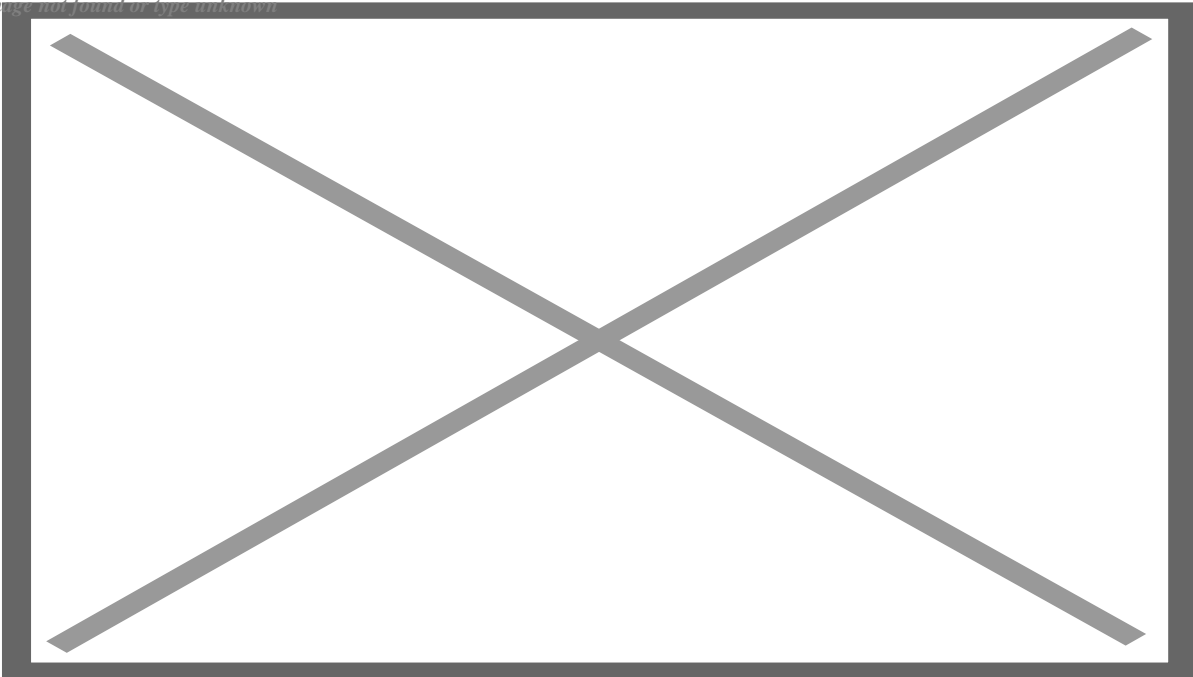


Representatives of Ethiopia's government meet Tigray rebels for peace talks

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People walk past a destroyed heavy artillery equipment in Hayk, Ethiopia Photographer: Amanuel Sileshi/AFP/Getty Images

Pretoria, October 25 (RHC)-- Representatives from Ethiopia's government and rebel forces in Tigray have gathered in South Africa for peace talks mediated by the African Union.

The talks came as the United Nations warned the situation in Ethiopia is spiraling out of control, with reports of widespread atrocities including airstrikes and artillery fire that have exacerbated a humanitarian catastrophe.

Some estimates put the number of dead in Tigray at 800,000 since fighting erupted less than two years ago. The United Nations says the resulting health crisis now threatens 6 million people.

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