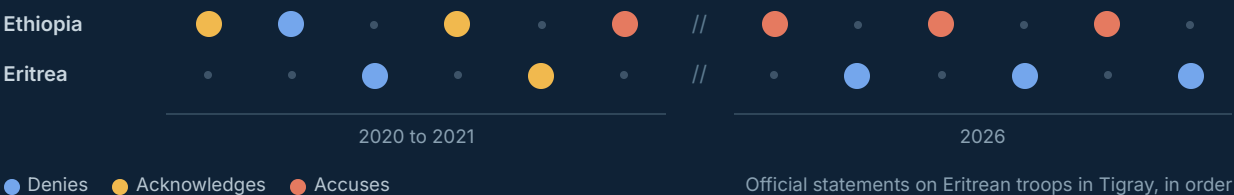


False in 2021, Asserted in 2026

Eritrean Troops and the Politics of Verification



In January 2021, Ethiopia’s Foreign Ministry called reports of Eritrean soldiers in Tigray “false and unfounded”. In October 2026, its officials say Eritrea’s army is fighting there. Neither verdict came with evidence the public could check.

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CONTENTS

	Summary and key findings	3
1	The return of an old allegation	4
2	When the allegation was “false and unfounded”	4
3	When alliances change, so do official verdicts	5
4	What three platforms show	7
5	Evidence without provenance	8
6	The architecture of amplification	8
7	The cost of politically defined truth	9
8	Verification cannot depend on political alignment	10
	Postscript: developments after data collection	11
A	Methodology, data and limitations	12
B	Cross-platform claim register	13
	References	15
	About the author	17

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SUMMARY

In January 2021, Ethiopia’s Foreign Ministry called reports of Eritrean soldiers in Tigray “false and unfounded”; two months later the prime minister acknowledged their presence. In October 2026, with the two governments now adversaries, Ethiopian officials say Eritrea’s army is fighting in Tigray, and Eritrea calls the allegation a fabrication. This report sets the two episodes side by side and traces how the October 2026 allegation traveled across X, Facebook and YouTube, drawing on 104 posts and videos published between 22 September and 8 October 2026. It argues that, whichever way the alliance stood, official verdicts on this question have been a poor proxy for the evidence, and it closes with recommendations for platforms, newsrooms, policymakers and funders.

KEY FINDINGS

1. While the two governments were allies, Ethiopia’s official verdict on Eritrean troops in Tigray trailed the evidence: a denial in January 2021, an acknowledgment in March and an attribution of the Axum killings to Eritrean troops in May.
2. As adversaries, the verdict ran ahead of the evidence. A senior Ethiopian official asserted full Eritrean participation in early October 2026, days before any news organization in this review reported a sighting, and no news organization in this review has independently verified the reported troop movements or the images.
3. Eritrea’s denials have barely changed since 2021, interrupted only by its April 2021 admission that its forces were fighting. A government that denied a deployment it later acknowledged has shown that its denials are not evidence either.
4. Each government spoke mainly on a different platform. Ethiopia’s allegation reached Facebook through state broadcasters in three languages; Eritrea’s denial was argued on X and reached Facebook second-hand. A team watching one platform saw half the contest.
5. Repetition can pass for corroboration. One AFP report appeared on six Facebook news pages within about eight hours, and certainty rose as the claim moved from newsrooms to commentators and groups.
6. The week’s key images remain unverified. One was geolocated, but its date and the identity of the men aboard are not established, and that careful finding was misrepresented in both directions within hours.
7. The sample showed no sign of coordinated inauthentic behavior. The amplification observed is consistent with organic sharing by partisan and news-driven accounts.

METHOD IN BRIEF. Posts were collected on 7 October 2026 with AI-assisted search tools and traced to their original URLs; no AI-generated summary is cited as a source. Times are in UTC, and the times of X posts were confirmed from their post identifiers. Engagement figures in the Facebook collection came from two incompatible methods, so this report makes no comparisons of reach. The YouTube findings rest on titles and channel descriptions. Annex A sets out each collection and its limitations.

