



Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

General Country of Origin Information Report
on Ethiopia
August 2026

Publication details

City	The Hague
Drawn up by	Country of Origin Information Unit (MOA/AB)
Version number	1.0

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**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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Introduction

This Country of Origin Information (COI) Report was drawn up on the basis of the points for attention mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR) compiled by the Ministry of Asylum and Migration.¹ The ToR for this COI Report were adopted on 5 February 2026. These ToR, together with the COI Report, are available on the website of the Dutch Government.

This General COI Report describes the situation in Ethiopia insofar as it is relevant to the assessment of asylum applications from persons originating from that country and to decision-making on the return of rejected Ethiopian asylum seekers. It is an update of the General COI Report on Ethiopia of January 2024. The reporting period is from January 2024 to mid-August 2026.

This COI Report does not claim to provide an exhaustive list of individual security incidents and human rights violations. The incidents specifically reported are cited for the purpose of substantiating and illustrating a more general view.

In the description of violent incidents, the available news reports have been used to specify the numbers of victims. If a news report makes an explicit distinction between civilians and combatants killed, this distinction has been adopted. If a description in the COI Report refers only to 'deaths' and/or 'injuries', it may be assumed that the underlying news report makes no mention of whether the victims mentioned were civilians or combatants.

This COI Report is a factual, neutral and objective representation of the findings that were made during the period under consideration. It is not a policy document, nor does it reflect the Dutch government's vision or policy in relation to any given country or region. The COI Report does not contain any conclusions concerning immigration policy.

This COI Report has been compiled on the basis of public and confidential sources, using carefully selected, analysed and verified information. In the compilation of this report, use was made of information from various United Nations (UN) organisations, specialist literature, media reporting and information from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The content in this COI Report is based on multiple sources, except where the facts are generally undisputed or when stated otherwise. The text represents a synthesis of sources. Where quantitative data are provided, they can be traced back to the sources. The public sources that were consulted are listed in Chapter 12 of this COI Report.

Some of the information used was obtained during a fact-finding mission (FFM) to Addis Abeba² that took place in early April 2026. In addition, some of the information used was sourced from the Netherlands' diplomatic mission in Addis Abeba, as well as from confidential discussions and correspondence beyond the immediate context of the FFM. The information gleaned in this way was used mainly to support and augment passages based on publicly available information. Each of

¹ Now the Ministry of Justice and Security.

² The name of the Ethiopian capital means 'New Flower'. Geoffrey Last, Richard Pankhurst and Eric Robson, *A history of Ethiopia in pictures, From ancient to modern times*, published in 2014, p. 48.

these sources is marked as a 'confidential source' in the footnotes and accompanied by a date.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the composition and size of Ethiopia's population, along with a brief interpretation of the country's historical and political context. It also discusses the political and geopolitical developments occurring during the current reporting period. Chapter 2 examines the (digital) national identity card, known as the *fayda*. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the armed conflicts, including the various armed actors and the security situation in each region. Chapter 4 considers the scale and intensity of the violence in more detail, based on quantitative conflict data. Chapter 5 describes the overall human rights situation in the country, addressing topics including detentions, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, as well as the situation of specific groups, such as political opponents, human rights defenders, critical journalists and social media users. This chapter also discusses the situation of a number of specific population groups. Chapter 6 examines forced recruitment by state and non-state actors. Chapter 7 describes the humanitarian situation in the country, and particularly the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the level of food insecurity, violence against humanitarian actors and the situation of refugees and asylum seekers, especially those from Eritrea. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 describe the situation of women, minors (including unaccompanied minors) and LGBTIQ+ people, respectively. Chapter 11 examines return to Ethiopia and the potential difficulties Ethiopians have encountered in the process. Chapter 12 contains a list of abbreviations and terms in other languages, as well as a bibliography. Finally, Chapter 13 consists of four maps.

Terms from Amharic and Tigrinya³ cannot be represented unambiguously in the Latin alphabet. This COI Report uses the most common variant of each term found in the literature consulted. Alternative spellings are listed in the footnotes.

³ Also spelt 'Tigrigna'.

1 Country information

1.1 Introduction to the population of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is situated in the Horn of Africa and has a diverse population.⁴ The relationships and interactions between the various population groups cannot be described in any single, unambiguous way, and they are subject to change. On the one hand, cultural exchange and mutual influence have been taking place for centuries, fuelled in part by inter-ethnic marriages and trade relations between the communities. On the other hand, ethnic divisions may become more pronounced within the context of competition for natural resources and armed conflict.⁵

As far as is known, there were no current figures on the ethnic composition of the Ethiopian population. According to a 2007 census, the country was home to more than eighty ethnolinguistic groups. The four largest ethnic groups were the Oromo (34.4%), the Amhara (27%), the Somali (6.2%) and the Tigrayans (6.1%).⁶

The term 'Somali' refers to a member of the Somali linguistic and cultural community, which is spread across several countries, including Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. The term 'Somali citizen' refers to a person of Somali citizenship.⁷

The languages spoken in Ethiopia belong to different language families.⁸ For example, the Amhara and Tigrayan people speak Semitic languages, while Oromo⁹ and Somali are classified as belonging to the Cushitic language family. In contrast, the Anuak,¹⁰ Nuer and Nyangatom¹¹ people speak Nilo-Saharan languages.¹²

An ethnolinguistic map of Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia is presented in Section 13.1. This map dates from 2011 and contains information about the official languages in these three countries. This information may be out of date.

Ethiopians used various perceptions and criteria to determine a person's ethnicity or regional background. Within this context, examples of 'criteria' might include a person's name or accent. One source warned that ethnicity was not absolute and that the differences between ethnolinguistic population groups were relative. For example, some Amharic names are used by members of other ethnic groups, and some Ethiopians are native speakers of both Amharic and Oromo.¹³

⁴ Els de Temmerman, *De Hoorn van Waanzin, Soedan, Ethiopië, Somalië*, published in 1992, p. 109. Minority Rights Group, *Communities*, updated in June 2019, accessed 23 February 2026.

⁵ Ethiopian Institute of Peace (EIP), *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution, 1989-2025*, published in 2025, p. 122. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

⁶ Minority Rights Group, *Communities*, updated in June 2019, accessed 23 February 2026.

⁷ Rift Valley Institute (RVI), *Talking peace in the Ogaden, The search for an end to conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, published in 2014, p. 12. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

⁸ Ethiopian Embassy in Washington D.C., *About Ethiopia*, no date, accessed 24 February 2026.

⁹ Known in the vernacular as *Afaan Oromoo*.

¹⁰ Also spelt 'Anyuak' and 'Anywaa'. Within the Nilo-Saharan language family, the Anuak belong to the Luo-speaking cluster.

¹¹ Within the Nilo-Saharan language family, the Nyangatom belong to the Ateker-speaking cluster.

¹² James S. Olson, *The peoples of Africa, An ethnohistorical dictionary*, published in 1996, pp. 27, 33, 448, 449, 467, 468, 528-530, 557 and 558. Barbara F. Grimes (ed.), *Ethnologue, Volume 1, Languages of the world*, published in 2000, pp. 109, 110 and 116-118. Nicera Kimani and Marc Broere, *Roses will rise, Rael Lomoti's journey to redefine tradition through football*, published in 2026, p. 174.

