crisis management should compare disasters across nations. Though researchers are eager to see works on crisis communication in a global context, some have even referred to our field as being in a "state of emergency" because it "fails to reflect the needs and global reality of crisis communication today" (Diers-Lawson, 2017), only a small number of studies (less than a dozen) have been conducted, according to Coombs and Laufer. Among the more useful ones that offer light on international crisis communication are Frandsen and Johansen's Rhetorical Arena

Theory, Huiling Ding's Critical Contextualized Methodology, and Lisa Potts' social web experience design based on Actor-Network Theory.

Frandsen and Johansen (2010) investigate three remarks from the Vatican and/or Pope Benedict XVI following the Pope's talk at a German university in 2006 using Hearit's (2006) rhetorical model of apologizing and apologetic ethics. Due to the Pope's contentious remark about the Islamic prophet Muhammad, the address drew criticism from a number of Muslim nations. Their study's findings demonstrate that Hearit's rhetorical model and its underlying ethical principles do not support the Pope's apologies. The Pope's case reflects the current global contexts, which include an increase in opportunities for offense and repentance, widening sociocultural gaps, difficult linguistic and rhetorical barriers, media's escalating role as "agent's provocateurs," an increase in third parties, and an increase in people who "stand on their rights." As a result, it gets simpler to violate a societal order through wrongdoings while also becoming more challenging to accept responsibility for wrongdoings. Hearit's approach is unable to adequately explain this instance because it does not take these contexts into consideration. The "rhetorical arena," a multivocal strategy for handling crisis communication in international settings, is suggested by Frandsen and Johansen. As the Pope's case demonstrated, their theory of the rhetorical arena can solve the common circumstance in which "we have to apologize for something that we normally do not need to apologize for according to our sociocultural order, but which is considered a kind of wrongdoing within other sociocultural orders."

To be more precise, "the communicative complexity of organizational crises" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018) is better understood from two perspectives thanks to the rhetorical arena model of crisis communication. It is founded on a multi-vocal methodology that considers a variety of crisis-related reactions in the social setting where senders and receivers interact, compete, work together, or negotiate during a crisis. This method highlights how the connection between communicators is complex, erratic, and chaotic and how the development of a text by the sender and the active interpretation of that text occur in synchronic space. Frandsen and Johansen (2018) assert that the concept of voice places more of an emphasis on intricacy than on power. Second, this approach views crisis communication as being mediated by four factors: context, media, genre, and text. These four factors work in tandem to ensure that the study is thorough and includes both textual and contextual analysis. The study of the diachronic aspect of crisis communication, or the times just before, during, and after a crisis, is also aided by these four characteristics. Notably, the notion of "context" in this theory is much broader than that in Coombs' SCCT: Frandsen and Johansen's "context" (2005) takes into account the "different actors, structures, and processes, as well as other pertinent phenomena connected to culture, organization, and society" in addition to crisis type, crisis, crisis evolution, and relational history (all of which together constitute the "context" in SCCT). The rhetorical arena model, according to Frandsen and Johansen (2007), is "an elaboration" and "an extension of the text-oriented model of Benoit and the context-oriented model of Coombs" and is "an appropriate choice" for a crisis involving two or more organizations.

Although the rhetorical arena theory has a number of advantages over conventional models, neither a systematic analytical framework for the study of inter-organizational crisis communication nor major empirical research have been conducted to support it. It is a method that could direct us to critically assess the research history of our subject, step outside the box, and draw novel theories from a critical examination of fresh situations.

To summarize, the social web experience architecture framework developed by Potts, Ding's critical contextualized methodology, and Frandsen and Johansen's rhetorical arena theory all place an emphasis on the communication process (information transmission) and products (discourses), with the goal of identifying, representing, and evaluating the communicative beings from two interconnected systems of subjects (text and context). These theories look at issues such as what/how an institution/organization/person communicates during a crisis (text questions), and when/where/to whom their communication is directed (context questions). However, several fundamental questions, such as "Why does a crisis happen, develop, and cease?" have not been thoroughly examined or addressed by any of these ideas. What causes or controls its birth, development, and demise? Can we deduce some pattern from the chaos, complexity, and complexity of the chaotic, seemingly random crisis outbreak? In addition to these inquiries into the causes of the current global financial crisis, it is important to look at crises in the context of the Web's evolving history. 3.0 Using social networks. Common issues with the aforementioned approaches include their inability to quantify and systematically handle massive data in the age of global social media. Finding provisional solutions to the aforementioned concerns is essential for researchers and professionals and vital for the advancement of the crisis communication profession and scholarly field as we face our rapidly globalized world and the enormous challenges it brings for crisis management.

## **2.8. Empirical Review**

Numerous studies have been done on how public relations can be used to manage conflict at the regional, national, and even international levels. Effective public relations can help lessen conflict between a company and the public, according to the findings of a global study on the topic (Grunig et al., 1998). Public relations, for instance, can help manage conflicts and lower their costs when they arise as a result of pressure and regulation (Huang, 2001).

The findings of research by Ertem and Jung (2020) at the University of Alabama on the topic of: Roles and Functions of Public Relations Practitioners in the Resolution of Conflicts in the U.S. and Turkey show that public relations practitioners' roles are effective in resolving conflicts between their organization and the publics of both countries. Public relations professionals can serve as an early warning system for top management before problems arise, start conversations with pressure groups, and communicate stakeholders' perspectives to top management if they perform their managerial and reflective/strategic duties in their firms.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia does not have a public diplomacy and communications strategy as a nation, which was seen as a shortcoming in looking at the practice.

The department was also a new phenomenon in the practice of public diplomacy of the Ministry however, the research conducted by Elleni (2015) on the Public diplomacy practice of the FDRE Minister of Foreign Affairs towards the Egyptian public in Addis Ababa University. This demonstrates that MFA's PR division lacks the necessary strategic communication ability to manage the international conflict between the two nations.

In addition to the research findings from Elleni (2015) At Addis Ababa University, Leta (2019) also conducted research on the strategic role of public relations in crisis management and the reconciliation process in Ethiopia. The study's findings show that the government of Ethiopia's communication lacked a basic understanding of the role of public relations in handling disputes. Practitioners defined PR in accordance with their regular tasks and the two primary kinds of failed bureau assignments. These are gathering public feedback and controlling the available data (Leta, 2019).

As the researcher tries to investigate in chapter one, the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the United States deteriorated as a result of the war that broke out in Ethiopia's northern region. Moses et al. (2022) conducted research on political and media analysis of the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia and came to the conclusion that both local and international media showed a blatant pattern of bias and selective reporting, either towards the government or the TPLF. Establishing the truth was incredibly difficult due to this reporting style, especially when it came to contentious matters that were marked by disinformation and misinformation trends. The final analysis by Moses et al. (2022) then indicates that the communication staff's duties in conflict management were ineffective and that they serve as propagandists for a particular group.

Most academics have concentrated on the importance of public relations in conflict resolution, according to Ertem and Jung (2020), but they have not discussed the duties and responsibilities of public relations practitioners in resolving conflicts. For instance, Qiu and Cameron (2007) concentrated on how strategic conflict management as a public relations tool can be useful in health communication, while Huang (2009) examined how public relations tactics are functionally related to conflict resolution. In general, this study will attempt to close this gap in the literature by concentrating on the use of RAT to evaluate the roles of international public relations in managing the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the United States since the North crisis erupted on November 4, 2020.

## 2.9. Conceptual Framework

The Frandsen and Johansen crisis communication management model was adopted by the researcher with some modifications to fill the theoretical gap and evaluate the function of international public relations in managing tense relations between Ethi-US in the case of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The researcher also adds a strategic communication plan as one variable to fill the gaps in the rhetorical arena theory and efficiently measure MFA strategic communication, used for evaluating the role of public relations practices in the strained management of Ethiopia-US relations. The rhetorical arena theory's four components are context, medium, genre, and text.



*Figure 2: modified RAT theoretical framework by Author*

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Paradigm**

Research design, according to Campbell et al. (1982:17), is "the process of narrowing or focusing your perspective for a particular study." Plans and processes for the issue being researched, ranging from generalizations to specific strategies for data collecting and analysis, are known as research designs (Creswell, 2009). It is a framework of procedures and strategies selected by a researcher to bring together numerous research components in a reasonably logical way in order to effectively address the research challenge. It offers information on how to carry out research using a specific approach. Which study design should be chosen is the main decision.

The researcher might utilize research design as a beneficial framework or plan while they work to collect data for their study. In order to acquire the necessary data for this study to be undertaken, research designs were employed in research proposals to demonstrate how the variables of the proposed research were observed, managed, or changed.

The social constructivism method was used by the researcher to study reality in a subjective way. Social constructivists hold that people want to comprehend the society in which they live and work. People form subjective interpretations of the significance of their experiences in relation to particular items or objects. Due to the diversity and multiplicity of these meanings, the researcher chose to focus on the complexity of viewpoints rather than try to categorize or organize them.

The research's objective was to rely as heavily as possible on the participants' perceptions of the issue under investigation. In order to enable the participants to construct the meaning of a scenario, which is often forged in conversations or interactions with other people, the questions become broad and general. The better the questions, the more carefully the researcher will listen to what people say or do in their everyday environments. These arbitrary definitions are frequently contested historically and socially. They are not merely imprinted on people; rather, they are created through social interaction (thus social constructivism) and the historical and cultural conventions that shape how people conduct their lives. Thus, the dynamics of interpersonal interaction are frequently studied by constructivist academics.

Taking constructivism as an illustration, Crotty (1998) outlined numerous presumptions:

1. Humans create meaning as they interact with the environment they are interpreting. Open-ended questions are frequently used by qualitative researchers so that participants can express their opinions. We all are born into a world of meaning that is placed upon us by our culture.
2. Humans interact with their reality and attempt to make sense of it based on their historical and social viewpoints. Thus, by physically visiting this location and acquiring information, qualitative researchers aim to comprehend the context or

setting of the individuals. Additionally, they interpret what they discover using their personal experiences and educational background as a guide.

In order to manage the tense ties between Ethiopia and the US, the researcher explored the application of RAT in IPR positions by using effective strategic communication.

## **3.2. Research Approach**

The study used a qualitative research methodology because the research title falls within the category of case study methodology. The researcher might gain deep understanding of a situation or the target population through qualitative research. There are no numerical data involved. Creswell (2014) asserts that qualitative research happens in a natural environment. To conduct the research, the qualitative researcher frequently travels to the participant's location (home or workplace). This made it possible for the researcher to learn a great deal of specific information about the subject or setting and to become deeply immersed in the participants' genuine experiences. As a result, it makes it possible for the researcher to gather and analyze pertinent data in a qualitative manner. This indicates that the ideal strategy is to define the case from its foundation up.

The study employed a case study methodology. Belay and Abdinasir (2015) assert that the case-by-case technique entails summarizing case narratives while providing evidence to support them. This strategy is more appropriate when the case being covered has a single important actor around whom the narratives are to be centered.

## **3.3 Research Design**

### **3.3.1. Case study**

A case study is a common form of qualitative research design that calls for thorough and meticulous observation of a social unit in order to examine a small number of events or circumstances and their connections. Singh (2006) asserts that the primary goal of a case study is the formation of a case based on diagnosis, which is carried out using the post-case records. It establishes the relationship's cause and effect. He asserts that a case study will be successful if it includes the following three phases:

1. The first part, referred to as the Retrospective phase, deals with the case's records or history.
2. Second, the prospective phase refers to how the case is now progressing.
3. The third stage, known as the prospective phase, is concerned with the case's potential growth and advancement. These described case study phases will be followed in this study.

As a result, during the Retrospective part of the study, questions will be raised about the pre-crisis period, previous crises, and stakeholder relationships. Additionally, it will attempt to

evaluate the current conditions, notably the two countries' ongoing crisis communication efforts, as part of the prospective phase. Last but not least, it will be anticipated that this research will cover the endeavor of the comparative phase as it is expected to forward recommendations, remarks, and counsel.

In order to observe and comprehend the topic under investigation, this research design was detailed in terms of its parts, ideologies, and the perspective from which two countries' interactions were chosen.