1 The return of an old allegation

On 7 October 2026, residents of Adigrat, a Tigrayan town near the Eritrean border, told the BBC they had watched convoys of soldiers moving south. One counted about 40 trucks. Another said the vehicles carried Eritrean registration plates and were heading toward Edaga Hamus (also spelled Idaga Hamus), on the road to Mekelle.¹

The same day, a local official and residents told AFP that Eritrean troops had been deployed around the town,² and witnesses gave Reuters a similar account. Days earlier, Abraham Belay, a senior Ethiopian official, had told the broadcaster Fana that “the Eritrean army has participated with its full capacity and logistics”, in the BBC’s translation.^{1,3}

Eritrea answered in kind. Its information minister, Yemane Gebremeskel, accused Addis Ababa on X of “fabricating various allegations against Eritrea” to justify a war.⁴ He separately told Reuters that Eritrean forces were not in Adigrat.

Each government spoke with certainty. The evidence available to the public was far thinner. The BBC, which cannot report from Tigray, said it had not been able to independently verify any of the reported troop movements or the images circulating online.¹ In the material reviewed for this report, no news organization had established who was in the trucks, when the images were taken or how many soldiers had crossed.

The allegation may prove accurate, since several separately sourced witness accounts point the same way. For now, though, it is an allegation, and the two authorities presenting it as fact or as fabrication are both parties to the conflict.

That raises the question this report examines: what happens to the categories of true, false and “disinformation” when the institutions applying them are combatants? Ethiopia’s own record on this exact allegation offers an answer, and a warning.

2 When the allegation was “false and unfounded”

Between late 2020 and early 2021, reports that Eritrean soldiers were fighting in Tigray came from residents and from inside the Ethiopian state itself. In December 2020, the commander of the army’s Northern Command, Major General Belay Seyoum, told a meeting in Mekelle that Eritrean forces had entered, said the army had not wanted them to, and blamed Tigrayan forces for leaving the border open.⁵ The interim mayor of Mekelle repeated the point, and an Ethiopian Human Rights Commission report cited Humera residents describing looting that involved Eritrean soldiers.

On 20 January 2021, the Foreign Ministry took the opposite position. Its spokesperson, Ambassador Dina Mufti, said reports of Eritrean and Somali soldiers’ involvement in what the government called a law-enforcement operation were “false and unfounded”, Fana reported that day.⁶ Eritrean deployments along the border, he added, should surprise no one.

Two months later the verdict collapsed. On 23 March 2021, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed told parliament that the Eritrean army had “crossed the border and was operating in Ethiopia”, that reports indicated atrocities in Tigray, and that Eritrea had promised to leave once Ethiopian forces could hold the border.⁷ The admission followed months of denials from both capitals. In mid-April, Eritrea acknowledged in a letter to the UN Security Council that its forces were taking part in the fighting.⁸

Asmara had also contested the gravest evidence. In February 2021 it called an AP report on a massacre in Tigray “outrageous lies”.⁹ Later that month, Amnesty International attributed the killing of hundreds of civilians in Axum to Eritrean troops.¹⁰

The January verdict was not a fact-check. It was a ruling by a party to the war, issued weeks after the army’s own regional commander had said otherwise, and phrased in the vocabulary of verification. It was wrong, and the government that issued it conceded the underlying fact two months later.

Nothing in the record shows whether the spokesperson knew the statement was untrue. The evidence establishes contradiction, not deliberate deception. It does establish what every analyst of this conflict should keep in view: in early 2021, the official classification of this allegation was a poor guide to the truth.

3 When alliances change, so do official verdicts

The alliance of 2020 and 2021 has since collapsed, largely over Abiy’s ambition to acquire one of Eritrea’s Red Sea ports.¹ In October 2025, Ethiopia wrote to the UN Secretary-General accusing Eritrea of colluding with the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and preparing an offensive.¹¹

On 3 February 2026, Abiy told parliament that Eritrean troops had massacred young people in Axum and looted factories in Adwa during the war.^{12,13} The Axum killings were not news to his government. In May 2021, while the two countries were still allies, Ethiopia’s attorney general had attributed 110 civilian deaths there to Eritrean troops.¹⁴ What was new in 2026 was the prime minister delivering the accusation himself, amid an open rupture. Eritrea’s information minister called it “cheap and despicable lies”.