¹³ Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

This COI Report does not in any way claim that it is possible to determine a person's ethnicity in an objective and verifiable manner. An overview of some of the perceptions and criteria by which Ethiopians believed they could recognise one another is provided below. This list cannot be regarded as exhaustive.

- Names;
- Language and accent;
- Facial features;
- Traditional clothing, tattoos and scars.¹⁴

Each criterion is explained in greater detail or clarified below.

Names

Some names can be traced back to a specific ethnic group, such as the Amhara, Oromo or Tigrayan.¹⁵

Languages and accent

The federal government uses Amharic as its official language, as laid down in the Ethiopian Constitution,¹⁶ in Article 5 (2).¹⁷ This language has several regional variants. Some people speak Amharic with a particular regional accent and/or supplement it with loanwords from their own native languages. A person's background can be deduced from their pronunciation and vocabulary.¹⁸ It is also possible that a person may have moved to another region and may not be fluent in the local language (for example, an Amhar in Oromia who does not speak Oromo).¹⁹

Facial features

Although Ethiopia has been a place of migration and intermingling for centuries, Ethiopians associate certain facial features with specific regions (for example, people from the highlands in the north or the lowlands in the west).²⁰

Traditional clothing, tattoos and scars

Traditional clothing, tattoos on the face or neck, and ritual scars may also be traceable to specific ethnic groups or regions. The use of such features has declined amongst young people.²¹ One source stated that, in some rural areas, traditional dress was worn in everyday life, but that in provincial towns, such attire was worn only at religious and cultural ceremonies.²²

¹⁴ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 39 and 43. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026.

¹⁵ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026.

¹⁶ The full text of the Ethiopian Constitution can be accessed in English and Amharic on the [website of the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussel](#).

¹⁷ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), *Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 21 August 1995, p. 3.

¹⁸ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026.

¹⁹ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026.

²⁰ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

²¹ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

²² Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

1.2 Size of the Ethiopian population

Little detailed and verifiable information was available concerning the size of the Ethiopian population and its regional distribution. As already mentioned, the most recent census was conducted in 2007. The *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification* (IPC)²³ is normally an authoritative source on food insecurity and hunger. As such, it collects information on the population size of countries. During the war in Tigray (2020–2022), the Ethiopian government and the IPC disagreed over the interpretation of data, after which the latter was expelled from the country. Consequently, the most recent IPC data on Ethiopia were from 2021, as shown on the IPC website.²⁴

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),²⁵ the population of Ethiopia stood at 135,500,000 in 2025. The UNFPA nevertheless did not specify population figures for each region.²⁶ With around 135 million inhabitants, Ethiopia has the second-largest population in Africa.²⁷

1.3 Administrative structures and regional powers

Ethiopia is officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). Administratively, the country is divided into twelve states, known as 'regions', and two chartered cities: Addis Abeba and Dire Dawa. These chartered cities are also referred to as 'federal cities'.²⁸

The federal states enjoy far-reaching powers, which are specified in Article 52 of the Ethiopian Constitution of 1995.²⁹ For example, under Article 52(2)(g) of the Constitution, regional authorities may establish a police force to maintain peace and public order within their own regions.³⁰ If a state government is no longer able to guarantee security within its own region, it may, pursuant to Article 51(14) of the Constitution, request the federal government to intervene with federal forces.³¹

The regions created in 1995 were largely drawn along ethnolinguistic lines. This ethno-regional division was intended to accommodate the various population groups within a federal system. Within this context, the terms 'ethnic decentralisation' and 'ethnic federalism' have been mentioned.³²

²³ The IPC is the UN's international food monitor and is based in Rome. Additional information on the IPC is available at <https://www.ipcinfo.org>.

²⁴ Confidential source, 22 May 2026.

²⁵ Additional information on the tasks and activities of the UNFPA in Ethiopia is available at <https://ethiopia.unfpa.org/en>.

²⁶ UNFPA, *Ethiopia population 2025*, no date, accessed 22 May 2026.

²⁷ Al Jazeera, *A visual guide to Ethiopia's ethnic groups and conflict areas*, 29 May 2026.

²⁸ The twelve regions are Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Central Ethiopia, Gambela, Harari, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, Tigray, South Ethiopia and South West Ethiopia (see also the map in Section 13.2).

²⁹ FDRE, *Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 21 August 1995, p. 19.

³⁰ FDRE, *Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 21 August 1995, p. 20.

³¹ FDRE, *Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 21 August 1995, p. 19.

³² Last, Pankhurst and Robson, *A history of Ethiopia in pictures*, published in 2014, p. 65. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021, pp. 9 and 10. Jan Pronk, *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika, Onderhandelen over autonomie, vrede and hulpverlening*, published in 2025, pp. 105, 109, 110 and 342.

A map of Ethiopia showing the various regions is presented in Section 13.2. The names of most regions refer to specific ethnic groups, for example Amhara (Amhara), Oromia (Oromo),³³ Somali (Somali) and Tigray³⁴ (Tigrayan).³⁵ In the past, the Somali region was also known as 'the Ogaden'. This place name referred specifically to the Ogaden clan and was not considered inclusive by the other Somali clans living in this region.³⁶

The Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 and the associated territorial organisation were intended to protect the cultural rights of the various population groups. According to critics, however, the governance model of 'ethnic federalism' inadvertently fuelled tensions between different groups. They argued that ethnicity had been institutionalised as a political identity, even though no region was inhabited exclusively by any single, identical population group.³⁷

1.4 Historical and political context

In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie I was overthrown and a junta, known as the Derg (Amharic for 'council' or 'committee'),³⁸ seized power. In 1991, following a civil war that had lasted for years, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took power. This coalition comprised various parties and movements, including the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).³⁹ The TPLF exerted the greatest influence within the EPRDF.⁴⁰

The TPLF was founded in the mid-1970s in Tigray, a mountainous region in northern Ethiopia. It sought to put an end to the marginalisation of Tigray (actual or alleged) and took up arms against the Derg regime. Initially, the TPLF sought an independent state, but later revised this objective to autonomy within a federal system.⁴¹

In its armed struggle, the TPLF joined forces with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which was campaigning for an independent Eritrea. Following a decades-long struggle for independence, Eritrea became de facto independent in 1991. The country officially gained independence in 1993. This was preceded by a referendum, in which the vast majority of the Eritrean population voted in favour of

³³ Also spelt 'Oromiya'.

³⁴ Also spelt 'Tigré' and 'Tigrai'.

³⁵ Last, Pankhurst and Robson, *A history of Ethiopia in pictures*, published in 2014, p. 65.

³⁶ RVI, *Talking peace in the Ogaden*, published in 2014, p. 12. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

³⁷ Internationale Spectator, *Etniciteit en democratisering in Ethiopia*, November 1995, pp. 591 and 592. De Volkskrant, *Etnische zuiveringen in Ethiopia verdienen geen steun*, 23 July 1996. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021, p. 10. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Borkena, *Ethiopia's fragile peace, Why the end of war has not brought stability*, 31 May 2026. AS, *Fragmented sovereignty, constitutional ambiguity, How Ethiopia's unresolved federal security architecture fuels regional conflicts*, 30 July 2026.