This strategy makes the assumption that several realities or interpretations of the human experience are plausible. Fundamentally, it is interpretive. Accordingly, the researcher interprets the data and creates a description of a person or environment before looking for themes or categories in the data and then coming to a conclusion regarding the data's theoretical and personal implications (Creswell 2014). The study made an effort to make sense of the complex interpretation and explanation of the relationship between the two nations.

### **3.4. Data Collection Method**

The researcher used qualitative data collection techniques in this investigation. In order to collect the necessary data for this investigation, interviews and documents were used. As Stewart (2002). In-depth interviews will be used to explore specific issues in the area of crisis communication from the practitioners' point of view. The advantage of this method is its ability to obtain subjective information from participants and provide information regarding their feelings; values, attitudes, and beliefs. Also, Creswell (2014) said conducting interviews with people helps to understand public opinion and attitude.

The main goal of the interview, according to Belay and Abdinasir (2015), is to examine specific behavioral phenomena in depth and breadth using a small number of focal individuals, who are strongly related to the study objective. Unstructured interviews offer more latitude. According to Belay and Abdinasir (2015), they are typically described as focused (targets a specific event or experience rather than general lines of inquiry about the event), depth (searching and emphasizing psychological and social factors), and non-directive (allows the interviewees a great deal of freedom to discuss the problem under investigation).

Face-to-face in-depth interviews served as the primary source for this study. It aids in deciphering the case in detail and providing answers to the research inquiries. The interviewer is mostly free to reword the questions, amend them, and add some new questions to the list even if the researcher utilized a set of instructions and questions to guide respondents.

Therefore, the researcher conducted in-person interviews with MFA practitioners of foreign PR, diplomats, and specialists. The documents were gathered from the digital repositories of the MFA and the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, D.C., as those two websites were in charge of communicating with the US government about accusations and misunderstandings brought on by

TPLF propaganda in order to manage the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US. Six press statements and two biweekly news briefing of MFA's were used as sources by the researcher.

Interviewees	Work place	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview
Respondent One	MFA's	April 18/2023	33 Minutes
Respondent Two	MFA's	April 20/2023	29 Minutes
Respondent Three	MFA's	April 20/2023	35 Minutes
Respondent Four	AAU	April 21/2023	40 Minutes
Respondent Five	MFA's	April 23/2023	17 Minutes

*Table 1: participants of the study (Interviewee of the study)*

Combining the two approaches helps the researcher reduce bias and boosts the study's final conclusions.

### **3.5. Participants of the Study**

IPR MFA practitioners, diplomats, the communication wing facilitator, and experts all participated in one-on-one in-depth interviews. Additionally, their position was more pertinent to the topic of the study. As a result, they were able to address the issue at its height in terms of the two countries' foreign relations and crisis management. When requesting an interview, the interviewees were informed of the topic, but they were not informed of the pre-planned interview questions. The interviewees were urged to go into further detail on the interview's themes and, at the end, to add anything else they felt was relevant to the subject but wasn't covered by the pre-planned questions.

### **3.6. Data analysis**

For this study article dialogue, a press release and a sample fortnightly briefing were analyzed using Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional framework. Discourse is frequently used in a variety of contexts, according to Fairclough (2010), including (a) meaning-making as a social process element; (b) the language associated with a specific social field or practice (for example, "political discourse"); and (c) a way of conceptualizing aspects of the world associated with a specific social perspective (for example, a "neo-liberal discourse of globalization"). The case of IPR's involvement in managing tense ties between Ethiopia and the US was chosen for examination since it pertains to political discourse analysis and uses the RAT theoretical framework.

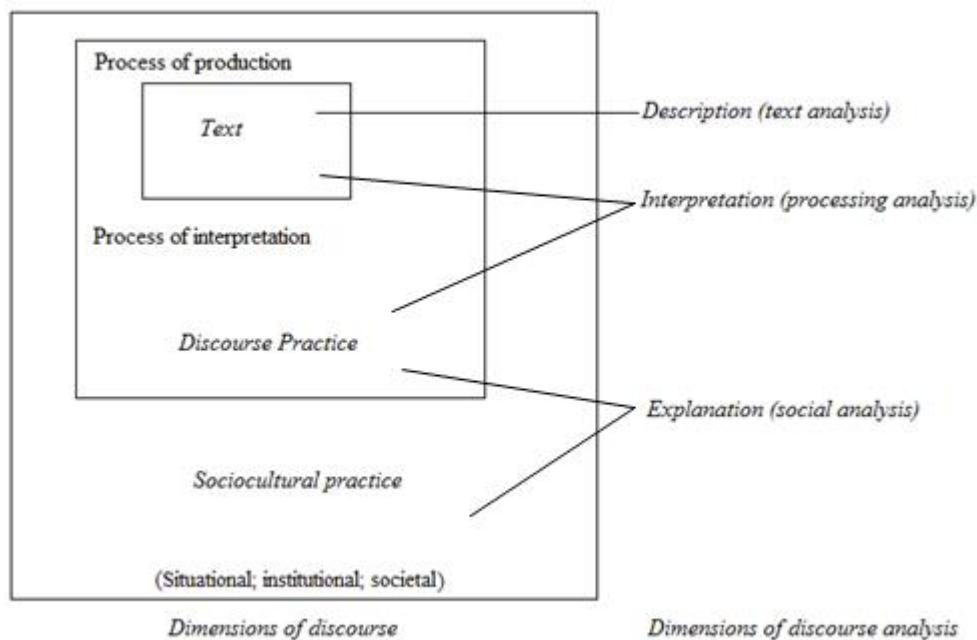
Therefore, the researcher conducted a critical analysis of a number of press releases and biweekly press briefings provided by the three-dimensional Framework Fairclough (2010).

Text is the subject of Fairclough's Model's initial analytical focus. Fairclough (2010) asserts that linguistic analysis is a component of text analysis. Additionally, "Linguistic analysis includes the

analysis of the grammar, vocabulary, sound system, semantics, and cohesion organization above the sentence level," the statement continues.

**Processing Analysis (Interpretation):** It demonstrates the connection between the text and the discourse processes. Reading is the result of an interaction between the text's characteristics and the interpreter's tools and methods for working with the text. Depending on the text's nature, the range of possible readings will be limited and defined (Fairclough, 2010).

**Social Analysis (Explanation):** According to Fairclough (2010), there is a connection between social and cultural reality and discourse at this stage. For an accurate reading of a document, it is vital to understand the immediate context from which it developed. The language and specific words that make up a text is the subject of this examination.



**Figure 3: Three-dimensional Framework (Fairclough, 2010)**

Additionally, the Interview was thematically evaluated in conjunction with the previously mentioned discourse analysis. Based on the interview data, the four RAT variables context, genre, and medium were examined. On the other hand, as was already mentioned clearly, the Text was treated through the three-dimensional Framework of Fairclough (2010).

### **3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Study**

The chosen respondents were used to gather the study's data. The respondents were chosen on purpose. Purposive sampling was employed by the researcher in order to identify the precise individual in charge of MFA's IPR practice. In order to increase the instrument's validity, interview questions and discourse analysis reveal how the researcher has improved in response to their feedback.

The validity of the thesis was asserted after the study leader saw the interview questions and documents connected to international public relations practitioners and managing the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US by using the RAT theoretical framework. In addition, the results from various interviewees and the various tools (documents and interviews) used could uphold and improve the research's dependability. The interviewer was also a knowledgeable individual with a strong sense of direction in their line of work.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter analyzes and presents the data that was gathered in accordance with the study's objectives. Key informants were subjected to lengthy, in-depth interviews to collect the qualitative data. Similar to how the study of the literature and the framework outlined in chapter two would serve as the foundation for the analysis. Additional information was acquired from MFA Ethiopia in addition to the interview data, and discourse analysis using the Three-dimensional Framework (Fairclough, 2010) was performed on those papers.

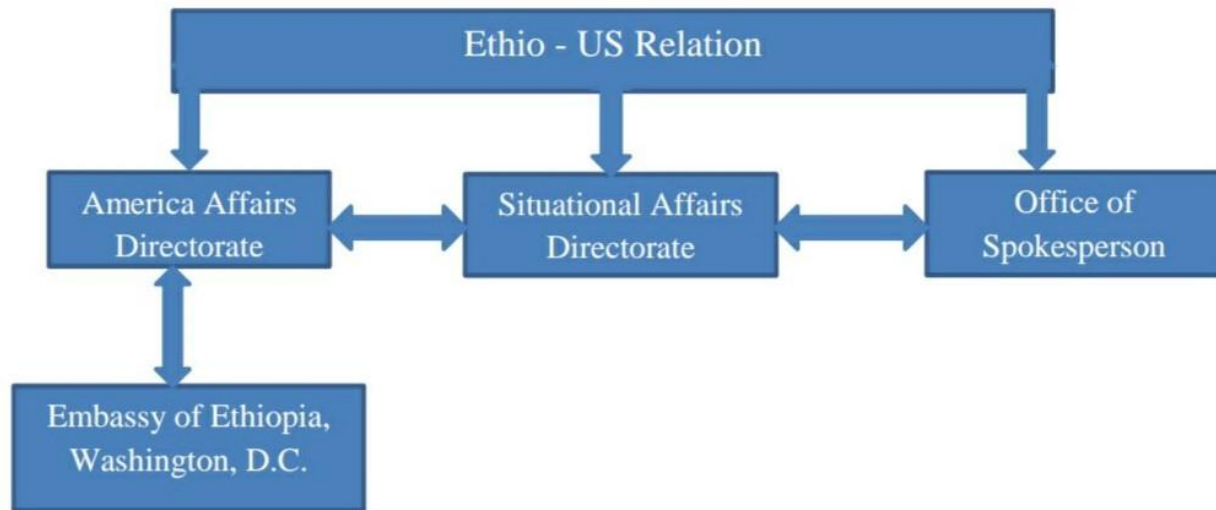
Three sections make up the data display, discussion, and analysis. In the first section, the concept is primarily addressed along with the context, genre, and media that were used to address both the internal and external public in the context of US-Ethiopian relations while taking IPR strategies into account during the crisis management process. The focus of the second section is on the rhetorical strategies used to materialize and express the MFA Ethiopia content. The last section of this chapter attempts to study the general characteristics of IPR in tense US-Ethiopian relations. Additionally, this section reflects on the RAT theoretical framework based on analyzed data.

Before moving on to those portions of the analysis, the researcher wants to highlight a few points about the organizational structure of MFA Ethiopia, in particular the relationship between Ethiopia and the US. Three directorates of the MFA Ethiopia work together to enhance US-Ethiopian relations. These directorates are the Office of Spokesperson, the Situational Affairs Directorate, and the American Affairs Directorate.

In the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the US, only the American Affairs Directorate is active. This department directs and facilitates the Ethiopian embassy in Washington, D.C. There are diplomats, desk officers, experts, principals, ambassadors, etc. at the Directorate. This department primarily focuses on advancing Ethiopia's national interests while fostering good relations with Americans.

There are many duties assigned to the Situational Affairs Directorate. This directorate is accountable for more than only the Ethiopia-US relationship; it also collaborates with other directorates to address Ethiopia's national interest in international affairs. On the other hand, this directorate serves as the liaison between all MFA Ethiopia directorates, connecting them all on a single desk. Although this directorate serves as the hub for all other directorates, its major duty is to keep an eye on the present state of affairs locally, regionally, and globally. The directorate also meets with other MFA directorates for weekly briefings. Finally, the Situational Affairs Directorate develops the message to address MFA's internal and external public based on the weekly briefings.

The Office of Spokesperson is the final directorate this essay highlights. The MFA communication wing's sole actor is this office. The primary responsibility of this office is to facilitate and manage the MFA Ethiopia's communication process by speaking directly to the MFA's target audience, whether it be the internal or external public. As previously stated, this office has a close relationship with the Situational Affairs Directorate, which creates messages to be sent to the public on behalf of the MFA and provides weekly briefings. The majority of communication specialists who use IPR belong here. Consequently, the Ethio-US demonstrated the organizational structure of the MFA Ethiopia as follows:



*Figure 4: MFA organizational structure specifically the Ethio-US relation wing designed by the Author*

#### **4.2. MFA Actors on Ethio-US relation within the Rhetorical Arena**

When assessing the scenario environment relevant to MFA crisis communication, the various actors who are involved and who interact within The Rhetorical Arena might be considered as crucial. Respondent four noted that "stakeholders (including diplomats, ambassadors, foreigners, and US officials) are the first actors to join the arena of MFA Ethiopia. Principals, members of the international community, journalists from around the world, representatives of international organizations, and workers of international organizations who are involved in the US-Ethiopia relationship generally and during the internal strife in northern Ethiopia, as this is what has strained the US-Ethiopia relationship".