Four days later, foreign minister Gedion Timothewos wrote to his Eritrean counterpart that Eritrean forces had long been on Ethiopian land along the border, were advancing deeper into northeastern Ethiopia, and must withdraw.¹¹ Yemane called these “patently false and fabricated accusations”.¹⁵ On 1 October, Ethiopia closed its embassy in Asmara, citing Eritrea’s “direct and indirect acts of hostility and belligerence”, and Eritrea cut ties.^{16,17} Abraham Belay’s interview followed within days.

Set side by side, the two periods show continuity and change. In both, official verdicts on Eritrean military involvement came without material the public could test, such as imagery with metadata, unit identifications or named prisoners. In the material reviewed here, no Ethiopian government channel published such evidence for the October allegation, although Abraham Belay said many Eritrean soldiers had been killed and captured.

What changed was the verdict's timing relative to the evidence. In 2021, while Eritrea was an ally, the official verdict trailed the evidence: a denial in January while proof accumulated, an acknowledgment in March, an attribution of the Axum killings in May. In October 2026, with Eritrea an adversary, the verdict on the new allegation ran ahead of the evidence. Abraham Belay asserted full Eritrean participation days before any news organization in this sample reported a sighting, and the claim remains unverified.

That does not prove motive. Governments hold intelligence they do not publish, and a claim made for political reasons can still be true. But the record supports a narrower conclusion with confidence: whichever way the alliance stood, the official verdict was a poor proxy for what the evidence showed.

Eritrea's verdict, by contrast, has barely moved: "outrageous lies" in 2021, "fabricated" accusations in 2026, interrupted only by its April 2021 admission. Consistency is not credibility. A government that denied a deployment it later acknowledged has shown that its denials are not evidence either, and on its own neither government's statement tells the public much about what is moving on the road between Adigrat and Edaga Hamus.

Figure 1. Ethiopia moved from denial to accusation; Eritrea denied all but once

Official statements on Eritrean troops in Tigray, by government and period (12 statements, 2020 to 2026)

● Denies ● Acknowledges ● Accuses

	2020 to 2021: allies in the Tigray war	2026: adversaries
Ethiopian government	27 Dec 2020 Acknowledges Army Northern Command chief, in Mekelle Eritrean forces had entered	3 Feb 2026 Accuses Abiy Ahmed, to parliament Eritrean troops massacred Axum youth
	20 Jan 2021 Denies Foreign Ministry, on Eritrean role reports "false and unfounded"	7 Feb 2026 Accuses Foreign minister, to Asmara Eritrean forces must withdraw
	23 Mar 2021 Acknowledges Abiy Ahmed, to parliament the Eritrean army crossed the border	3 to 4 Oct 2026 Accuses Abraham Belay, on Fana army took part "with its full capacity"
	21 May 2021 Accuses Attorney general, on Axum Eritrean troops killed 110 civilians	
Eritrean government	19 Feb 2021 Denies On an AP massacre report "outrageous lies"	3 Feb 2026 Denies Yemane Gebremeskel, on Axum charge "cheap and despicable lies"
	16 Apr 2021 Acknowledges Letter to the UN Security Council its forces are in the fighting	9 Feb 2026 Denies Yemane Gebremeskel, on troop claim "patently false and fabricated"
		7 Oct 2026 Denies Yemane Gebremeskel, on X Ethiopia is "fabricating" allegations

While allied, Ethiopia's verdicts trailed the evidence: denial in January 2021, acknowledgment in March, attribution of the Axum killings in May. On the October 2026 allegation, made as adversaries, they ran ahead of it. Eritrea denied this throughout, apart from its April 2021 letter to the UN.

Sources: notes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Figure by the author.

4 What three platforms show

This report draws on 41 posts from 25 accounts on X, 28 public Facebook posts in six languages published between 22 September and 7 October, and 35 YouTube videos returned by searches in English and Amharic. It is a purposive sample of relevant, visible material, not a representative one. The findings below describe the sample, not Ethiopian or Eritrean audiences as a whole.

Each government spoke mainly on a different platform. Ethiopia's allegation reached Facebook through Ethiopian broadcasters in three languages within about 19 hours: Amhara Media Corporation in Amharic¹⁸ and Fana's Tigrinya service¹⁹ late on 3 October (UTC), then Fana English the next afternoon.³ The X collection found no Ethiopian government account making the claim; there, third parties carried it.