³⁸ Also spelt 'Dergu(e)'. Colonel Menghistu Haile Mariam led the Derg regime (1974–1991). In the literature, this regime is variously described as 'military', 'Marxist' and 'communist'. In 1987, Menghistu became president of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE). In 1991, Menghistu fled to Zimbabwe. EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, pp. 8, 9 and 11.

³⁹ In Amharic, the TPLF is known as *Hezbawi Woyyane Harinnet Tigray*. The term 'Woy(y)ane' refers to a popular uprising in Tigray in 1943 against the imperial rule of Haile Selassie. Within the context of the TPLF, this term means something like '(justified) uprising'. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 28 March 2026.

⁴⁰ Last, Pankhurst and Robson, *A history of Ethiopia in pictures*, published in 2014, p. 64. Els de Temmerman, *De Hoorn van Waanzin*, pp. 114 and 115. EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, pp. 15, 16 and 30. Pronk, *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika*, published in 2025, pp. 98 and 106. Addis Standard (AS), *From ideals of liberation to autocracy, TPLF's five-decade arc of ideological collapse, authoritarian drift*, 25 May 2026.

⁴¹ Christopher Clapham (red.), *African guerrillas*, published in 1998, pp. 36, 38, 39 and 50. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Borkena, *The new normal, Why TPLF and its cadres, including senior army officials, struggle to accept reality*, 29 June 2026.

secession from Ethiopia. As a result, Ethiopia found itself landlocked by its neighbouring countries. The country no longer had direct access to the Red Sea.⁴²

Ideological and military-strategic differences already existed between the TPLF and the EPLF during their joint struggle against the Derg regime. During the 1990s, relations between the TPLF-dominated EPRDF and Eritrea deteriorated. The tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea escalated into a border war (1998–2000) centring primarily on control of the disputed border town of Badme. From the perspective of the Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, the TPLF – with which he had previously collaborated against the Derg regime – posed an existential threat to Eritrea. Until 2018, the TPLF dominated Ethiopian politics.⁴³

In 2018, Abiy Ahmed became Prime Minister of Ethiopia. He signed a peace treaty with Eritrea in the same year. In recognition of this, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. In the same year, Abiy dissolved the EPRDF and founded the Prosperity Party (PP).⁴⁴ These developments served to isolate the TPLF, as it no longer dominated national politics and retained power only in Tigray, which had been its original power base.⁴⁵

In November 2020, tensions between the federal government in Addis Abeba and the TPLF in Tigray led to a war. Eritrea and pro-government militias from Amhara and Afar fought alongside the federal authorities. Eritrea hoped to eliminate the TPLF once and for all, and the Amharic militias captured western and southern parts of Tigray that they saw as belonging to Amhara.⁴⁶ The conflict took place mainly in Tigray, but it also affected Afar and Amhara. For this reason, the conflict is also known as the 'Northern War'.⁴⁷

After two years of fighting, the Ethiopian federal government and the TPLF signed a ceasefire agreement in Pretoria (South Africa) in November 2022. This agreement, facilitated by the African Union (AU), was known in full as the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), or the Pretoria Peace Agreement (PPA) for short. The agreement did not bring about lasting peace. For example, the Ethiopian federal government fell out with both Eritrea and the Amharic militias,⁴⁸ as explained briefly below. In Tigray, fighting took place in the period following the signing of the Pretoria Agreement (see Subsection 3.6.4).

⁴² Last, Pankhurst and Robson, *A history of Ethiopia in pictures*, published in 2014, p. 65. EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, p. 15. Pronk, *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika*, published in 2025, pp. 114 and 115. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. MO, *'In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig and alles staat in lichterlaaie'*, 17 April 2026.

⁴³ Clapham (red.), *African guerrillas*, published in 1998, p. 45. Last, Pankhurst and Robson, *A history of Ethiopia in pictures*, published in 2014, p. 65. Pronk, *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika*, published in 2025, pp. 140, 146 and 147. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. MO, *'In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig and alles staat in lichterlaaie'*, 17 April 2026.

⁴⁴ The PP has its own website: prosperity.org.et/web/eng.

⁴⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021, pp. 7, 11, 12 and 14. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, p. 6. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

⁴⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021, pp. 8, 9 and 47–50. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, p. 6. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025, p. 8. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray, A powder keg in the Horn of Africa*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 2.

⁴⁷ EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, pp. 54 and 55.

⁴⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 8 and 9. Clingendael Institute, *Rethinking Ethiopia's National Dialogue, Navigating conflict and growing repression ahead of 2026 elections*, July 2025, p. 6. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025, p. 8. The Africa Report, *Ethiopia-Eritrea, Has Abiy met his match as Asmara and Tigray join forces?*, 10 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 2. The New Humanitarian (TNH), *The growing threat of conflict in the Horn of Africa*, 23 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. MO, *'In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig and alles staat in lichterlaaie'*, 17 April 2026. Borkena, *Ethiopia's fragile peace*, 31 May 2026.

From October 2023 onwards, Prime Minister Abiy increasingly emphasised Ethiopia's need to secure direct access to the Red Sea. As mentioned above, following Eritrea's secession in 1993, Ethiopia found itself landlocked by its neighbouring countries. Prime Minister Abiy's remarks put further strain on relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea.⁴⁹

In Amhara, an armed uprising broke out against the federal government in 2023. As stated in Section 1.3, under the Constitution, the federal states have the right to their own police force. Over the years, these regional police forces have developed into what are known as regional special forces. These were paramilitary forces for which there was no constitutional framework. The constitution did not specify how these regional armed forces were to relate to the federal government. Following the war in Tigray (2020–2022), Prime Minister Abiy wanted to disband the regional armed forces. Some Amharic paramilitaries, who had fought alongside the federal government in Tigray, nevertheless refused to be demobilised or integrated into the federal army or the federal police. Under the umbrella term 'Fano',⁵⁰ they took up arms against the federal government.⁵¹ During the current reporting period, various Fano groups sought to build closer ties with one another. In January 2026, they founded the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM),⁵² about which additional information is provided in Section 3.4.

An armed conflict was also raging in Oromia. Many Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia (see Section 1.1), had long felt marginalised.⁵³ For many years, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)⁵⁴ waged an armed struggle against the marginalisation (actual or alleged) of the Oromo people. After Prime Minister Abiy, himself an Oromo, came to power, he sought to build bridges with various armed opposition groups, including the OLF. In early July 2018, the Ethiopian parliament approved a proposal to remove the OLF from the national list of terrorist organisations. In December 2019, the OLF was officially registered as a political party. The armed wing of the OLF, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA),⁵⁵ nevertheless rejected this process of rapprochement and continued the armed struggle. The federal government referred to the OLA as 'Shene'.⁵⁶ By giving it this nickname, the government wanted to make it clear that, in its view, the OLA had no legitimacy and was not really a liberation army.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 17. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025, p. 8. The Africa Report, *Ethiopia-Eritrea*, 10 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 2. TNH, *The growing threat of conflict in the Horn of Africa*, 23 February 2026. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *Is Ethiopia heading back to war with the TPLF or Eritrea in Tigray?*, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. MO, *'In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig and alles staat in lichterlaaie'*, 17 April 2026.