According to Grunig (2002), the PR's public should be firmly defined in the initial step. In order to differentiate the public either internally or externally, the PR practitioner needs design effective crisis management communication.

Respondent five (April 2015) claims that "MFA Ethiopia's IPR practitioners are actively reporting on MFA Ethiopia activities for the external publics, who can be located locally,

regionally, and internationally. It is uncommon for IPR to address and support internal communication for internal publics”. Respondents one and two (April 2015) counter that "on the engagement of communication, MFA has a number of internal and external stakeholders. The MFA works to establish a number of teams, such as the Situational Affairs directorate, Diaspora agency, and Digital Diplomacy, as well as recently establishing public diplomacy to facilitate and effectively address all elements of the MFA public. Even though respondents one and two (April 2015) agreed that the MFA makes an effort to communicate with all of its stakeholders, the respondent to the question explicitly stated that "all of MFA Ethiopia's communication activity is guided through strategic communication plan rather than based on previous experience and assumption by taking proactive measures."

Therefore, MFA Ethiopia has a clearly no defined manual or strategic communication plan to deal with the communication practice as a guideline. Then, the IPR Practitioners practice their roles based on assumptions. This way of practice belongs to the proactive measure. In the process of taking proactive measures, all stakeholders that could potentially be harmed should participate in crisis preparation.

### **4.3. Context of MFA Ethiopia Designed its Communication Strategy to Manage Strained Relation of Ethio-US**

Three sub-context variables, including the societal and cultural context, the organizational and institutional framework, and the situational environment, are seen to be essential due to the situation's context (with MFA Ethiopia as the focal point). Since there are several economic, social, and political ideology differences between Ethiopia and the United States, as well as the fact that reality is defined and examined through various contextualization's of social belief and social structure specific nation

#### **A. Societal and Cultural Context**

It is critical to keep in mind that MFA, as an organization, produces products for multimedia users to address its primary interests, which are to "Defend the rights and interests of Ethiopians through establishing alliances and partnerships to help create a favorable regional and global environment, promote Ethiopia's reputation, and ensure a peaceful and prosperous society," according to its mission statement.

As a result, MFA Ethiopia conducts business locally, regionally, and globally. Due to the case's global scope and connection to the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US, no particular cultural background is relevant. According to Pew Research Center (2013), the term "Western Culture" does not refer to any particular racial or ethnic group but rather to a certain collection of societal principles, such as science, technology, happiness, individualism, capitalism, and rights, all of which are based on an understanding of "reason" (reality). When it comes to the issue of "rights," it is reasonable to assume that the case in question may be connected to the ideals embodied by Western Culture (Pew Research Center, 2013)).

Since the internal crisis in northern Ethiopia was unexpected but at the same time the US administration gave high emphasis, then we are urged to take proactive measures to mitigate the situation without having concrete understanding about the societal and cultural values of the US, according to respondent two (April 2015), "the first challenge that we face since the last three years regarding the Ethio-US relation was lack of well-informed/deep understanding of the US societal and cultural value." Although respondent one acknowledged the lack of understanding of the social and cultural context, respondent two (April 2015) disputes the claim, stating that "the series concern of the US over Ethiopian internal crisis was not lack of Ethiopian government addressing the ongoing conflict for the international community or understanding of the western socio-economic and political diversity/in defining truth but that led the US to pay more attention and take series action on Ethiopia.

To summarize, an IPR practitioner should have a thorough understanding of how to effectively and efficiently connect with the public by finding common ground when working on matters of this nature that involve varied sociological and cultural components. Laity (2010:98) claims that effective strategic communication necessitates the effective use of information through coordination between/among relevant institutions and result-oriented actions; socio-cultural structure, history, and customs of the target audience, as well as technological factors, should be taken into consideration in the use and transfer of information.

## **B. Organizational and Institutional Context**

The researcher attempts to study IPR practitioners in this sub-context by assessing organizational structure and culture. The MFA Ethiopia handles the Ethio-US relationship in terms of organizational culture by working with the horizontal directorate and a number of local, regional, and international players.

According to respondent two (April 2016), "As previously stated during the first phase of the northern Ethiopian conflict, the TPLF was employing a well-developed communication wing and getting the chance to persuade the international community and stand by their sides. To counter the situation, we established Fact Check Ethiopia, which is headed by Ambassador Rediwan Hussein and is in charge of battling the TPLF's false propaganda campaign. Additionally, we established digital diplomacy by working with the international journalist Hermella Aregawi, who founded the #Nomore campaign. The actions carried out by MFA Ethiopia to effectively address Ethiopians' interest in international relations in general and the US in particular are also mentioned by respondent one.

However, respondent five (April 2015) offers a fresh analysis of the MFA Ethiopia's substantial involvement in forming and establishing an organizational structure to resolve the strained relations between Ethiopia and the United States:

*"All the corrective actions MFA Ethiopia took to lessen the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the US came as a result of the bumpy road events between the two nations. The*

*lifting of Ethiopia's suspension from AGOA eligibility demonstrates, in my opinion, the effectiveness of the corrective actions implemented by MFA Ethiopia. Since we IPR practitioners have a long-term and short-term strategic communication strategy that guides to effectively support the internal and external communication, the total communication gap has occurred”*

Thus, Paul's (2011) argument that strategic communication should be considered as a significant part of government efforts to speak to, listen to, engage with, and establish good faith to all people of the world addresses the respondent's argument. Paul (2011) argues that strategic communication should not be thought of only as a tool for countering violent extremism. A study of how foreign audience attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions will support these aims is necessary for the ability to influence and persuade, in addition to having a clearly defined policy purpose. In strategic communication, influencing and persuading come after effective informing techniques. Knowledgeable audiences are prepared to hear the speaker and check the veracity and accuracy of the information.

### **C. Situational Context**

During the Trump administration, there was a terrible start to the US-Ethiopian relationship due to GERD concerns. After becoming office, President Biden's administration adopted a non-interventionist approach to GERD issues. The Ethiopian government headed by Abiy Ahmed (Dr.) received favorable reviews from the Biden administration as well. "The peaceful transfer of power in 2018 to a government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed opened a new chapter in Ethiopian history as well as a promising new chapter in U.S.-Ethiopian relations," according to Ambassador Feltman's (2021) report.

As the US government expresses more worry and reacts to the internal situation, the violence in northern Ethiopia has had a severe effect on Ethiopia-US relations. Successive U.S. Administrations have characterized Ethiopia as a crucial partner in regional stability and development, according to Congressional Research Service (2021), while occasionally voicing worry about political space, human rights, and unrest. Relationships have focused on initiatives to reduce hunger and poverty, raise health indicators, and combat terrorism and regional instability. The connection has been strained by the Tigray conflict.

Respondents two and three (April 2015) made it very clear why the US administration decided to intervene in Ethiopia, citing "the US motives to secure the interest over the horn of Africa, the cultivated relationship over 20 plus with TPLF officials, the involvement of Eritrean troops on the conflict and also the Amhara fano, special force, as well as militia engagement on the northern conflict."

Respondent four (April 2015) examines the aforementioned claim by contrasting it with US worries about the domestic crises. Respondent four explains:

*"Even though the US administration raised these complaints, the primary categories for the problems were violating human rights and rendering humanitarian aid. The world community was supporting the TPLF and the Ethiopian government was struggling with a serious communication gap. The Ethiopian government's explanations for the US response were rambling and evasive. Even the statement itself lacks coherence. For instance, the Ethiopian government was denied Eritrean troops for a long time before the prime minister revealed Eritrean troops were involved in the battle in northern Ethiopia during a parliamentary debate".*

Based on practitioner writings, Coombs (2007) identifies four requirements for how an organization should present its crisis response:

1. Be quick; respond in an hour or less;
2. Avoid saying "no comment" because people perceive that negatively;
3. Be accurate; check all the facts carefully; and Be consistent;
4. Avoid contradictions in statements to stakeholders.

According to the Rhetorical Arena theory, the anticipated public perception of the crisis can be considered the most important situational component in understanding the crisis communication in place. The type of crisis can be identified using the crisis communication theory represented, and the organization's level of accountability can be established. The MFA IPR's communication was not systematically created from the standpoint of the profession; rather, it dealt with their presumptions since, as was previously said, they lacked comprehension of the contextual diversity of the two countries.

#### **4.4. Selection of Medium and Genre in Crisis Communication**

The MFA of Ethiopia was communicated to both the internal and external public through multi-medias such as print, broadcast, and online media. The main interest of MFA was as its mission specifically states, "Defend the rights and interests of Ethiopians through establishing alliances and partnerships to help create a favorable regional and global environment, promote Ethiopia's reputation, and ensure a peaceful and prosperous Ethiopia".

To address the strained relationship of Ethio-US the MFA Ethiopia mainly use digital media, local broadcast media as well using international media to address accusation and misleading propaganda disseminated by TPLF. Respondents two and three (April 2015) quoted that, "to keep the interest of Ethiopia from the international relation as general and the US specifically we use the international media through our different ministers such as Gediyon Thimotiyos (Dr.), Sileshi Bekele (Dr.), as well as Ambassador Rediwan Hussein and Ambassador Fitsum Arega"

Respondents one and five (April 2015) also mentioned the MFA's medium, stating that "we address the strained relations between Ethiopia and the US primarily through social media by setting up digital diplomacy platform." Our weekly and biweekly declarations as well as an

additional statement intended to address and clarify the crisis in northern Ethiopia were broadcast through traditional and international media as part of the No More Twitter campaign.

Respondent one (April 2015) also mentions the genre that MFA Ethiopia primarily employs to address the tense relationship between Ethiopia and the United States, such as "weekly/biweekly press statement, press release, news reporting created by IPR practitioners, blog(which handle the weekly diplomat note)".

However, a strategic communication plan should be followed while using a variety of message-delivery genres, including newsletters, manuals, emails, memos, official notices, word-of-mouth, media broadcasts, and other sources. Effective communication with people, governments, and other communication players around the world, as well as conflict management, help a nation develop a positive reputation. Shayna Englin, a professor of public relations and corporate communications, claims that strategic communication entails using the best message and the appropriate media while adhering to organizational communication-specific goals. The best message being delivered to the target audience aids in enhancing the organization's reputation and creating a positive public perception.

To be broad According to Paul (2011), a country's message may not be effectively communicated through strategic communication if it sticks to a particular type of medium. The international public or audience will comprehend if countries communicate their messages more forcefully and clearly on a variety of platforms, and strategic communication will have been successful.

#### **4.5. Critical Discourse Analysis of MFA's Crisis Communication**

In this section, the researcher primarily aims to study the text that the MFA of Ethiopia created to speak to its intended audience on the relationship between Ethiopia and the United States. Discourse analysis, specifically the three-dimensional Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2010 model), is used for the textual analysis, as the researcher noted in the preceding chapter. The main three dimensions of discourse, according to Fairclough's three-dimensional model, are text, interaction, and context. Fairclough (2010) replaces "context" and "interaction" with "sociocultural practice" and "discourse practice" since he views "a mode of action" as discourse. The idea that discourse is a type of social practice is emphasized in this way (see the example of three-dimensional models in Chapter 3 Model 3). Next, let's examine each of the MFA data points individually. Ethiopia primarily demonstrates the strained Ethio-US relationship as well as the text design strategies used in response to US action made over the issue in northern Ethiopia.

##### **A. Description (Text Analysis)**

Text is the subject of Fairclough's Model's first analytical focus. Fairclough (2010) asserts that linguistic analysis is a component of text analysis. Additionally, according to Fairclough (2010),

"Linguistic analysis includes the analysis of the grammar, vocabulary, sound system, semantics, and cohesion organization above the sentence level."