Eritrea's case ran the other way. Its information minister argued it on X, while the Facebook collection found no official Eritrean page. The denial reached Facebook second-hand, through a Somali-language personal account²⁰ and an Arabic-language aggregator,²¹ among others. A trust and safety team watching one platform saw half of this contest.

One wire story is not six confirmations. On 7 October, a single AFP report resting on a local official and residents in Adigrat appeared within about eight hours on the Facebook pages of Ahram Online,²² Addis Standard in English²³ and Afaan Oromo,²⁴ Arab News,²⁵ Africanews² and DNE Africa.²⁶ One X user made the point directly: several headlines resting on the same anonymous witnesses are not several confirmations.²⁷ The distinction cuts both ways. The BBC, AFP and Reuters each gathered their own witness accounts, and that convergence carries more weight than syndication, though none amounts to independent verification.

Certainty rose as the claim moved away from newsrooms. Of seven Facebook posts by news organizations that carried the allegation, six attributed it to witnesses or officials. The exception, Arab News, opened its caption by stating as fact that Eritrean troops had moved into Tigray. Of seven commentator, creator and group posts carrying it, four presented the incursion as fact without citing any source. One, in a large Afaan Oromo public group, declared it "confirmed" (*mirkanaa'eera*).²⁸ Another, a reel posted a day before the first wire reports, stated flatly that Eritrean forces were crossing at Zalambessa and at Bure in Afar.²⁹ A small, non-random sample cannot show how common this pattern is, but it shows where the qualifiers fell away.

Framing shifted with language. Addis Standard's Afaan Oromo post carried witness details its English post lacked, including heavy weapons moving toward Edaga Hamus. On YouTube, an English-language channel titled its video as a report of troops entering Adigrat.³⁰ A Tigrinya channel asked whether the Eritrean army had entered Tigray,³¹ while the diaspora broadcaster ATV Asena stated that it had entered openly.³²

The same searches returned material spanning eight years. Eritrean state newscasts from early October 2026 sat beside a clip of an Eritrean convoy filmed in Bizet in March 2021³³ and 2021 reports of Abiy's admission. The YouTube collection captured titles and descriptions, not the videos' content, upload dates or view counts, so these observations rest on titles alone.

5 Evidence without provenance

The week's most consequential images show heavily loaded trucks carrying uniformed men on a highland road. They appeared on X at 10:12 UTC on 7 October, from an account that captioned them as Eritrean forces photographed that day on the Adigrat to Edaga Hamus road; the post drew about 72,000 views.³⁴ Within hours another account reposted them as “BREAKING” fact,³⁵ and a Tigrayan academic's Facebook page posted similar truck photos as that day's footage.³⁶

A third account read a visible license plate as an Eritrean commercial format.³⁷ That is a real clue about a vehicle's registration. It says nothing about the unit, the date, or whom the men aboard serve.

Nine hours after the first post, analysts at the Critical Threats Project geolocated one image to Edaga Hamus, about 12 miles south of Adigrat, and stated that they could not verify when it was taken or who was aboard.³⁸ That is what disciplined open-source work looks like: one variable established, two left open.

It is also where the information environment broke. About four hours later, an account called Eritrean Post rendered the assessment as “no confirmed incursion, and no satellite proof”, which the analysts had not said.³⁹ Accounts on the other side had already moved from “reportedly” to “confirmed”, on the strength of broadcaster reports that themselves relied on residents. The same careful finding was pulled in both directions.

Was old war footage passed off as new? The question matters because genuine footage of Eritrean convoys in Tigray from 2020 and 2021 remains a search away. This review did not establish a single case.

A Facebook reel stamped “Meskerem 27” shows why dating is hard.⁴⁰ In the Ethiopian calendar that date falls on 7 or 8 October every year, so it fits 7 October 2026 and equally fits 7 October 2021, when the war was still being fought. A plausible location, a matching convoy and a calendar stamp do not add up to a dated, attributed event. Until someone establishes the earliest upload of each image, the honest classification is unverified: not authentic, and not fake.