⁵⁰ Also spelt 'Fanno'.

⁵¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 14 and 34. World Peace Foundation (WPF), *Tigray in the eye of the storm*, 2 January 2024. The Guardian, *Inside Ethiopia's Fano insurgency – photo essay*, 1 December 2025. The Africa Report, *Who are the Fano – and why is Ethiopia blaming Eritrea for arming them?*, 16 January 2026. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, pp. 6 and 7. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026. AS, *Fragmented sovereignty, constitutional ambiguity*, 30 July 2026. The Africa Report, *Fano's Kingdom, Inside the insurrection in northern Ethiopia*, 12 August 2026.

⁵² Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC), *Fano factions unite in Amhara under new name Amhara Fano National Movement*, 17 January 2026. Borkena, *Statement regarding the establishment of the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM)*, 18 January 2026. Martin Plaut, *Fano forces statement on their complete unification, Establishment of the Amhara Fano National Movement and leadership*, 18 January 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia's last two Amhara Fano factions unite*, 19 January 2026. ATC, *AFNM welcomes Bizamo Fano, Ensures committee representation*, 22 January 2026. The Africa Report, *Fano's Kingdom*, 12 August 2026.

⁵³ AS, *From nationalism to class politics, Rethinking the Oromo struggle*, 26 June 2026.

⁵⁴ The OLF is known in Oromo as the *Adda Bilisummaa Oromoo* (ABO).

⁵⁵ The OLA is known in Oromo as *Waraana Bilisummaa Oromoo* (WBO).

⁵⁶ In the Oromo language, *Shene* literally means 'Five'.

⁵⁷ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, July 2018, pp. 13 and 14. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021, pp. 7, 15, 21, 22 and 72. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, p. 8. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*,

Section 3.5 discusses the OLA in greater detail. Section 5.4 addresses the situation of members and supporters of the OLF.

1.5 Political developments at the domestic level

1.5.1 Division and mounting tensions in Tigray

The provisions of the Pretoria Peace Agreement (see Section 1.4) included the establishment of a regional interim administration for Tigray, known as the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA).⁵⁸ The TPLF nominated its own leader, Debretsion Gebremichael (hereinafter: Debretsion) as President of the TIRA, but Prime Minister Abiy rejected this nomination. In response, the TPLF nominated its spokesperson, Getachew Reda (hereinafter: Getachew), as President of the TIRA, to which Prime Minister Abiy agreed.⁵⁹ Getachew had signed the PPA on behalf of the TPLF in November 2022.⁶⁰

Tensions within the TPLF had already been mounting during the previous reporting period. The 'old guard', led by Debretsion, wanted the TPLF to retain control over the regional administration and the regional armed forces, known as the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF). The 'reformers' led by Getachew were open to giving other political parties in Tigray greater scope for action. Getachew's faction also sought a pragmatic relationship with the federal government in Addis Abeba. From the perspective of the 'old guard', Getachew was thus moving too far in the direction of Prime Minister Abiy.⁶¹

During the current reporting period, the 'old guard' resolved the internal power struggle in its favour. In August 2024, Getachew was expelled from the TPLF. Tadesse Werede (hereinafter: Tadesse),⁶² the commander of the TDF, assumed the chairmanship of the TIRA on 8 April 2025, with the approval of Prime Minister Abiy. Getachew fled Addis Abeba, where, he took up a post as an adviser on East African affairs to Prime Minister Abiy.⁶³ Getachew founded a new party known as *Simret*, which means 'solidarity' in Tigrinya.⁶⁴ He enjoyed particular support in South Tigray, his home region.⁶⁵

January 2024, p. 11. The Independent, 'Executions, torture, abductions, rape', *Ethiopia's hidden conflict*, 2 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Amnesty International, "No one came to my rescue", *Gang rape, sexual slavery, and mass displacement of women in Oromia, Ethiopia*, published on 6 March 2026, p. 10. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁵⁸ This governing body was also known as the Interim Regional Administration of Tigray (IRAT).

⁵⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 9 and 10. The Africa Report, *Tigray's deepening political crisis raises fear of another war in northern Ethiopia*, 13 February 2025. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, pp. 5 and 6.

⁶⁰ ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 6. Al Jazeera, *Ethiopia must not be dragged back into war*, 11 June 2026.

⁶¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 11. The Africa Report, *Tigray's deepening political crisis raises fear of another war in northern Ethiopia*, 13 February 2025. African Arguments, *The turbulent career of Getachew Reda*, 18 June 2025. TNH, *I don't want to fight again in another Tigray war*, 4 August 2025. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025, p. 9. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

⁶² Also spelt 'Worede'.

⁶³ AS, *Divided and disputed, TPLF's fractured leadership, electoral board feud threaten Tigray's fragile peace*, 25 March 2025. African Arguments, *The turbulent career of Getachew Reda*, 18 June 2025. TNH, *I don't want to fight again in another Tigray war*, 4 August 2025. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025, p. 9. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 11 and 12. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. MO, 'In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig en alles staat in lichterlaaie', 17 April 2026.

⁶⁴ Also spelt *Semret*. In English, this party is known as the *Tigray Democratic Solidarity Party* (TDSP). It has its own website: <https://www.tigraidemocraticsolidarity.org>.

⁶⁵ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 13. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. MO, 'In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig en alles staat in lichterlaaie', 17 April 2026.

In the same month that Getachew lost the presidency of the TIRA, some units broke away from the TDF. They settled in the border region between south-eastern Tigray and Afar and called themselves the Tigray Peace Forces (TPF).⁶⁶ This armed group accused the TPLF of abuse of power and expressed willingness to cooperate with the federal government. Although the TPF and Simret shared the same objective – to bring the TPLF’s dominance in Tigray to an end – and support base, they were officially two separate entities.⁶⁷ Commentators and the media nevertheless regarded the TPF as Simret’s armed wing.⁶⁸ Additional information on the TPF is provided in Section 3.2.

Although other political parties were also represented in the TIRA, the TPLF, under Debretsion’s leadership, remained dominant within this governing body. As a result, the TPLF retained a significant degree of control over the TDF, as this regional military force was accountable to the TIRA (see also Section 3.3).⁶⁹

During the current reporting period, the financial capacity of the TIRA came under pressure, as the federal government in Addis Abeba was continually decreasing the funding available to the Tigray regional administration. The federal government feared that the money would be channelled to the TPLF and the TDF. As a result, the TIRA was no longer able to pay the salaries of regional-level civil servants, such as teachers, healthcare workers and journalists.⁷⁰ In April 2026, the TIRA announced that a budget deficit of 8.5 billion birr had emerged.⁷¹ As a result, the salaries of more than 141,000 civil servants could not be paid.⁷²

Meanwhile, political tensions in Tigray and between the TPLF and the federal government continued to rise. On 9 April 2026, Prime Minister Abiy unilaterally extended the term of office of the TIRA, led by Tadesse, by one year. The TPLF, led by Debretsion, opposed this. It considered that this unilateral decision by Prime Minister Abiy was contrary to the spirit of the PPA. The TPLF argued that it should have taken a decision together with the federal government. In contrast, Tadesse stated that the extension had been granted in accordance with the law. This once again highlighted the friction between the TPLF and the federal government, as well as the divisions within Tigray’s political and military elite.⁷³

On 19 April 2026, the TPLF adopted a resolution to dissolve the TIRA and reinstate the pre-war parliament of Tigray, the ‘Tigray Regional State Council’ (hereinafter: the Tigray Council). It argued that the PPA had not been fully implemented. For example, Amharic militias continued to exercise control over certain areas that had belonged to Tigray before the war, meaning that Tigrayans who had fled these areas

⁶⁶ The TPF are known in Tigrinya as *Hara Meret*, which means ‘Free Land’ or ‘Liberated Land’.