On May 17 the Ethiopian MFA release a four-page detailed statement entitled "*Press statement on the unfair and unwarranted accusations leveled against Ethiopia*" addressing five major issues that the government of Ethiopia accused in the international community. Those points are:

- ✚ ***On the Humanitarian response in the Tigray region***
- ✚ ***On allegations of human rights abuses***
- ✚ ***On calls for Ceasefire and national dialogue***
- ✚ ***On allegations of the clampdown on dissent***
- ✚ ***On attempts to meddle in Ethiopia's Internal affairs***

The above points addressed by the Spokesperson of Ethiopian MFA were the main arguments that the international community is concerned about in the ongoing Ethiopian internal crisis mainly the Northern Ethiopia crisis. The US also shows more attention by lay down several sanctions as the northern Ethiopia conflict strained the relationship with Ethiopia. Even though the spokesperson tries to clarify the incidents and what is going on the ground by categorizing into the above-listed points the press release where no indications of the controversy are expressed, However but it is still placed where no indications of the controversy are expressed, but it is still placed within the crisis, due to tries to address the *unfair and unwarranted accusations leveled against Ethiopia mainly for the international community as a general and US specifically*.

Consequently, there is a lexical absence within the MFA statement in addressing *unfair and unwarranted accusations against Ethiopia*. This lexical absence may indicate that the government does not intend to affiliate itself directly with the internal crisis that occurred in the Northern part of Ethiopia with the TPLF issue debated but distances itself instead by portraying values and beliefs, contradicting the stakeholder accusations (Appendix 3).

This can be understood as the main message in the short statement, where 'journalists' is mentioned three times, supplemented by the pronouns: 'those' and 'them'. In addition to this, the statement also mentioned 5 times attempts **to meddle in Ethiopia's internal affairs as external pressures**. Those expressions are the stance of the Ethiopian government towards the *unfair and unwarranted accusations against Ethiopia*. Thus the statement designed by the MFA Spokesperson lacks in addressing the stance of the government through logical expression. To address this analysis the statement tries to clarify the *unfair and unwarranted accusations against Ethiopia as follows*;

***"...The government does not believe that there are journalists or politicians jailed because of their political views and opinions. Those behind the bar are accused of violating the law. Therefore, they will have their day in court and the law will set them free if they are found not guilty..."***

*"..Hence, continuously lamenting about human rights abuses, while the Ethiopian government has shown its unreserved commitment to getting to the bottom of the issue and applying the full force of the law in ensuring accountability and justice, serves no other purpose than unnecessarily politicizing the issue and exert undue pressure..."*

*"...It is indeed unfortunate that some partners chose to dwell on internal matters of Ethiopia. One can't be indifferent when Ethiopia is flagrantly invaded while purporting to have too much concern about and trying to unduly delve into its internal matters; for doing so simply bears duplicity. That is why the Ethiopian government rejects those statements, which are not only inappropriate but also completely unacceptable..."*

The above three statements are extracted from the statement of MFA on 17 May 2021 designed to adjust *unfair and unwarranted accusations against Ethiopia*. However the statement lacks logical reasoning in designing text through point out why the journalists and politicians were jailed by providing tangible evidence rather than stating the beliefs of the government as well as, regarding **attempts to meddle in Ethiopia's Internal affairs** the Spokesperson statement explains as unnecessarily politicizing the issue and exert undue pressure, then the statement confirms that why the Ethiopian government rejects accusations statements and also not only inappropriate but also completely unacceptable. (See full statement on Appendix 3).

In designing text in *logical reasoning* MFA of Ethiopia lacks not only the statement released on 17 May 2021. MFA of Ethiopia responds to all statements given by the US about the humanitarian response in the Tigray region, human rights abuse as well as concerning the freedom of speech. Almost all states of the US tries to push the sole actors of the crisis in northern Ethiopia by laying down several sanctions like; *Suspension Ethiopia from Eligibility of AGOA, Impose Visa Restrictions on Ethiopian Officials, Washington Statement on Senate Resolution 97 as well as US statement regarding the situation in Tigray region on 20 Feb 2021 by US Secretary of State Mr. Antony J. Blinken*(see full statement on Appendix 1, Appendix 4, Appendix 5, Appendix 7). Those statements were responded to by the MFA Ethiopia by addressing the international community as well as the US by stating the stance of the Ethiopian government and also categorizing the accusation coming from the international media, international community, and the US specifically as "...No more double standard, no more to unilateral coercive measure and no more in meddling internal affairs under in pretext of human rights..." (Appendix 8)

MFA of Ethiopia statements also use the value-laden word 'inclusiveness' is portrayed in connection with the question of diversity. All text designed by MFA to address the US statements were with an open connotation and also the selection of words in the process of wrong perception of the international community and the US specifically can drive a structural opposition. MFA spokesperson office and the Situational director who is responsible for

addressing the issues and crafting well-designed messages respectively should give more emphasis on the understanding of the diversified context of the Ethio-US relation.

***"...the most challenging issues in addressing the northern Ethiopia conflict for the international community were the ones who are responsible in crafting message have lacks understanding of the diversified context of the international community in perceiving reality..."***

Description (Text Analysis) Fairclough's Model concerning text crafted and disseminated by the Ethiopia MFA for international communication and international relation need a strategic communication plan to be guided scientifically and professionally by the IPR practitioner, diplomats, and the Ethiopian MFA as an organization that has internal and external publics, the communication is not guided through strategic communication plan. The concerned bodies of communication who engage in Ethio-US relation like; the Spokesperson Directorate, the Situational Affairs Directorate as well as the American Affairs Directorate understands the concept of strategic communication in several ways.

As respondent one (April 2015), "MFA has no internal and external communication plan. As the minister's office has no strategic plan the IPR practitioners practice their work through the professional experience that they have previously. This may create communication gaps for our internal and external publics...", on the other hand, Respondent Three (April 2015) doesn't support the views of respondent one. Respondent three stated that "...we don't need to prepare strategic communication plan as well as we don't have to communicate with anyone rather we do engage to facilitate the bilateral relation of the Ethio-US relation..." According to the views of the respondent, three (April 2015) of the roles of communication and strategic communication plan in international relation is misunderstood.

As the research conducted by Njabulo (2018) finding states, Information and information communication technologies have become a central and critical aspect of international relations. Information is at the heart of political, economic, and military development hence the move by countries around the world to grapple. On the other hand, Entman (2008), suggests that diplomatic leaders employ strategic communications plans to resolve disputes between nations and to build bridges of mutual understanding to assist with negotiation and dialogue processes, as well as to create positive public opinion towards outcomes.

Thus respondent two (April 2015) confirmed the pivotal roles of the communication and strategic communication plan on international relations as, *"during the first phase of the northern Ethiopia conflict the government of Ethiopia loses the international arena because the TPLF was good in addressing the international public to stand on their side, then the government of Ethiopia decided to set up Fact check who is responsible to shape the disinformation as well as to address the real face of TPLF for the international community. However, we were challenged because we don't have short-term and long-term strategic communication plans that guide us"*

## **B. Interpretation (Processing Analysis)**

As Fairclough (2010) says in this section the researcher tries to analyze the relationship between text and interaction by seeing the text designed by MFA Ethiopia to address the US response towards the north Ethiopia conflict as the product of a process of production and as recourse in the process of interpretation.

Examining the connotation of the word 'diversity' signifies 'difference', which can be seen as a floating signifier with no specific meaning, but as it is related to 'human rights abuse' and 'humanitarian response', it gets a specific meaning. Consequently, commitment to diversity in the discursive context of the statement promotes the Ethiopian government's commitment to saving from different accusations. In practice, this would include understanding reality in several ways than the MFA of Ethiopia.

An interpretation thereof may derive a few assumptions about MFA's intentions behind the statement: it can be understood as an attempt to persuade stakeholders into embracing diversity as a valuable asset within the international partners of the Ethiopian government. In framing the statement for the international community specifically concerning the US the MFA Ethiopia uses words that were created to interpret in several contexts and leads the external public as they are embarrassed.

*"...The government of Ethiopia urges the international community to not be easily swayed by the propaganda campaign of the TPLF clique and its sympathizers, including the international media that tend to whitewash the crimes of the clique that has a track record of committing ineffable atrocities on Ethiopians for more than three decades..."*

*"...Selective perceptions of news reports and journalists who have continued to observe things through colored glasses taint news outputs that often tend to find the federal government of Ethiopia as the usual suspect for all the allegedly committed human rights violations in the Tigray region..."*

*"...Putting all the blame for alleged crimes on the Ethiopian government and turning a blind eye to the misdeeds of TPLF that continued to play the victim will not be a viable way to give justice to affected people..."(see the full statement in Appendix 2)*

The above statements are extracted from statement 8 April 2021 which the central point of the statement is targeted the international community and international media perception about the northern Ethiopia conflict the statement was designed the text by using phrases like; *not to be easily swayed, colored glasses taint news, a blind eye* that may embarrass them as well as provides a door for interpretation. Here below are also various statements extracted from MFA Ethiopia's statements on imposing Visa restrictions on Ethiopian government officials as well as the suspension of Ethiopia from eligibility of AGOA.

***...Hence, at this important juncture, the Ethiopian government was expecting support and understanding and not such kind of ill-advised measures to unnecessarily overshadow the elections... (See full statement in Appendix 5)***

***..If such a resolve to meddle in our internal affairs and undermine the century-old bilateral ties continues unabated, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be forced to reassess its relations with the United States, which might have implications beyond our bilateral relationship... (See full statement in Appendix 5)***

***...The Government of Ethiopia is deeply dismayed by the failure of the United States to properly acknowledge efforts made to address concerns on both the humanitarian aid and human rights issues in connection with the conflict... (See full statement in Appendix 7)***

The above three extracted sentence from the statement of MFA of Ethiopia has embarrassing phrases such as; *ill-advised measures, reassess its relations and deeply dismayed by the failure of the United States* which embarrass the US government as well as tries to show the power of Ethiopian government by using phrases *reassess the relationship with the US*. As respondent three and four (April 2015) stated as a common argument point out the reason why the US lay severe sanction on Ethiopia were through; *the cultivated relation for 20 plus years relation with TPLF officials, geopolitical interest, and regional power involvement specifically Eretria as well as the one who took the power was new for the making partners and strong institutions*. Then the MFA of Ethiopia expected to logically reason out during crafting a message to address the international community by addressing the cause that strained the Ethiopian international relation.

Most of MFA Ethiopia's statements reveals a degree of certainty, and authority and provide double standards expressed through discourse on the US and international communities' accusations, and somehow some of the statement contradict each other regarding the explanation given about Eritrean troops. The statement given by the MFA spokesperson was full of denial for a long period and then the prime minister admits during the parliament discussion. On the other hand, when the US respond to the Amhara regional force and Eritrean troops with one single statement the MFA responded only to the accusation about the regional force of Amhara;

***"...There have also been repeated attempts to make unwarranted statements on Ethiopia's internal affairs, particularly concerning the Amhara regional forces. Ethiopia is a sovereign nation, and it cannot accept any dictates from outside on how to manage its internal affairs. The Ethiopian government wants to make it abundantly clear once again that deploying the necessary security structures and means available***

***in ensuring the rule of law within all corners of its borders is within its sole responsibility. It is mandated by the Constitution to ensure peace and security against any threats to the Constitutional order of the country. It is in this context that the Federal government has been undertaking the rule of law operations in Tigray...*** (See full statement in Appendix 3)

Responding to no comment on a certain accusation is a negative impact and also half confirmation for whom who accuses. Here also stakeholder accusations without directly acknowledging an issue, may point to a denial strategy. MFA Ethiopian on the one hand accuse the US of politically motivated and an attempt to middle Ethiopian internal affairs without logically stating the act of the US trial, on the other hand minimizing the accusation through the international community by providing double standard against the TPLF crime committed as;

***"...On the other hand, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has been investigating and reporting on human rights issues, including the Mai Kadra massacre, civilian casualties, sexual violence, and allegations of discriminatory treatment..."***(See full statement in Appendix 3)

***"...There were indeed difficulties in accessing some pocket areas because of security issues but that has now been addressed. That is why it is absurd for some partners to continue to lament lack of access despite the actual situation on the ground..."*** (See full statement in Appendix 3)

***"... Hence, continuously lamenting about human rights abuses, while the Ethiopian government has shown its unreserved commitment to get to the bottom of the issue and apply the full force of the law in ensuring accountability and justice, serves no other purpose than unnecessarily politicizing the issue and exert undue pressure..."*** (See full statement in Appendix 3)

***"...The Resolution's assertion of 'lack of humanitarian access- in the Tigray region is contrary to fact..."*** (See full statement in Appendix 4)

Where there first three extracted statements either minimizing as *some pocket areas* or make a double standard by mentioning *the Mai Kadra massacre* the Ethiopian government categorizes the response of the international communities as the response, *which serves no other purpose than unnecessarily politicizing the issue and exerts undue pressure*. However, in another statement on May 2021 weekly briefing, the spokespersons admit a lack of humanitarian access in the Tigray region.