6 The architecture of amplification

Observed: the claim moved before the wires did. On 4 October, the account that later posted the truck images asserted that Eritrean forces had entered through Rama, Sheraro and Zalambessa, attaching no evidence, and re-posted the claim on 7 October.⁴¹ On 5 October, the British journalist Martin Plaut posted what he described as a first-hand account of troops marching into Adigrat, without publishing the witness's words; the post drew about 119,000 views.⁴²

Observed: caveats did not travel with the reports. A BBC Tigrinya journalist posted on X that Eritrean troops were back in Tigray, “according to multiple sources”, keeping the attribution but not his article's statement that the BBC had not verified the movements.⁴³ An amplifying account presented BBC Amharic and DW Amharic reporting as confirmation, although both rested on residents.⁴⁴

The word “back” deserves scrutiny of its own. In February 2026, Ethiopia’s foreign minister wrote that Eritrean forces had long been on Ethiopian land along the border,⁴¹ and some X users argued that Eritrean forces never fully left.⁴⁵ A new crossing and a deeper advance from positions already held are different events, and the “return” framing quietly chooses between them.

Observed: political figures set the frame before any sighting. In the Facebook sample, the earliest statement of the narrative that Eritrea backs Ethiopia’s armed opposition is a 22 September interview with Getachew Reda, the TPLF’s wartime spokesman, who has since moved to the federal side.⁴⁶ A diaspora outlet’s write-up noted that the claims had not been independently established.⁴⁷

Inferred, not observed. Repetition across outlets and languages can create an impression of independent confirmation. Short video strips context. Polarized audiences read hedged reports through what they already believe. These are plausible mechanisms, not measured effects, and this review has no data on how recommendation systems ranked any of this content.

Not found. Nothing in the sample indicates coordinated inauthentic behavior by either side. The amplification observed is consistent with organic sharing by partisan and news-driven accounts. Testing for coordination would require account-level data, such as creation dates, posting synchrony and network structure, which this sample does not contain.

7 The cost of politically defined truth

Words such as false, unfounded, fabricated and disinformation carry authority because they imply a check against evidence. When a party to a war issues them as verdicts, it spends that authority, and not only its own.

In 2021, the Ethiopian state called accurate reporting false, and Eritrea called documented massacre reporting lies before conceding its troops were present. In 2026, both governments again pronounce on a contested military claim with no public evidence attached.

Each episode teaches audiences that “false” can mean “inconvenient to the speaker”. That lesson does not stay with governments. It erodes trust in the journalists and fact-checkers who use the same words with a method behind them.

The costs fall hardest in Tigray. Residents told the BBC of their distress at seeing Eritrean soldiers again, five years after atrocities attributed to them.¹ People deciding whether a road is safe, or whether to leave, need accurate information about who controls it, not competing verdicts.

Accountability suffers too. Abuses documented by journalists and investigators in 2021 are still called lies by Eritrea. Ethiopia’s government, which handled them as a matter for its attorney general in 2021, now invokes them as a political accusation. When recognition of atrocities depends on alliances, so does the prospect of justice for those who suffered them.

8 Verification cannot depend on political alignment

In 2021, the official answer to whether Eritrean troops were in Tigray was wrong. In 2026, it may prove right. In neither year was it evidence, and the practical consequences are specific.

For Meta, X and YouTube

1. **Treat statements by parties to a conflict as claims.** A minister's assertion about troop movements is news, but labels, fact-check programs and authoritative-source treatment should not count it as verification. That held for Ethiopia's denial in 2021, holds for its assertion in 2026, and holds for every Eritrean denial.
2. **Label provenance, not only truth.** The week's key images were neither proven true nor proven false. A label stating what is established, such as "location verified; date and identity not", would have served users better than silence or a binary verdict.
3. **Show upload history on conflict footage.** Genuine 2021 convoy footage sits a search away from 2026 material. Original upload dates on reshared video, and researcher access to that metadata, cut the cost of catching recycled footage.
4. **Staff the languages where the contest happens.** In this sample the allegation traveled in Amharic, Tigrinya, Afaan Oromo and English, and the Eritrean denial in English, Somali and Arabic. Review capacity in English and Amharic alone misses much of it.
5. **Share signals across platforms in a crisis.** Each government's message lived mainly on a different service, so integrity teams working platform by platform each see half the picture.

For newsrooms

1. **Carry the caveat into the social post.** The BBC's article said the movements were unverified; social versions did not always say so.
2. **Distinguish syndication from corroboration.** Say whether a report rests on your own sourcing or a wire story, and how many separate witness accounts exist.
3. **Publish the verification state of images:** location, date and identity, each marked established or not.
4. **Correct where the claim traveled.** When a claim's status changes, update the social post as well as the article.