⁶⁷ Africa Intelligence (AI), *Addis Ababa backs creation of armed Tigrayan opposition in Afar region*, 14 May 2025. The Africa Report, *In Tigray, a new armed group emerges*, 13 June 2025. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 13. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

⁶⁸ AI, *Abiy Ahmed keeps Tigrayan opposition on a tight leash*, 26 September 2025. MO, *‘In Ethiopia heb je maar één vonk nodig and alles staat in lichterlaaie’*, 17 April 2026.

⁶⁹ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 12 August 2026.

⁷⁰ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 12. ATC, *Protests against budget freeze scheduled for 24 March*, 20 March 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis*, 11 - 18 March 2026, published on 20 March 2026, pp. 2, 5 and 6. AI, *‘Strategic leadership’ in Tigray gears up for potential war*, 23 March 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁷¹ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 24 April 2026, 8.5 billion birr was equivalent to 137,819,120.85 euros.

⁷² AS, *Tigray Interim Administration says 8.5 billion birr budget shortfall has triggered severe financial crisis*, 24 April 2026.

⁷³ AS, *TPLF oppose extension of Tigray Interim Administration, says “violates Pretoria Agreement”*, 9 April 2026. The Reporter, *Tigray at a crossroads as interim rule extended, Political rift deepens and war fears resurface*, 11 April 2026. AS, *President Tadesse Worede defends appointment amid criticism, rejects calls to step down*, 15 April 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia’s Tigray interim leader rejects TPLF call on mandate*, 16 April 2026.

during the war were unable to return in large numbers.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Tigray did not receive any resources, including financial resources, from the federal government. Tadesse described the aforementioned decision by the TPLF as a 'breach of the PPA' and stated that the TIRA would continue to operate under his leadership.⁷⁵

On 5 May 2026, the Tigray Council met and appointed Debretsion as president of the Tigray Regional Government. Tadesse once again described this state of affairs as a 'breach of the PPA'. Getachew and his Simret party condemned the re-establishment of the Tigray Council and the appointment of Debretsion. To their view, this meant that the PPA had been 'rendered null and void'.⁷⁶ Furthermore, on 17 May 2026 in Addis Abeba, they established their own council, together with other Tigrayan groups, known as the Tigray Peace and Change Council.⁷⁷

At the time of writing, it seemed that the TIRA's role had come to an end and Tadesse had faded from view. Because of its dominant position within Tigray's political system, the TPLF succeeded in unilaterally sidelining the TIRA.⁷⁸

Olusegun Obasanjo, the AU's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa,⁷⁹ visited Mekelle, the capital of Tigray, on 11 June 2026. Debretsion received Obasanjo's delegation. Various items were on the agenda, including the continued implementation of the PPA,⁸⁰ the issues surrounding the disputed territories and the return of displaced Tigrayans, and the mounting tensions between the Ethiopian federal government and the TPLF. At the time of writing, it was unclear whether the meeting had led to any concrete agreements or follow-up steps.⁸¹

In late June 2026, the EU Delegation to Ethiopia expressed concerns about the tense situation in Tigray on its social media channels. Within this context, the delegation referred in particular to the re-establishment of the Tigray Council and the introduction of compulsory military service by that governing body (see Section 6.3). The EU called on the parties concerned to focus on implementing the PPA and expressed support for Obasanjo's mediation efforts.⁸² The TPLF rejected the EU's statement.⁸³

⁷⁴ In this regard, one source noted that a few individuals had indeed returned to these areas, but little or nothing was known about their return. Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, *Fears over Ethiopia peace deal as TPLF restores Tigray government*, 20 April 2026. AS, *TPLF calls for reinstatement of Tigray Council, signals restructuring of interim administration*, 20 April 2026. ATC, *TDF reportedly restricts travel; TPLF to reinstate pre-war regional council*, 20 April 2026. AS, *Tigray Interim President says TPLF move to reinstate pre-war council "nullifies" Pretoria Agreement*, 21 April 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia war fears as TPLF 'abolishes' Tigray government*, 21 April 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia's Tigray leader says TPLF decision 'nullifies' peace deal*, 22 April 2026. Trouw, *Gesteggel en strijd bedreigen wankle vrede in Tigray*, 23 April 2026. AS, *How TPLF reclaimed the Tigray State Council?*, 8 May 2026.

⁷⁶ AS, *TPLF says Tigray Council 'elects Debretsion Gebremichael as president', resumes work after three-and-a-half-year suspension*, 5 May 2026. ATC, *Pre-war Regional Council appoints Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael as president*, 5 May 2026. BBC Monitoring, *TPLF elects its chairman as Ethiopia's Tigray president*, 5 May 2026. The Reporter, *Tigray leadership crisis threatens return to conflict*, 5 May 2026. The Africa Report, *Tigray's parallel governance crisis tests limits of the Pretoria agreement*, 7 May 2026. AS, *How TPLF reclaimed the Tigray State Council?*, 8 May 2026. The Africa Report, *Tigray is being led back to the brink*, 8 May 2026. Confidential source, 8 May 2026.

⁷⁷ AS, *New 'Tigray Peace and Change' council formed in Addis Abeba, Getachew Reda says body will enter Mekele "shortly"*, 18 May 2026.

⁷⁸ Confidential source, 12 August 2026.

⁷⁹ Obasanjo served as President of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007. He was involved in the drafting of the PPA in 2022.

⁸⁰ Obasanjo's visit to Tigray formed part of the AU Monitoring and Verification, Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM), an AU mechanism that oversaw the implementation of the PPA.

⁸¹ AS, *Olusegun Obasanjo, international envoys arrive in Mekelle for talks on Pretoria Agreement, regional security*, 11 June 2026. ATC, *AU envoys arrive in Tigray to review Pretoria Agreement amid rising regional tensions*, 11 June 2026. BBC Monitoring, *AU delegation meets Ethiopia's Tigray officials amid mounting tensions*, 11 June 2026. Confidential source, 14 August 2026.

⁸² Borkena, *European Union urges resumption of talks on CoHA "concrete implementation"*, 28 June 2026. AS, *EU joins U.S. in raising concern over Tigray tensions, urges return to Pretoria peace talks*, 29 June 2026.