Theoretically, this points to a major discursive misalignment between the MFA Ethiopia discourses in responding to the US, as the utilization of denial strategies in combination with other strategies derives a communicative inconsistency.

For selected MFA Ethiopia Statements were also made to express the certainty of "will" as well as a sense of authority.

***"...If such a resolve to meddle in our internal affairs and undermine the century-old bilateral ties continues unabated, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be forced to reassess its relations with the United States, which might have implications beyond our bilateral relationship..."(see full statement on Appendix 5)***

In the above-extracted statement from 25 May 2021, the word will at the same time address the certainty the Ethiopian government has to reassess its relationship with the US as well as imply the government of Ethiopia has the mandate to reassess its relationship with the US.

The other observations also address that the term "our" implies the stance of the government as well as the Ethiopian people. Here below are two statements extracted from the press statement on May 2021 and June 2021 respectively, whereas the first statement indicates the people of Ethiopia, and the second one stands for the government. In addition to this the term "we" also used in the first statement stands both for the government and the people inclusively.

***"...No doubt, the task ahead is daunting, but with the support and unity of our people, we remain confident that we shall overcome our difficulties and realize the hopes and aspirations of generations of Ethiopians for a peaceful and prosperous Ethiopia..." (See full statement in Appendix 5)***

***"...But it is also our concern that the international community respects matters that solely fall under our internal jurisdiction..." (See full statement in Appendix 6)***

Therefore, such expression is understood as an elevation of MFA of Ethiopia's authority and capabilities, as the organization has the *power* to support as well as stand for the people it belongs, to by considering its textual context; it stresses the application of the bolstering strategy as well.

### **C. Explanation (Social Analysis)**

In this final session of this paper discourse analysis, the author tries to analyze the dimension of "discourse as social practice," or more precisely "social-cultural practice." ideology or power is taken into account to fully explain the interaction between social-cultural context and the production and consumption of texts. Fairclough (2010) justifies this session as, "explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determinants of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects"

MFA Ethiopia statements were rare in conveying diverse ideology. As MFA Ethiopia has international public who has a multicultural ideology and diverse way of sensing the concept of reality and beliefs the communication must take into the constraints on its overall practice of the communication process.

As previously stated the US administration seriously responds to human rights abuse, provision of humanitarian services, and mass killings in the Northern Ethiopia conflict. For those concerns, MFA Ethiopia responds to the US misunderstandings over the cases that seem to shadow the vibrant Ethiopia-the U.S relationship. Even though the MFA Ethiopian believes the shadow happens on the relationship between the two countries would not last long (see the full statement in Appendix 6), MFA Ethiopia accuses the TPLF of false propaganda for those misunderstandings;

***"...The problem with TPLF is not just in initiating the crime, but its resolve to twist the truth and concoct stories through doctored footage in a bid to continue misinforming the world. And the sad thing is that the international media has been readily picking such products of the clique without giving second thoughts while pretending to fail to notice the clique's wrongs..." (See full statement in Appendix 2)***

From this point of view, the researcher analyzed that MFA Ethiopia's communication practice over the last three years on addressing the northern conflict for the international community and the US to discard the false propaganda of TPLF was not effective. However, MFA Ethiopia accuses the international communities and the US administration of being politically motivated and attempting to middle on Ethiopian internal affairs as well as using loud words/rather than using logical designing of text as the western communities perceive truth based on evidence/ which creates a fertile condition to shadow the two countries relation.

***"...Hence, at this important juncture, the Ethiopian government was expecting support and understanding and not such kind of ill-advised measures to unnecessarily overshadow the elections..." (See full statement on Appendix 5)***

***"...The Government of Ethiopia is deeply dismayed by the failure of the United States to properly acknowledge efforts made to address concerns on both the humanitarian aid and human rights issues in connection with the conflict..." (See full statement in Appendix 7)***

***"...This is why Ethiopia has categorically rejected the special session and its politically motivated outcome which undermines trust in the work of the council, and most importantly, the territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and political independence..." (See full statement in Appendix 8)***

The above three extracted statements show how the MFA Ethiopia designed text in a way that embarrass the accusation before by laminating by politically motivated phrases.

From the societal ideology perspective, the MFA Ethiopia' statement on the provision of humanitarian service concerning the Northern crisis were lack the individualistic values of Western society as well as ruined the ideology of individual rights protection.

***"...There were indeed difficulties in accessing some pocket areas because of security issues but that has now been addressed..." (See full statement in Appendix 2)***

***"... Be that as it may, the government of Ethiopia believes that it has to set the records straight on slanted reports that continued to portray the federal government as an instigator of all crime..." (See full statement in Appendix 3)***

The above two statements are extracted from statements given by MFA Ethiopia on 8 April 2021 and 17 May 2021 respectively which indicate that the first one oversimplifies the case and the next one was the measure taken to bring to justice without confirming the accusation.

To generalize when one country engages in addressing the international communities in the context of crisis there should be always room for negotiation as well as a flexible approach, not only to be accepted by the international communities but also to minimize the damage followed by the crisis. However, MFA Ethiopia confirms the stance of the Ethiopian government regarding the northern Ethiopian conflict and no desire to negotiate with TPLF, even though the government believes that human rights violation was ended as the TPLF must come to justice through the law enforcement launched by the prime minister Abiy Ahmed (Dr.) on 4 Nov 2020 as the TPLF attack the northern command.

***"...However, it should be clear that the push by partners to involve the TPLF in this national dialogue process is unacceptable..." (See full statement in Appendix 3)***

***"...But it should be understood that the government cannot be compelled to sit down and negotiate with the TPLF, which has already been labeled as a terrorist organization, and any sort of attempt to resuscitate the terrorist group would be counterproductive and untenable..." (See full statement in Appendix 5)***

***"...while the belligerent TPLF appears to be the underdog that happens to be at the receiving ends of the alleged atrocities and human rights violations in the region..." (See full statement on Appendix 2)***

The two statements are extracted from statements of MFA Ethiopia on 17 May 2021 and 25 May 2021 respectively that underlined the government of Ethiopia's stance over the TPLF for a long period. The third statement also extracted from the MFA Ethiopia statement on 8 April 2021 implies the atrocities and human rights violations caused by TPLF Such stances negatively harm Ethiopia's interest in international relations as Western diplomacy is highly concerned with the human rights violation.

#### **4.6. Roles of MFA's IPR Practitioners**

According to Seitel (2007), public relations can play a variety of roles, including writing, media relations, planning, counseling, research, publicity, community and employment connections, government and employment relations, management of public affairs issues, and more. Furthermore, Broom and Smith's four categories of responsibilities are crucial to comprehending how PR works and the contributions it provides to organizational development (Moss & Green, 2001; Adjei, 2015). These groups include problem-solving process facilitators, communication facilitators, expert prescribers, and corporate communication specialists.

Respondent one briefly describes the responsibilities of the MFA Ethiopia IPR practitioner as the case study of this article focuses on that role. Our main message is to address many activities of MFA Ethiopia to address and maintain the interest of the government. Then, our IPR is expected to produce news for our social media pages to reach our audience of digital media users as well as for our news, articles, press releases, and weekly press briefing for domestic and international media sources. In addition to the roles in writing several articles that respondent five also mentioned and quoted, we also worked on writing several reports and facilitated several forums and campaigns created by MFA Ethiopia as well as internal and external training sessions.

According to the researcher's observations, MFA Ethiopia actively participates on its Twitter page. In contrast, Facebook is another medium through which the MFA communicates with the audience for digital media. Additionally, MFA Ethiopia also maintains a blog website that is updated once a week and discusses significant events that have happened in Horn Africa generally by giving a quick summary and addressing specific information regarding Ethiopia. Even though the MFA communication wing convey a message through several media outlet (broadcast, print, and digital media) the crafted message is not designed as the genres of media require professionalism. For all media genres, they deliver the same carefully crafted message.

Although responses one and five claimed that IPR of MFA was composing a message, their primary responsibility is to publicize MFA activities for both the internal and external audience. The Situational Affairs Directorate creates significant concerns that may call for political interpretation and that clarify Ethiopia's connections with a number of other nations. According to respondent two (April 2015),

"On Mondays, as a staff, we hold weekly discussions with diplomats who are represented by a number of regional and international directorates. These diplomats highlight information that they learned from their employees by keeping an eye on reliable websites and a variety of media sources. Then, using the briefing's suggestions, we draft a message ".

The IPR practitioners of MFA attempt to address the communication facilitator position, which was divided into four groups by Broom and Smith, mostly through establishing connections between the external public and the MFA. On the other hand, MFA IPR rarely does work that addresses the internal public. IPR of MFA does not play the roles of expert prescriber and corporate communication specialist. When creating long- and short-term strategic communication plans that direct the overall communication components of MFA, those two primary categories of public relations jobs need to have a thorough awareness of the professional features of IPR. According to respondent two, MFA does not have a strategic communication plan that directs all communication-related activities. As a result, the engagement is carried out based on assumptions.

#### **4.7. Reflection on RAT Theoretical Framework**

It has long been a demand of crisis communication researchers to investigate "the dynamics, complexity, and in some cases conflictual actuality created by the ongoing process of globalization" and "the effects of the international context on crisis communication" (Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, & Johansen, 2010). Because they are "more receiver oriented" (Coombs et al., 2010), or in other words, "focusing on a single organization," the dominant theories, such as Benoit's Image Restoration Theory, Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory, or Shin and Cameron's Contingency Theory, have shortcomings that make them "less useful if we wish to include the inter-organizational dimension" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). These theories also don't "pay enough attention to the high degree of complexity and dynamics characterizing most crises" (Frandsen & Johansen, 2007).

The rhetorical arena model of crisis communication, in particular, improves our comprehension of "the communicative complexity of organizational crises" from two perspectives (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). It is founded on a multi-vocal methodology that considers a variety of crisis-related reactions in the social setting where senders and receivers interact, compete, work together, or negotiate during a crisis. This method highlights how the connection between communicators is complex, erratic, and chaotic and how the development of a text by the sender and the active interpretation of that text occur in synchronic space. Frandsen and Johansen assert that the concept of voice places more emphasis on intricacy than power.

Second, this approach views crisis communication as being mediated by four factors: context, media, genre, and text. These four factors work in tandem to ensure that the study is thorough and includes both textual and contextual analysis. The study of the diachronic aspect of crisis communication, or the times just before, during, and after a crisis, is also aided by these four characteristics. The researcher used the rhetorical arena theoretical framework to evaluate the practice using the mentioned variables for the research case on the assessment of the roles of IPR in managing tense relationships.

Here, the author proposes a modification to study crisis communication which primarily involved international events effectively. Context, media, genre, and text are the four factors that make up the RAT theoretical framework. However, one element needs to be investigated to make the conclusion sound stronger. Analyzing specific crisis communication utilizing such variables may result in a concrete conclusion. The four RAT variables were deemed to be insufficient by the researcher after conducting interviews and text data analysis. Instead, the person who directs the communication process and subordinates the four RAT variables should be considered one variable. The Strategic Communication Plan is the variable that directs the entire communication process.

Long-term or short-term goals may be considered when designing the strategic communication plan. Strong organizations that place a high priority on creating an effective platform for communication may have both long- and short-term strategic communication plans that are derived from the organization's strategic management plan and address a specific organization's

mission, vision, and goal by creating both an internal public with the management and an external public with the internal public.