For policymakers and funders

1. **Prioritize access.** The BBC cannot report from Tigray. Independent access for journalists and monitors would settle more of these questions than any official statement.
2. **Do not treat belligerents as arbiters of what is false.** Fund independent verification capacity in the region rather than relying on official classifications of contested claims.
3. **Secure researcher access to platform data,** so that claims of coordination can be tested rather than asserted.

4. Answer official labels with evidence, not takedowns. Had the January 2021 verdict governed content removal, accurate reporting would have come down.

The question raised by Eritrean soldiers in 2021 and by trucks on the Adigrat road in 2026 is the same: what happened, and how do we know? Information integrity work in this conflict has to apply one evidentiary standard to every claim, whoever makes it and whichever side it serves, and to say plainly when the honest answer is that we do not yet know.

Postscript: developments after data collection

8 October 2026

After data collection closed, the Associated Press reported that Ermiyas Ababu, a Mekelle-based commander of the government-allied Tigray Peace Force, said Eritrean personnel had entered Adigrat on 6 October and Edaga Hamus on 7 October. AP also reported that the conflict monitor ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data) said Eritrean troops crossed the border at Zalambessa on 7 October and that Ethiopian military drones targeted them at Guada. AP could not independently verify either account, and ACLED had not responded to AP's inquiry about the basis for its claims.⁴⁸

Both reports add to the evidence cited for claims 001, 002 and 010 in Annex B, but neither moves any claim to verified. The first comes from a commander of a force working alongside Ethiopian federal troops, and so from a party to the conflict. The second is a monitor's assessment whose basis had not been explained.

Annex A. Methodology, data and limitations

The three collections support direction and examples, not measurement. Each was traced to original URLs, and all times are in UTC. The table sets out what was independently verified in each collection and what limits it.

Collection	Records	Verified independently	Main limitations
X	41 posts from 25 accounts, 23 September to 8 October 2026 (UTC)	All 41 post times, decoded from post identifiers; every time matches the collection	Compiled as a narrative rather than a structured dataset, with no per-post language or engagement fields. X restricts automated access, so post wording could not be checked by script. View counts are available for selected posts only. Three items cited without links (an ACLED note on Martin Plaut's site, a post by @Seb_Masson_ and a drone-strike claim at Guada) were excluded. One post falls 19 minutes after 7 October (UTC).
YouTube	35 distinct videos, 20 of them fully cataloged, including some identified from search-result screenshots	Video IDs matched to titles and channels from the screenshots	No video was watched (embedded player error 153), so upload dates, view counts, durations and transcripts were not captured. Some catalog fields were truncated. The collection's narrative misdated Eritrea's break in ties (it came on 1 October), and an airport-seizure claim it attributed to Anadolu could not be verified; neither is used in this report.
Facebook	30 rows: 28 posts from 22 September to 7 October 2026, plus 2 historical reference items with non-Facebook URLs	URLs and dates present; duplicate notes consistent	Four rows lack post IDs, and one URL (BBC Amharic) is truncated. Three duplicates were removed at collection. Engagement figures came from two incompatible methods (direct reads for 4 posts, search snippets for 15, none for 9), so no reach comparisons are made. Four items were only partly read (untranscribed audio, an unread document image). Translations and stance coding were produced at the collection stage.

Facebook sample, 28 posts. Languages: English 12, Amharic 5, Afaan Oromo 4, Tigrinya 3, English with Amharic 2, Somali 1, Arabic 1. Sources: news organizations 10; commentators, creators, aggregators and diaspora outlets 11; state or official pages 5; public-group posts 2.

Dating note. One collection dated Abraham Belay's interview to about 1 October, but the earliest post found is 3 October at 20:08 UTC, and the X collection gives 4 October. This report says "days earlier" and dates the spread from 3 October.