⁸³ AS, *TPLF rejects EU allegations, urges bloc to press federal government on Pretoria agreement*, 29 June 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia's TPLF group rejects EU comments on its actions in Tigray*, 29 June 2026.

On 11 July 2026, the Tigray Council declared that the PPA was, in effect, no longer functioning. For this reason, the Council no longer regarded this agreement as the framework within which the conflict between the federal government and the TPLF could be resolved. In the Tigray Council's view, the federal government had failed to implement the PPA. The Council also accused the federal government of preparing for a new war.⁸⁴

1.5.2 General elections

Challenges in the electoral process

During the reporting period, Ethiopian politics was largely dominated by the federal and regional elections held on 1 June 2026.⁸⁵ In the run-up to these elections, a number of challenges arose, including rising tensions in Tigray and insecurity in Amhara, Oromia and other regions.⁸⁶ These challenges are elaborated in greater detail below.

One issue concerned the status of the TPLF. During the war in Tigray (2020–2022), the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)⁸⁷ suspended the TPLF as a political party, due to its involvement in the violence. On 9 August 2024, the NEBE decided to re-register the TPLF.⁸⁸ The TPLF wanted to regain its pre-war status, however, and it did not wish to stand in the elections as a newly registered party. The party pointed out that it had existed continuously since the 1970s. Partly because of this stalemate between the federal government and the TPLF, no elections were held in Tigray.⁸⁹

Another problem was also linked to the war in Tigray. As a result of the war, certain areas that previously fell within the Tigray region have come under the joint control of the federal armed forces and pro-government Amharic militias. Both Tigray and Amhara laid claim to these areas.⁹⁰ Hundreds of thousands of Tigrayans had fled these areas during the war and had not returned to their home regions.⁹¹ In the end, no voter registration took place in the areas claimed by Tigray and Amhara.⁹²

See Subsection 5.10.2 for information on the situation of Tigrayans in the areas that had previously been part of Tigray but were now under the joint control of the federal army and pro-government Amharic militias.

⁸⁴ AS, *Tigray authorities accuse federal government of preparing for war, says 'Pretoria Agreement' has collapsed*, 11 July 2026. ATC, *TPLF declares Pretoria Peace Agreement, Accuses ENDF of killings and destructions in Tigray*, 11 July 2026. Confidential source, 14 August 2026.

⁸⁵ Confidential source, 18 May 2026. AS, *Ethiopia's electoral crossroads, Legitimacy, repression, and imperative of transitional governance*, 22 May 2026.

⁸⁶ The Africa Report, *Ethiopia's seventh cycle, Why democratic reform is stalling at the grassroots*, 6 April 2026.

⁸⁷ The NEBE has its own website: <https://nebe.org.et/en>.

⁸⁸ The Reporter, *Election Board reinstates TPLF under 'special circumstances'*, 10 August 2024. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁸⁹ BBC Monitoring, *TPLF accuses Ethiopia of 'political marginalisation'*, 28 November 2025. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁹⁰ For this reason, some people referred to these areas as 'contested areas'. The names of these areas were subject to change. As far as could be ascertained, the areas concerned were Humera and the surrounding area, Alamata and the surrounding area, and Mai Tsebr. At the time of writing, Humera and the surrounding area, as well as Mai Tsebr, were under the joint control of the federal army and pro-government Amharic militias, while Alamata and the surrounding area were under the control of the TPLF and the TDF. Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

⁹¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 27. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Flare-up in Tigray highlights risk of more war in Northern Ethiopia*, 3 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. AS, *Limits of Pretoria, How Western Tigray became the blind spot of Ethiopia's peace deal*, 6 May 2026. Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

⁹² BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia 'may not hold elections' in disputed Amhara and Tigray areas*, 3 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

Insecurity in the run-up to and during the elections

There were concerns about whether the elections could actually take place in some areas, given the unsafe situation. This was particularly true of Amhara and Oromia, where fighters from Fano and the OLA, respectively, were engaged in an armed struggle.⁹³ In early February 2026, the NEBE classified almost half of Amhara as a security risk area.⁹⁴

Concerns about insecurity grew further when the AFNM (see Sections 1.4 and 3.4) announced a boycott of the elections on 15 March 2026. According to the AFNM, the elections were purportedly intended solely to keep Prime Minister Abiy in power and legitimise his regime. The AFNM regarded any political party taking part in the elections as an 'enemy of the Amharic people'. It was also said that AFNM fighters would 'take action' against anyone ignoring the election boycott.⁹⁵ This turned out not to be an empty threat. In March 2026, Fano fighters killed more than forty government officials, including election officials, in the area around Gondar,⁹⁶ according to one source.⁹⁷

The OLA also perceived the June 2026 elections as lacking legitimacy. On 23 March 2026, this armed opposition group stated that the elections were purportedly nothing more than a 'staged performance' intended to keep Prime Minister Abiy in power.⁹⁸

In late May 2026, the AFNM and the OLA imposed transport bans in Amhara and West and Central Oromia, respectively. The aim was to discourage members of the public from casting their votes on 1 June 2026. Both armed groups stated that they would make exceptions for ambulances and other emergency services.⁹⁹ In early June 2026, following election day, the AFNM and the OLA lifted the transport ban.¹⁰⁰

On election day, the NEBE announced that 143 polling stations had remained closed due to safety concerns. It was not clear from the statement exactly where all these polling stations were located, but they were most likely situated in Amhara and Oromia. According to the same NEBE announcement, more than 50,000 polling stations were open across the country on 1 June 2026.¹⁰¹

⁹³ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026. The Africa Report, *5 things to watch in Ethiopia's election under the shadow of conflict*, 29 May 2026.

⁹⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian election agency reveals security classification ahead of vote*, 5 February 2026.

⁹⁵ ATC, *Amhara Fano National Movement warns political parties against participating in elections*, 16 March 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Amhara militia warns Ethiopians against taking part in June election*, 16 March 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁹⁶ Also spelt 'Gonder'.

⁹⁷ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁹⁸ AS, *OLF-OLA joins Fano in criticizing Ethiopia's upcoming election, calls it a 'hollow ritual'*, 24 March 2026. BBC, *OLA calls Ethiopia June elections 'staged' amid insecurity*, 24 March 2026.

⁹⁹ ATC, *Fano imposes region-wide road closure starting 29 May*, 27 May 2026. Borkena, *Ethiopian rebels impose road closure in Amhara Region ahead of the general election*, 27 May 2026. ATC, *OLA imposes travel restrictions in Western and Central Oromia starting 29 May*, 30 May 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Rebels announce transport ban in Ethiopia's Oromia in protest to polls*, 30 May 2026.

¹⁰⁰ BBC Monitoring, *OLA rebels lift transport ban imposed in protest to Ethiopian polls*, 2 June 2026. ATC, *Fano and OLA lift transport ban imposed last week*, 3 June 2026.

¹⁰¹ AS, *Election Board says 143 polling stations failed to open over security problems; voting interrupted in 'certain areas' of Oromia and Amhara regions*, 1 June 2026. ATC, *143 polling stations fail to open on election day*, 1 June 2026. BBC, *Ethiopia election, Voting suspended in parts of the country as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed seeks another term*, 1 June 2026.