Pre-planned, goal-oriented, and well-managed are listed by Onat (2012) as the multidimensional and distinctive aspects of communication strategy. All of the communication's components and tools have been carefully thought out so that their combined efforts can support the desired outcome. The process of communication has a higher objective or target. The communication needs to be handled carefully. Controlling how the message is perceived, decoded, and understood by the target audience is equally crucial.

Onat also explains how effective strategic communication requires a variety of plans and techniques to realize the desired outcomes, a methodology to successfully choose and implement the communication's tactics and approaches, and a messenger to effectively deliver the message to the intended audience. Technology is employed in communication as well to speed up the process and increase audience accessibility.

Shayna Englin, a professor of public relations and corporate communications, claims that strategic communication entails using the best message and the appropriate media while adhering to organizational communication-specific goals. The best message being delivered to the target audience aids in enhancing the organization's reputation and creating a positive public perception. Following that, such issues are tackled and guided by creating a successful strategy plan.

The strategic plan is one factor that is assessed prior to the application of the communication strategy by using the draft paper from the professional perspective, as well as during and after to judge the success of the continuing communication practice and direct the communication process. The author modifies Frandsen & Johansen's (2007) model in the following ways because having an effective strategic communication plan facilitates the creation of effective and efficient communication; therefore, the qualities of the strategic communication plan should be evaluated as one variable to reach a strong conclusion.

#### **4.8. Major Findings**

After critically analyzing the MFA IPR's role in managing the strained relationship of Ethio-US through applying the above-mentioned research methodologies the researcher come up with the following major findings:

- ✚ MFA IPR practitioners engaged in the process of managing the strained relationship of Ethio-US since the north Ethiopia conflict broke out mainly through conveying messages to address the external public.
- ✚ Where the media monitoring task is done by diplomats, principals, and desk officers of the American Affairs directorate staff, the IPR has no role in combating and upsetting false propaganda accusation that leads the US administration to take series action over Ethiopia.

- ✚ Situational Affairs Director provide weekly talking point (which seems like an Editorial meeting in the media arena) as well as perform the documentation of several other ministerial statements that should be addressed internationally and craft message addressed by the Spokesperson's Office. Here the finding noted that the MFA IPR's role in archiving data and writing for media is done by another department that is not an expert in communication.
- ✚ In the process of crafting the message, the to address US and international communities' accusations over Ethiopia's MFA statement lacked addressing rhetorical tactics as well as having deep knowledge of the diverse context of the two countries. Press releases and biweekly press briefings were major genres in addressing the North Ethiopia conflict as the conflict negatively affect the country in the international arena.
- ✚ MFA conveys its message through multimedia (print, broadcast, and digital media) and also uses international media. But the message crafted by MFA has a gap in fulfilling the requirements of the chosen media professionally.
- ✚ MFA as an organization doesn't have a strategic communication plan that guides the overall communication activities through the process of creating a linkage between the internal public with top management, in addition, to the external public with the organization as well as in the process of building the national image of the state.
- ✚ The MFA Diplomats who are responsible for the Ethio-US relation have no strategic communication plan as well as they don't think a strategic communication plan helps in resolving disputes between nations and building bridges of mutual understanding. As respondent three (April 2015) confirms, "*We as a diplomat don't need to plan a strategic communication and we don't need to communicate with anyone, but we do engage bilaterally to keep our countries interest*".
- ✚ Last, but not least, fully measuring the MFA IPR practitioner roles in managing the strained relation of Ethio-US through the RAT variable was not enough. To fill the gap the researcher found a strategic communication plan as the fifth variable of the RAT framework to measure strategic communication effectively.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Conclusion

The study was conducted to examine the roles of IPR practitioners in managing strained management specifically the case of Ethio-US relations since the north conflict broke out. As Congressional Research Service (2021) quoted, Successive U.S. Administrations have described Ethiopia as an important development and regional security partner, while periodically expressing concern regarding political space, human rights, and unrest. Relations have centered on efforts to alleviate food insecurity and poverty, improve health indicators, and counter-terrorism and instability in the region. The Tigray conflict has strained the relationship.

Even though the relationship between the two countries is mainly addressed by Diplomats and Ambassador, Entman (2008), suggests that diplomatic leaders employ strategic communications to resolve disputes between nations and to build bridges of mutual understanding to assist with negotiation and dialogue processes, as well as to create positive public opinion towards outcomes. Here Entman (2008) implies that IPRs as strategic communicators play a pivotal role in international relations as a communication experts.

This piece of paper then tries to assess the roles of IPR practitioners of MFA Ethiopia in managing strained relations that occurred between Ethio-US relations as a result of the northern Ethiopia conflict. In this case, the following points are analyzed in this study by the researcher as the objective of the study is to assess the role of IPR practitioners and the IPR wing as a general:

- ✚ Analyzing the context of the communication strategies designed by MFA IPR
- ✚ Assessing the rhetorical tactics actualized and expressed in the text designed by MFA IPR
- ✚ Identify the genre of message developed by MFA IPR to address the stakeholders.
- ✚ Identify the channel used by MFA IPR and its precondition to choose those channels as its tool
- ✚ Analyzing the strategic communication plan outlined by MFA IPR in managing strained relations between the two countries.

To analyze those specific objectives, the researcher used a Qualitative research approach, and case study method. Data were collected from Primary through conducting In-depth interviews with key informants and the message conveyed by MFA Spokesperson Office (mainly the biweekly press briefing and press release) as input for analysis. The documents collected from the MFA were analyzed by the Fairclough (2010) three-dimensional Framework of discourse analysis with the collaboration of thematic analysis data gathered through interviews. After critically analyzing the MFA IPR's role in managing the strained relationship of Ethio-US through applying the above-mentioned research methodologies the researcher were found eight major findings as listed out on previous chapter.

Based on the major findings listed out on chapter four the researcher conclude that, MFA's IPR engage on Ethio-US relation through conveying message through using multimedia (print, broadcast, and digital media) and also uses international media to address the local and international audience about the government action taken to adjust the false accusation of the international media as well as the US government about Ethiopia and disseminate the overall activities of MFA's Ethiopia. However MFA's Ethiopia has no draft of strategic communication plan that guides the overall communication activities through the process of creating a linkage between the internal public with top management, in addition, to the external public with the organization as well as in the process of building the national image of the state. Additionally major roles of IPR MFA's like crafting message, archiving documents (governmental minister statements, regional and international issues concerned Ethiopia), providing weekly talking point (Editorials), media monitoring were performed by American affairs directorate and Situational Affair directorate. On the other hand the RAT theoretical framework should also add strategic communication plan to measure certain organization strategic communication effectively in addition to the genre, channel, context and text. Thus, as Ekeanyanwu (2006) states the IPR's role as, International Public Relations aims to identify more or less universal problems that challenge many or all nations and to search for general principles that apply widely, based on previously listed out points the researcher concluded that, MFA IPR's roles in managing the strained relation of Ethio-US was not as much as the profession of IPR required.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Based on analyzed data, major findings, and listed conclusion of this paper, the researchers forwarded the following recommendation:

- ✚ Firstly, MFA should have a draft well-organized and effective strategic communication plan that guides the overall activities of its communication aspect. Communication elements and tools are pre-planned in a way the coordinated efforts of all these help to achieve the desired goal. The communication should be well managed. It is also very important to control the target audiences
- ✚ Second, MFA should hire well-educated IPR practitioners to facilitate the overall communication activities as the professional ethics and principles required as well as it should have to provide short and long-term training for the IPR practitioner in collaboration with academic expertise and media practitioners.
- ✚ Thirdly, MFA should have room to engage IPR practitioners in managing crisis happen through counseling and drafting crisis communication plans as well. A PR practitioner research to identify a problem, defines it, and develops solutions to that problem and its implementation.
- ✚ Finally, as MFA has diversified the international public externally the IPR practitioners and Diplomats should be addressed continues training about the context of the global arena of the socio-economic, political, and cultural aspects to have a deep understanding when they perform their activities with international stakeholders.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **ON THE US STATEMENT REGARDING THE SITUATION IN THE TIGRAY REGION**

The Government of Ethiopia's prevailing focus and priority has been and still is to effectively respond to the humanitarian situation in the Tigray region. In doing so, it continues to collaborate and coordinate its actions with international partners to reach out to every person in need.

It should be noted that the Ethiopian government thus far is covering 70% of the assistance from its resources, while the remaining 30% is shared by development partners and NGOs. So far, the ongoing relief efforts have reached out to more than three million people. Priority is being given to people in vulnerable situations, particularly for women and children.

With the significant improvement in the security situation in the region, the government has now allowed unfettered access to humanitarian actors. It has also put in place an expedited clearance system to remove the bureaucratic hurdles in securing the necessary permits to operate in the region.

Accordingly, the World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley has confirmed the important progress that has been made in the humanitarian response, while also underscoring the need to do more. The international community needs to respond to his urgent appeal for more resources to scale up the ongoing relief operations, instead of continuously lamenting the dire humanitarian situation in the region.

On the other hand, the Ethiopian government has made its position unequivocally clear concerning human rights abuses and crimes allegedly committed in the Tigray region. The government of Ethiopia takes its responsibility for the safety, security, and well-being of all Ethiopian citizens very seriously. That is why it is fully committed to undertake thorough investigations to get to the bottom of the issue and bring perpetrators to justice. In this connection, the government not only welcomed the support of international human rights experts but also signaled the possibility of collaboration on joint investigations with the relevant human rights bodies.

Therefore, the government has shown its determination to engage positively and constructively by responding to the two major requests of the international community, i.e., unfettered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and independent investigation into the alleged human rights violations and crimes committed in the Tigray region. These are also the main issues raised by the US Secretary of State Mr. Antony J. Blinken in his press statement issued on 27 February 2021.

However, an attempt by the US to make pronouncements on Ethiopia's internal affairs and specifically, the reference to the Amhara regional forces redeployment in the above-mentioned press statement is regrettable. It should be clear that such matters are the sole responsibility of

the Ethiopian government, which as a sovereign nation, is responsible to deploy the necessary security structures and means available in ensuring the rule of law within all corners of its borders. The Ethiopian government, like any government of a sovereign nation, has in place various organizing principles in its Federal and Regional structures which are solely accountable only to the Ethiopian people. The Federal Government is mandated by the Constitution to ensure peace and security against any threats to the Constitutional order of the country. It is in the spirit of this responsibility and holding a nation together from treasonous and divisive forces that the Federal government has been undertaking the rule of law operations in Tigray.

Ethiopia has an unwavering commitment to honoring its international responsibilities, despite the destabilizing nature of the challenges that ensued due to the high treason of a criminal clique. Nevertheless, honoring international obligations and responsibilities should not be deemed by any entity as an invitation to dictate a sovereign nation's internal affairs.

Spokesperson Office February 28, 2021

Source: <https://ethiopianembassy.org/press-release-on-the-us-statement-regarding-the-situation-in-the-tigray-region-february-28-2021/>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Statement on international media and community**

The international media have been busy reporting crimes of all sorts of nature in the Tigray region since the beginning of the law enforcement operation that followed the unwarranted and surprise attack by the TPLF clique on the members of the Northern Command of the Ethiopian Defense Force on 4 November 2020. The government of Ethiopia not only sympathizes with the affected people and appreciates the rightful attention given to the protection of the rights of civilians in the Tigray region, but also leaves no stone unturned until the truth is revealed and perpetrators are brought to justice. Be that as it may, the government of Ethiopia believes that it has to set the records straight on slanted reports that continued to portray the federal government as an instigator of all crimes, while the belligerent TPLF appears to be the underdog that happens to be at the receiving ends of the alleged atrocities and human rights violations in the region.

The government of Ethiopia urges the international community to not be easily swayed by the propaganda campaign of the TPLF clique and its sympathizers, including the international media that tend to whitewash the crimes of the clique that has a track record of committing ineffable atrocities on Ethiopians for more than three decades. It should not also be forgotten that the government of Ethiopia has been dealing with a criminal enterprise that had been armed to its teeth and it would be naive to rule out the possibilities of civilian casualties during the rule of law operations in the region. As we have repeatedly said undesirable things might occur when dealing with a group that does not hesitate to use civilians as human shields and their household as hideouts.