Findings with the strongest independent support

1. On 20 January 2021, the Foreign Ministry, through Fana, called reports of Eritrean soldiers' involvement "false and unfounded"; on 23 March 2021, Abiy told parliament the Eritrean army had crossed the border.
2. On 3 February 2026, Abiy attributed the Axum massacre and Adwa looting to Eritrean troops, events documented in 2021, including by Ethiopia's own attorney general; Eritrea called the accusation lies.
3. On 7 October 2026, the BBC stated it had not verified any reported troop movements or images, and no outlet in this record had.
4. On 7 October, the truck images appeared at 10:12 UTC, a location-only geolocation at 19:22 UTC, and a misstatement of that geolocation at 23:29 UTC. The times are verified from post identifiers.
5. Ethiopia's allegation and Eritrea's denial traveled on different platforms and in different languages.

Annex B. Cross-platform claim register

Three of ten claims are verified, and all three are statements by officials; none of the October battlefield claims is. “First seen” means first in this sample, not the claim’s origin.

Verified	Established by reliable, independent reporting.				
Verified (statement)	The statement was made as described. The status does not extend to the truth of what was said.				
Unverified	Evidence is incomplete or points both ways. Qualifiers note what is partly supported (“location plausible”) or how thin the sourcing is (“single-source”).				
Official allegation / Political characterization	Asserted by a party to the conflict without public evidence, or an interpretation of motive that cannot be tested as fact.				
Not established	This review found no case either way. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.				
No.	Claim	First seen	Where it traveled	Evidence for and against	Status
001	Eritrean troops entered Tigray (Oct 2026)	3 Oct, state media on Facebook (Abraham Belay)	Facebook: state media in Amharic, Tigrinya and English; Afaan Oromo news and groups. X. YouTube titles in English and Tigrinya	For: separate witness accounts to the BBC, AFP and Reuters (7 Oct). Against: Eritrean denial to Reuters; no outlet verified	Unverified
002	Convoys moved from Zalambessa through Adigrat toward Edaga Hamus (7 Oct)	4 Oct, X (no evidence attached)	X, Facebook, YouTube	For: residents’ counts (about 40; 20 to 30; up to 60, second-hand); one image geolocated to Edaga Hamus. Against: counts differ; the image’s date and subjects are unverified	Unverified
003	Eritrea fights alongside or arms the TPLF	22 Sep, Getachew Reda interview (Facebook, YouTube)	Facebook state media; X	For: official statements only, including a minister’s remark to Bloomberg on 7 Oct (unconfirmed). Against: Eritrean denials	Official allegation
004	Ethiopia is fabricating a pretext for war over sea access	1 Oct, Eritrean statement on X	X; Facebook via Somali, Arabic and diaspora carriers	For: Ethiopia’s public push for Red Sea access (context, not proof). Against: witness accounts of troop movements	Political characterization
005	Ethiopia’s Foreign Ministry denied Eritrean involvement (Jan 2021)	20 Jan 2021, Fana	Historical	Fana report of the statement	Verified (statement)
006	Abiy acknowledged Eritrean troops in Tigray (Mar 2021)	23 Mar 2021, parliament	Historical; 2021 clips on YouTube	Al Jazeera; Reuters	Verified
007	War footage from 2020 to 2022 recycled as new	Not established	Facebook reels; YouTube	For: old convoy clips are easy to find; an undated “Meskerem 27” reel. Against: no earliest-upload evidence	Not established

No.	Claim	First seen	Where it traveled	Evidence for and against	Status
008	Abiy accused Eritrean troops of wartime atrocities (Feb 2026)	3 Feb 2026, parliament	News	AP. Ethiopia's attorney general had attributed the Axum killings to Eritrean troops in May 2021; Eritrea calls the 2026 accusation lies	Verified (statement)
009	Images show Eritrean-registered trucks in Tigray on 7 Oct	7 Oct, 10:12 UTC, X	X, then Facebook	For: plate format read by one account; geolocation to Edaga Hamus. Against: a counter-claim that the photo is in Eritrea (unverified); date unverified	Unverified; location plausible
010	Strikes on Eritrean vehicles; Eritrea downed Ethiopian drones	7 Oct, Afaan Oromo group post; 8 Oct, X citing Assena TV	Facebook, X	Single, unnamed or partisan sources; one BBC-quoted resident mentions drone strikes near Edaga Hamus	Unverified; single-source

References

Online sources were accessed between 7 and 8 October 2026. Times for X posts are decoded from post identifiers; times for Facebook posts are as recorded at collection. All times are UTC. Titles are given as recorded in the author's source log.

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