Women were under-represented in the elections.¹⁰² Of the 10,438 candidates who stood in the federal and regional elections, 7,747 were men (74.2%) and 2,691 were women (25.8%).¹⁰³ In the previous elections in 2021, the share of female candidates stood at 21.6%.¹⁰⁴ The share of female candidates has risen by 4.2% in the past five years. Additional information about the social situation of women in Ethiopia is provided in Chapter 8.

Initial reactions to the conduct of the elections

On 1 June 2026, general elections were held in Ethiopia for the seventh time in the country's history.¹⁰⁵ On 2 June 2026, the NEBE announced that, of the more than 54 million registered voters, 40 million had cast their votes. This brought the turnout to 74%.¹⁰⁶

The AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)¹⁰⁷ sent observers to Ethiopia to monitor the elections there.¹⁰⁸ The AU and IGAD observer missions presented their preliminary findings at a press conference on 3 June 2026. They noted that the elections had been peaceful in many areas and that the NEBE had made every effort to ensure that the elections were as competitive, inclusive and credible as possible. In addition, the AU and IGAD called on the Ethiopian government, political actors and other stakeholders to continue to work together to invest in the country's democratic institutions. The AU and IGAD observers had no specific comments or recommendations regarding Tigray and other areas where no elections had taken place.¹⁰⁹

Election results

On 21 June 2026, the NEBE announced the final results of the seat allocation for the federal parliament: the House of People's Representatives (HoPR). Prime Minister Abiy's PP had won the vast majority of the seats in parliament. The HoPR has a total of 547 seats, with each seat representing a constituency. As mentioned above, the Tigray region did not participate in the elections. As a result, the 38 seats reserved for Tigray remained vacant. In addition, eight constituencies in Amhara did not participate in the elections due to security concerns. As a result, a total of 501 seats were up for election on 1 June 2026. The ruling PP had won 438 seats; the various opposition parties and independent candidates together won 48. According to the NEBE, the elections had to be repeated in the remaining fifteen constituencies due to irregularities.¹¹⁰

¹⁰² Ethiopia Today, *Women represent less than a quarter of candidates for Ethiopia's upcoming general election*, 12 May 2026.

¹⁰³ Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Elections (CECOE), *7th general election candidate landscape*, no date, accessed 4 July 2026.

¹⁰⁴ CECOE, *6th general election candidate landscape*, no date, accessed 4 July 2026.

¹⁰⁵ The country had previously held elections in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2021.

¹⁰⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian election board promises action against poll irregularities*, 2 June 2026. AS, AU, IGAD observers urge inclusive political dialogue, stronger democratic institutions after Ethiopia's election, 3 June 2026.

¹⁰⁷ IGAD is based in Djibouti and has seven member states: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Additional information on IGAD is available at <https://igad.int>. On 12 December 2025, Eritrea withdrew from IGAD. Eritrea views IGAD as siding with Ethiopia and having turned against Eritrea. BBC, *Eritrea quits regional bloc as tensions rise with Ethiopia*, 12 December 2025. The Independent, *Eritrea withdraws from regional bloc as UN expresses concern over tensions with Ethiopia*, 13 December 2025. The Africa Report, *What Eritrea's IGAD exit means for power and security in the Horn*, 15 December 2025.

¹⁰⁸ The AU observer mission was known as the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM), led by Uhuru Kenyatta, the former President of Kenya.

¹⁰⁹ AS, AU, IGAD observers urge inclusive political dialogue, stronger democratic institutions after Ethiopia's election, 3 June 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

¹¹⁰ ATC, *NEBE releases final results for parliamentary seats; Prosperity Party wins most seats*, 21 June 2026. Borkena, *Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party wins landslide as security and economic crises persist*, 21 June 2026. The Reporter, *Board announces landslide win for Prosperity Party*, 21 June 2026. AS, *Election Board declares landslide victory for PM Abiy's Prosperity Party amid mounting security, political tensions*, 22 June 2026. Confidential source, 26 June 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

1.5.3 National Dialogue

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC)¹¹¹ was established in December 2021. This government commission was charged with initiating a National Dialogue (ND) aimed at national reconciliation and lasting peace. For example, this was intended to settle the border disputes between different regions. This initiative also sought to achieve a national consensus on the administrative division of the country (see also Section 1.3) and on symbols of national identity,¹¹² such as the flag.¹¹³

There were concerns about the composition of the ENDC. In the view of the political opposition and civil society, the ENDC lacked inclusivity and was unduly influenced by the ruling party, the PP.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, women were under-represented on the ENDC: of the eleven board members, three were women. The ENDC had also not identified women as a separate stakeholder group.¹¹⁵ Additional information about the situation of women in Ethiopia is provided in Chapter 8.

One source also noted that the dialogue was not sufficiently driven by the communities themselves. The federal government took too much control of the dialogue. As a result, the dialogue lacked legitimacy in the eyes of communities that felt marginalised, and their grievances remained unaddressed, according to the source.¹¹⁶

On 24 June 2026, the ENDC announced that it had identified eight agenda areas. These agenda areas were divided into various sub-themes. The ENDC stated that the agenda areas had been selected according to consultations held in more than 1,200 districts.¹¹⁷ According to the committee, more than 200,000 people, both inside and outside Ethiopia, had been consulted. The eight agenda areas were:

- Nation-building;
- The form and structure of the government, including the issue of ethnic federalism (see also Section 1.3);
- The status of the federal cities of Addis Abeba and Dire Dawa;
- Religious affairs;
- The judicial process, institutions and human rights (see also Chapter 5);
- Socio-economic issues, including the concerns of farmers and pastoralists;
- Good governance and the fight against corruption;
- Peace-building, reconciliation and conflict resolution.¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ The ENDC has its own website: <https://ethiondc.org.et/en/home/>.

¹¹² For example, there was debate about the national emblem – a yellow pentagram on a blue disc – which had been introduced by the EPRDF in 1996. Intended to embody the principle of 'unity in diversity', this five-pointed star fit in with the concept of ethnic federalism (see Section 1.3). Critics of this model of governance therefore argued that the pentagram lacked political neutrality. The Reporter, *In search of a unifying national emblem, GERD as a symbol of collective destiny*, 4 October 2025.

¹¹³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, p. 9. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 16. Clingendael Institute, *Rethinking Ethiopia's National Dialogue*, July 2025, pp. 1 and 8. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. ENDC, *About us*, no date, accessed 13 April 2026. Confidential source, 14 August 2026.

¹¹⁴ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, p. 9. AS, *National Dialogue without inclusion of key armed and non-armed stakeholders is a futile exercise*, 1 March 2024. AS, *Caucus of opposition parties accuses National Dialogue Commission of 'political bias' and 'failure to ensure inclusivity'*, 23 May 2024. AS, *Civil society group urges transparency and inclusivity in national dialogue process, issues petition*, 6 August 2024. Clingendael Institute, *Rethinking Ethiopia's National Dialogue*, July 2025, p. 8 and 9. Confidential source, 14 August 2026.

¹¹⁵ Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission, Playing to the gallery or a commitment to equality, inclusion, and reconciliation?*, 23 February 2022.