The government of Ethiopia, once again, is deeply dismayed by the deaths of civilians and the unfortunate circumstances that led them to endure unbearable situations. The government has a policy of zero tolerance for human rights violations and is committed to holding into account whosoever is involved in the alleged rights violations. The recent agreement between the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the UN to run a joint investigation on alleged human rights violations in the region is a manifestation of the Ethiopian federal government's devotion to taking the matter seriously.

Unfortunately, the international community has continued to be bombarded by biased reports that do not corroborate with the facts on the ground. Selective perceptions of news reports and journalists who have continued to observe things through colored glasses taint news outputs that often tend to find the federal government of Ethiopia as the usual suspect for all the allegedly committed human rights violations in the Tigray region. All the rush to accuse the government even tends to overshadow the well-substantiated crime committed against humanity by the TPLF clique on the innocent civilians of the Maikadra town.

The problem with TPLF is not just in initiating the crime, but its resolve to twist the truth and concoct stories through doctored footage in a bid to continue misinforming the world. And the sad thing is that the international media has been readily picking such products of the clique without giving second thoughts while pretending to fail to notice the clique's wrongs. To make matters worse, TPLF has staunch and bankrolled accomplices who are self-acclaimed gurus on matters of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

The international community will understand the matter at hand objectively by applying a rudimentary level of logical reasoning heeding to the fact that the concerted disinformation campaign by International media on Ethiopia cannot be a basis for the reality on the ground. This understanding entails that Investigations on the credibility and scope of allegations in the region should be substantiated by independent bodies and not by simply relying on the mere accusatory reports of news agencies.

Putting all the blame for alleged crimes on the Ethiopian government and turning a blind eye to the misdeeds of TPLF that continued to play the victim will not be a viable way to give justice to affected people. Acknowledging the initiatives to run independent investigations over the alleged human rights violations in the region could be the first step to take. Holding the irresponsible TPLF clique, that has continued to urge the people of Tigray to continue fighting for meaningless causes, accountable for the sufferings it has caused and the human rights violations it has continued to committing in the region is another step to take as a genuine concern to ease up the sufferings of civilians.

The Spokesperson Office, 08 April 2021

<https://ethiopianembassy.org/press-release-on-the-media-and-alleged-human-rights-violations-and-other-crimes-committed-in-tigray-april-8-2021/>

## **Appendix 3**

### ***Press statement on the unfair and unwarranted accusations leveled against Ethiopia***

It is indeed regrettable to note these days that there appears to be a concerted campaign to exert undue pressure against Ethiopia. In spite of the relentless efforts by the Ethiopian government to engage positively and constructively on issues and concerns raised by partners, it is being given a cold shoulder. That is why the Ethiopian government is being forced to question the motives of some of the partners, particularly given the public statements and pronouncements they made recently. They seem to be short of showing a genuine desire to understand and help Ethiopia overcome its current challenges; rather, they would only be counterproductive and exacerbating situations. Those statements and pronouncements as well as the fake news and speculations propagated through the media speak volumes in this regard. It is in this relation that the Ethiopian government finds it absolutely necessary, once again, to make its position unequivocally clear on some of the most important and salient issues.

#### **1. On the Humanitarian response in the Tigray region**

The Ethiopian government has not only demonstrated its willingness and commitment to work with the international community to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, but it has also provided full and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to operate in all parts of the region. There were indeed difficulties in accessing some pocket areas because of security issues but that has now been addressed. That is why it is absurd for some partners to continue to lament lack of access in spite of the actual situation on the ground. The challenge at hand is quite to the contrary and it is related to issues of capacity and resource. This is well known by humanitarian actors operating in the region. Therefore, as the Ethiopian government has made it clear time and again, what actually makes a real difference is for partners to make a timely and effective response to the international appeal by availing more resources to the relief efforts and not repeatedly call for access ad nauseum.

#### **2. On allegations of human rights abuses**

On several occasions, the Ethiopian government has also made it clear how it takes any allegations of human rights abuses and crimes extremely seriously. That is why it acted swiftly to undertake the necessary investigation to verify those allegations and bring perpetrators to justice. It is in this context that a team composed of representatives from the Federal Attorney General and the Federal Police Commission had been deployed in the Tigray Region to carry out this investigative work. Last week, they have announced the outcome of their criminal investigations and the actions taken thus far to ensure the necessary accountability in this regard.

On the other hand, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has been investigating and reporting on human rights issues, including the Mai Kadra massacre, civilian casualties, sexual violence, and allegations of discriminatory treatment. The outcome of these investigations will certainly enable the government to bring the perpetrators to justice and comprehensively address alleged human rights violations and crimes that have occurred in the Tigray region. The EHRC has already publicized some of its preliminary findings and recommendations from its

independent investigations. In addition, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have agreed to conduct joint investigations. Upon the invitation of the Ethiopian government, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights undertakes its own investigative work. Hence, continuously lamenting about human rights abuses, while the Ethiopian government has shown its unreserved commitment to get to the bottom of the issue and apply the full force of the law in ensuring accountability and justice, serves no other purpose than unnecessarily politicizing the issue and exert undue pressure.

### **3. On calls for Ceasefire and national dialogue**

The Ethiopian government has been consciously working to promote national dialogue build the necessary national consensus in the country to chart a better way forward. In this relation, it organized series of discussions to engage with wider sections of the Ethiopian society, including opposition political parties, the academic community, Civil Society Organizations, and various representatives of the society, including women and the youth with a view to promoting a culture of peace and reconciliation, and build civic political culture. The significance of these discussions as the country gears up to hold national elections cannot be over-emphasized.

In addition, the Ethiopian government has also shown its readiness to engage with legal opposition parties, members of the civil society, the private sector, elders, scholars, prominent personalities, and others in the Tigray region to promote dialogue. High-level engagement has already started based on a roadmap developed by the relevant Ethiopian authorities. However, it should be clear that the push by partners to involve the TPLF in this national dialogue process is unacceptable. TPLF is an outlawed group, which endangered the country's sovereignty and its constitutional order. The Ethiopian parliament recently passed a decision labelling it as a Terrorist Organization. That is why the Ethiopian government utterly rejects the repeated call by partners to cease hostilities and negotiate with the TPLF.

### **4. On allegations of clampdown on dissent**

The unwarranted and unsubstantiated allegations on the stifling of dissent and a crackdown on journalists that some media outlets propagate these days, while the country gears up to hold national elections, has no other purpose than to tarnish the government's image and undermine the electoral process. Nothing can be further from the truth. This is indeed a government, which has rescued the country from the abyss and opened up the political space to safeguard greater peace, freedom, and democracy. Its reform credentials have also been well recognized not only domestically but also internationally.

This said, the Ethiopian government is the first to acknowledge that its reform efforts have not been without challenges. But it is determined to redouble these efforts with all the necessary vigor. That is why it is doing everything possible to make sure that the upcoming elections are conducted in a peaceful, transparent, and credible manner. The expectation is that this will usher in a new era of democratic dispensation to meet the hopes and aspirations of the Ethiopian people for lasting peace, freedom, and democracy.

One thing is for sure though building and nurturing a fully-fledged democracy and political culture is essentially a homegrown process, and it cannot be achieved through external pressure.

The fundamental basis for the promotion of democracy is indeed the respect for constitutionality and the rule of law. And the primary responsibility of ensuring the necessary compliance in this regard certainly rests with the government.

What needs to be made clear here is that the Ethiopian government has no desire to clamp down on dissent. Otherwise, it would not have invited most of the opposition groups and politicians as well as journalists, activists and others who were in exile to return to their country and operate freely. It knows full well that this approach has been tried and tested in the past but failed.

The government does not believe that there are journalists or politicians jailed because of their political views and opinions. Those behind the bar are accused of violating the law. Therefore, they will have their day in court and the law will set them free if they are found not guilty. As far as foreign journalists are concerned, the government believes that it is not too much to ask them to strictly abide by the law of the land in carrying out their journalistic work. Those who do so have been operating without any difficulty. But it should be clear that the government is duty-bound to take the necessary legal action on those who are not willing and ready to comply with the law.

#### **5. On attempts to meddle in Ethiopia's Internal affairs**

There have also been repeated attempts to make unwarranted statements on Ethiopia's internal affairs, particularly in relation to the Amhara regional forces. Ethiopia is a sovereign nation, and it cannot accept any dictates from outside on how to manage its own internal affairs. The Ethiopian government wants to make it abundantly clear once again that deploying the necessary security structures and means available in ensuring the rule of law within all corners of its borders is within its sole responsibility. It is mandated by the Constitution to ensure peace and security against any threats to the Constitutional order of the country. It is in this context that the Federal government has been undertaking the rule of law operations in Tigray.

While it is the desire of the Ethiopian government to remain always ready and open to engage with partners on issues of mutual interest and concern, it will be forced to reassess its relations if these attempts to interfere in its internal affairs continue unabated. It is indeed unfortunate that some partners chose to dwell on internal matters of Ethiopia. One can't be indifferent when Ethiopia is flagrantly invaded while purporting to have too much concern about and trying to unduly delve into its internal matters; for doing so simply bears duplicity. That is why the Ethiopian government rejects those statements, which are not only inappropriate but also completely unacceptable.

Spokesperson Office 17 May 2021

Source: <https://bit.ly/3fCR7sT>

## Appendix 4

Spokesperson of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, H.E. Ambassador Dina Mufti, gave the Ministry's biweekly press briefing today (25 May 2021) to the media. In his presentation, the Ambassador focused on political diplomacy, Statements issued protesting decisions to infringe upon Ethiopia's sovereignty, Press Freedom and diplomatic activities related to citizens and the economy.

### II. Statements

The Ministry has issued three press statements over the Week; two on misrepresentations in the media and one on the visa restrictions on Ethiopian officials by the United States. In related news Ethiopian embassy in Washington D.C. has also written a statement to refute claims stated to pass Senate Resolution 97.

A. The first two statements were about the alleged use of chemical weapons in Tigray. We have made it clear to the world that the matter is the latest round of smear campaigns by the media which is unsubstantiated as usual. We have made it clear that Ethiopia has not employed and will never use such banned munitions because it takes its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention extremely seriously. As a victim of chemical weapons attack itself, Ethiopia also condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons by anyone anywhere.

### B. Ethiopian Embassy in Washington Statement on Senate Resolution 97

The Ethiopian Embassy expressed its disappointment over passage of Senate Resolution 97 by the U.S. Senate on May 19, 2021 and stressed the critical importance of strengthening the bilateral security collaboration to combat terrorism in the Horn of Africa. For over 120 years, Ethiopia and the United States have worked as strong partners and allies in ensuring and enhancing stability and security in the Horn of Africa, a relationship that can serve as a model for the rest of Africa. It raised its concerns over the following points:

- ❖ The Resolution creates a misplaced equivalency between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in calling for a ceasefire
- ❖ The Resolution's assertion of 'lack of humanitarian access- in the Tigray region is contrary to fact.
- ❖ The Resolution overlooks the fact that the infrastructure for public services was deliberately destroyed by the TPLF forces and that the Ethiopian Government has moved swiftly to restore such services at great cost.
- ❖ The Resolution calls for -release of all opposition leaders, supporters, activists, and journalists detained on the basis of their political activity. There are no such detainees in Ethiopia. The Resolution regrettably intrudes on matters that are under consideration by the Ethiopian judiciary.

- ❖ The Resolution’s call for national dialogue and reconciliation mirrors the effort launched following the enactment of Proclamation 1102/2018 in February 2019. The Reconciliation Commission and its 41 members, including prominent members of opposition parties, former high level political leaders, diverse religious figures, intellectuals, philanthropists, and others, continues its work today.
- ❖ The Resolution’s call for an Independent and transparent investigation of alleged human rights abuses’ is currently well underway jointly between the UN and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. The Ethiopian Government is aggressively pursuing human rights violators and has convicted three soldiers and charged 28 others suspected of killing civilians in the Tigray region.

Source: <https://ethiopianembassy.org/the-spokesperson-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-ethiopia-weekly-press-briefing-summary-may-25-2021/>

## **Appendix 5**

### ***On the U.S. Decision to Impose Visa Restrictions on Ethiopian Officials (Press Statement)***

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia finds it unfortunate to learn about the decision by the United States to continue exerting undue pressure on Ethiopia by imposing visa restrictions on Ethiopian officials. This is in addition to its previous decisions to restrict economic and security assistance to Ethiopia. In this regard, the Ethiopian Government would like to state the following points:

This decision came at a time when the Ethiopian Government has been engaging positively and constructively with the U.S. administration on issues of common concern. This was the spirit with which the Ethiopian Government welcomed the new U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, who met and held extensive consultations with senior government officials, including the Prime Minister.

It also sends a wrong signal at a time when Ethiopia is gearing up to hold national elections, which is expected to usher in a new political dispensation in the country. The 6th National Election would pave the way for an inclusive dialogue once a new government assumed office. Hence, at this important juncture, the Ethiopian government was expecting support and understanding and not such kind of ill-advised measures to unnecessarily overshadow the elections.

Ethiopia attaches great importance to its historic and friendly relationship with the United States which has stood the test of time. That is why the government finds it extremely regrettable that the implications of the visa restrictions and other related measures taken earlier will seriously undermine this longstanding and important bilateral relationship.

What is even more saddening is the tendency by the U.S. administration to treat the Ethiopian Government on an equal footing with the TPLF, which was designated as a terrorist organization

by the House of Peoples' Representative two weeks ago. There is nothing more revealing than this to understand the misguided approach by the administration.

The Ethiopian government has been consciously working to promote national dialogue through a series of engagements with wider sections of the Ethiopian society not because it was pushed from outside, but because it believes that this is the right thing to do to build the necessary national consensus in the country and chart out a better way forward. But it should be understood that the government cannot be compelled to sit down and negotiate with the TPLF, which has already been labeled as a terrorist organization, and any sort of attempt to resuscitate the terrorist group would be counterproductive and untenable.

As the Ethiopian Government has made it clear, time and again, the attempt by the U.S. administration to meddle in its internal affairs, is not only inappropriate but also completely unacceptable. Ethiopia should not be told how to run and manage its internal affairs.

As far as alleged human rights abuses committed in the Tigray region are concerned, the Ethiopian government is fulfilling its commitment to hold those responsible accountable. The Federal Attorney General's Office has announced the outcome of its investigative work and the important steps taken towards ensuring accountability and justice. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have already embarked on their joint independent investigation. Upon the invitation of the Ethiopian government, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) is also undertaking its investigations.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian government has not only demonstrated its willingness and commitment to work with the international community to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, but it has also provided full and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to operate in all parts of the region. It's been doing all it can by mustering its meager resources and that of partners to reach out to all people in dire need of urgent assistance. The humanitarian actors operating on the ground know full well that the challenge at hand is related to issues of capacity and additional resources and not so much about access.

After the series of engagements with international partners, including the U.S., and the tangible progress made in addressing some of the prevailing challenges, the decision by the U.S. administration to impose visa restrictions and other measures is not only regrettable but will also seriously harm and undermine the constructive spirit of engagement and the significant gains achieved on the ground, not to mention the centuries-old people-to-people relationships.

If such a resolve to meddle in our internal affairs and undermining the century-old bilateral ties continues unabated, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be forced to reassess its relations with the United States, which might have implications beyond our bilateral relationship.

The Ethiopian government will not be deterred by this unfortunate decision of the U.S. administration. It will continue its relentless efforts to overcome current challenges and lead the country on the path of lasting peace and prosperity. No doubt, the task ahead is daunting, but with the support and unity of our people, we remain confident that we shall overcome our

difficulties and realize the hopes and aspirations of generations of Ethiopians for a peaceful and prosperous Ethiopia.

Spokesperson Office 25 May 2021

Source: <https://mfaethiopiablog.wordpress.com/2021/05/28/a-week-in-the-horn-28-05-2021/>

## Appendix 6

The spokesperson of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, H.E. Ambassador Dina Mufti, gave the Ministry's biweekly press briefing today (02 June 2021) to the media. In his presentation, the Ambassador focused on political diplomacy, the situation in Tigray and the Ethiopia-U.S.A relations, Economic diplomacy and citizen-centered diplomatic activities. Here is summary of the Press Briefing,

### ❖ *II. Ethiopia-U.S.A relations and the situation in Tigray*

- ❖ Ethiopia treasures its Relationship with the U.S. and believes that sanctions are not necessary for the U.S. to send its points across, particularly at this time where Ethiopians are preparing to exercise their democratic rights in the upcoming elections and also see the initial results of their labors on the GERD.
- ❖ We believe that misunderstandings over the cases that seem to shadow the vibrant Ethiopia-the U.S relationship would not last long.
- ❖ The government of Ethiopia will continue addressing the concerns of the U.S. and the international community regarding issues in the Tigray regional state, not only caring for the relationships but also out of its deep concern for the wellbeing of the people of Tigray.
- ❖ But it is also our concern that the international community respects matters that solely fall under our internal jurisdiction.
- ❖ In this regard, we would like to thank Senator Jim Inhofe, United States Senator from the state of Oklahoma, and his address to the Senate floor which basically touches upon two things
  1. The United States should not threaten the federal government of Ethiopia on equal footing with a terrorist group (To make points clear here we can take the recent news that announced the assassination of the Mayor of Adigrat town by the terrorist group raising the number of Targeted assassinations of Tigray Provisional Administration Members to 23 deaths, 20 kidnappings and hospitalization of 4 of them)
  2. The government of Ethiopia is committed to bring all perpetrators of criminal acts in the region before justice

Source: <https://ethiopianembassy.org/the-spokesperson-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-ethiopia-weekly-press-briefing-summary-june-2-2021/>

## **Appendix 7**

### ***Press Statement on the Suspension of Ethiopia from AGOA Eligibility***

The Government of Ethiopia understands the human rights concerns of the United States Government over the ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia. We believe that such concerns over human rights issues do not warrant the decision of the US to suspend Ethiopia's privileges over the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The decision is misguided and fails to take into account the commitment of the Government of the United States to value the wellbeing of ordinary citizens.

Removing the preferential agreement will affect the livelihoods of more than 200,000 low-income families, mostly; women who have got nothing to do with the conflict. It will also considerably impair the lives of one million people who engage in the supply chain ecosystem.

What Ethiopians expect from the International community, and the US, in particular, at this time is an unbiased assessment of the critical situation and supply of the much-needed humanitarian support to affected people. Unjustified intimidation to jeopardize the economic livelihoods of innocent citizens, which we believe is propelled by the enemies of Ethiopia behind the scenes, will not give a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The Government of Ethiopia is deeply dismayed by the failure of the United States to properly acknowledge efforts made to address concerns on both the humanitarian aid and human rights issues in connection with the conflict. Reducing security checkpoints from 7 to 2, among others, has shown our commitment to address the concerns of the International Community over some bureaucratic hurdles. The Federal Government also supported the joint investigation by the UN Human Rights Office and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) into alleged violations of human rights committed in Tigray. The Government of Ethiopia has also been supportive of investigations over the issue by independent domestic institutions. Accordingly, punitive measures were taken over perpetrators of atrocities.

The time calls for concerted efforts from all responsible bodies, both in Ethiopia and abroad, to mitigate the unprecedented challenges posed by the actions of the TPLF. Removing the duty-free arrangement will, by no means, ease up the problem. We, therefore, urge the United States Government to reverse its decision that may only embolden the terrorist group while endangering the aspirations of Ethiopians to extricate themselves out of poverty.

*Office of the Spokesperson 03 November 2021*

# Appendix 8



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THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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PRESS RELEASE

## Press Release

Ethiopia is extremely disappointed to have witnessed once again the use of the Human Rights Council by some to advance their politically motivated agenda.

Regardless of repeated requests by the government of Ethiopia for the Council not to hold a special session but rather engage in a constructive manner and work in a collaborative spirit with the country concerned, some succeeded in achieving their objective through attaining majority votes in the Council.

This is also done against the recommendations by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission which were submitted to the President of the Human Rights Council on 14 December 2021 and to all members of the Council requesting it to unequivocally support the implementation of the Joint Investigation Team's recommendations, the work of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force and for the OHCHR and the EHRC to continue with further joint investigations.

This action by some in the Council is an attempt to find an alternative way of meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state and serves no purpose except exacerbating the situation on the ground.

What is even more worrying is that this trend in the proliferation of establishing mechanisms through the Council in most cases have failed to attain their objectives and have become merely tools of imposition on countries who refuse interference in their internal affairs.

This is why Ethiopia has categorically rejected the special session and its politically motivated outcome which undermines trust in the work of the Council, and most importantly, the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and political independence of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia would like to reiterate that it will not cooperate with the established mechanism imposed upon it against its consent.

Ethiopia wishes to thank those who have expressed their support and solidarity and reiterates its commitment to continue its efforts to fulfill its obligations under international law to respect and protect human rights.

No More to double standards; No More to unilateral coercive measures; and No More to meddling in internal affairs under the pretext of human rights.

17 December 2021

<http://www.mfa.gov.et/>

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## **Appendix 9**

The interview questions are designed basically to collect data from the international public relation relations officers, experts and team leaders in order to find out the crisis communication approach of MFA in the time when there was a crisis/disagreement/strained bilateral relation of Ethio-US. The researcher will exhaustively list as much questions as possible to get the necessary replies that would help the research make robust. All the interview questions will address research questions but for the sake of clarity the researcher believe to divide them into two major groups.

### **State of the Profession and the General Characteristics**

1. How do you see the practice or efforts of MFA in terms of international public relations?
2. How do you evaluate the outcomes of International Public Relations to the nation or the country?
3. Is your organization have any operational procedures and manuals of IPR?
4. Explain the strategy your organization used to manage the crisis of Ethio-US bilateral relation?
5. Explain the actions your organization used to manage the crisis Ethio-US bilateral relation?
6. How do you evaluate the outcomes of International Public Relations in identify a problem, defines it and develops solutions to that problem and its implementation?
7. How do you evaluate the outcomes of International Public Relations to keep two-way communication flow between organizations and their stakeholders?
8. How do you evaluate the outcomes of International Public Relations in forming parts of heads a strategic team constructed to plan and execute strategies to solve communication problems identified in the organization?
9. How do you evaluate the outcomes of International Public Relations in “generating communication products that implement the policy decisions” made by management members?
10. How important is the use of international public relations information for the international relation?

### **Crisis Management & Communication, Issue Management**

1. How is PR involved in managing crisis situation occurred on bilateral relation of the Ethio-US?
2. How MFA IPR practitioners understand the organizational agenda within inclusive and diversified way?
3. How MFA IPR practitioners understand the organizational values within inclusive and diversified way?

4. How MFA IPR practitioners understand the organizational identity within inclusive and diversified way?
5. How the MFA IPR practitioners understand the circumstance of the crisis occurred on the bilateral relation of the ETHIO- US as well as performs their tasks?
6. How the MFA IPR practitioners understand the beginning of the issue leading to a crisis and type of crisis occurred on the bilateral relation of the ETHIO- US as well as performs their tasks?
7. How MFA IPR point out the individualistic ideals of US from a perception of ‘reason’ in Ethio-US strained bilateral relation?
8. How MFA IPR point out the idea right in US from a perception of ‘reason’ in Ethio-US strained bilateral relation?
9. How MFA IPR point out the science and technology ideals of US from a perception of ‘reason’ in Ethio-US strained bilateral relation?
10. How do you reach your target audience during the crisis communication with US?
  - ✓ Press release
  - ✓ Media Interview
  - ✓ Speeches
  - ✓ Others?
11. Are there any IPR strategies and tactics applied to manage the bilateral crisis of Ethio-US?
  - ✓ Organizing seminar locally and internationally,
  - ✓ Effective Community Relations Application.
  - ✓ Film and documentary film production.
  - ✓ Mass Reorientation,
  - ✓ Rebranding
  - ✓ Others?
12. How do you reach your target audience during the crisis communication with US?
  - ✓ Print media?
  - ✓ Broadcast media?
  - ✓ Online media?
  - ✓ Others?
13. Who are your stakeholders?
14. Is there any problems do you encounter while trying to reach out them?