¹¹⁶ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

¹¹⁷ In Ethiopia, a district is known as a *woreda*.

¹¹⁸ Borkena, *Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission announces eight agenda areas for upcoming talks*, 24 June 2026. AS, *Amid persistent concerns over legitimacy, inclusivity, National Dialogue Commission unveils 'eight agenda pillars' for consultation form*, 25 June 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 26 June 2026, pp. 14 and 15. The

On 13 July 2026, the Tigray Council rejected the ND initiated by the ENDC. According to the Tigray Council, the regional authorities and the people of Tigray were not represented in the dialogue. Furthermore, according to the Tigray Council, the ENDC was reportedly turning a blind eye to Tigray's grievances, including the stalled implementation of the PPA, the issue of the disputed territories and the return of displaced Tigrayans to these areas. The Tigray Council's statement should be viewed in light of the mounting tensions between the TPLF and the federal government (see Subsection 1.5.1).¹¹⁹

The OLA and the AFNM also rejected the efforts of the ENDC. In July 2026, both armed opposition groups stated that the ND would be aimed at consolidating the position of power held by Prime Minister Abiy and the PP. According to the OLA and the AFNM, the ND lacked inclusivity, and the grievances of opposition groups and communities remained unaddressed.¹²⁰

1.6 Geopolitical context

1.6.1 Eritrea

The aftermath of the war in Tigray (2020–2022), the issue of access to the Red Sea (see Section 1.4) and the presence of Eritrean troops on Ethiopian territory continued to dominate relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea during the current reporting period.¹²¹

According to Prime Minister Abiy, access to the Red Sea was an 'existential issue' for Ethiopia. This desire was focused primarily on Assab, a port city in south-eastern Eritrea.¹²² Reports emerged that Ethiopia and Eritrea were building up their military forces along the border, and commentators feared a new interstate conflict between the two countries, similar to the border war of 1998–2000 (see Section 1.4).¹²³

During the reporting period, Eritrea and the TPLF, led by Debretsion, appeared to be seeking to improve relations. For example, in May 2025, an informal process known as *Tsimdo* – which means 'engagement' in Tigrinya – came into being.¹²⁴ This Semitic language is spoken on both sides of the border between Eritrea and Tigray. The initiative encouraged Eritreans and Tigrayans to strengthen their ties once again.¹²⁵ As part of *Tsimdo*, Tigrayans were permitted to cross the border on 14

Reporter, *The National Dialogue's defining test: independence, inclusion and trust*, 27 June 2026. Confidential source, 14 August 2026.

¹¹⁹ AS, *TPLF-reinstated Tigray Regional State rejects National Dialogue forum, says region will not participate*, 14 July 2026.

¹²⁰ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 21 July 2026, pp. 9 and 10. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia's OLA group says ongoing talks meant to advance PM's agenda*, 21 July 2026. AS, *Opposition coalition, OLF-OLA dismiss National Dialogue as 'mock process,' call for unified front against government*, 22 July 2026. AS, *Fano rejects National Dialogue conference, urges boycott and intensified anti-government struggle*, 25 July 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 28 July 2026, p. 6.

¹²¹ The Africa Report, *Are Ethiopia and Eritrea about to go to war?*, 18 February 2026.

¹²² Assab is situated approximately 65 kilometres from the border with Ethiopia.

¹²³ AI, *Afars an unknown entity in Abiy's plans for port of Assab*, 31 October 2025. The Africa Report, *Assab Port, Red Sea flashpoint testing Ethiopia and Eritrea's fragile peace*, 13 November 2025. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia and Eritrea at odds again – will they go to war?*, 20 November 2025. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, pp. 8 and 15. The Independent, *Abiy's vision of Ethiopia includes a seaport in Eritrea, Some see a looming conflict*, 28 February 2026. The New York Times, *Ethiopia's demand for Red Sea access drives fears of new war with Eritrea*, 4 March 2026.

¹²⁴ Also spelt *Tsimdoo* and *Ximdo*.

¹²⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Eritrean activist says ethnic Tigrayans granted free access*, 5 May 2025. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, pp. 14 and 15. AS, *From Pretoria to Tsimdo, Tigray's constitutional integrity, limits of external patronage*, 23 February 2026. AS, *Ethiopia-Eritrea informal border opening, Step toward peace or geopolitical trap?*, 17 July 2025. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025, p. 9. The Africa Report, *Tsimdo, The mysterious coalition putting Ethiopia on edge*, 15 June 2026. Confidential source, 4 August 2026.

September 2025 to hold an Orthodox Christian celebration together with their Eritrean fellow believers. The regional authorities in Tigray openly supported the aforementioned process of rapprochement; the Eritrean government appeared to give tacit approval.¹²⁶ Additional information on the situation in the border region between Tigray and Eritrea is provided in Subsection 5.9.1.

Other reports also pointed to a rapprochement between Eritrea and the TPLF. For example, it appeared that the Eritrean armed forces, referred to as the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF), were largely withdrawing from Tigray (see Subsection 5.10.3).¹²⁷ *Africa Intelligence* (AI)¹²⁸ reported that a delegation of Eritrean military personnel had visited Mekelle in late February 2026. There, the delegation reportedly held talks with representatives of the then TIRA, the TPLF and the TDF regarding the security situation and the military balance of power.¹²⁹

In the broadest sense, the term 'Tsimdo' referred to a loose alliance between, Eritrea, the TPLF, Sudan and other entities.¹³⁰ The Ethiopian federal government warned that the cooperation (actual or alleged) between these actors should not be solidified in the form of a formal alliance.¹³¹

In addition, the Ethiopian government accused Eritrea of providing support to both the TPLF in Tigray and Fano in Amhara.¹³² The Ethiopian police announced that, on 14 January 2026, they had intercepted a consignment of more than 56,000 bullets at a checkpoint in Amhara. According to the police, the ammunition had come from Eritrea and was intended for Fano. The consignment of bullets had purportedly been smuggled into the country through the TPLF in Tigray.¹³³ Eritrea denied such allegations.¹³⁴

The heightened tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea had an impact on the situation of the Eritrean community in Ethiopia (see Subsection 7.5.4).

1.6.2 Sudan

During the current reporting period, relations between Ethiopia and the Sudanese authorities came under strain.¹³⁵ In this COI Report, 'Sudanese authorities' refers to the de facto government based in Port Sudan, a port city on the Red Sea, and, increasingly, in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan is the head

¹²⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Eritreans, Ethiopia's ethnic-Tigrayans unite for holiday amid tensions*, 15 September 2025.

¹²⁷ Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

¹²⁸ AI is an independent journalism platform based in France. AI's investigative journalists are based throughout Africa. Additional information is available at <https://www.africaintelligence.com>.

¹²⁹ AI, *'Strategic' leadership in Tigray gears up for potential war*, 23 March 2026.

¹³⁰ AI, *Distrust clouds Tsimdo, the growing anti-Abiy front*, 1 June 2026. The Africa Report, *Tsimdo, The mysterious coalition putting Ethiopia on edge*, 15 June 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 1 - 8 July 2026*, published on 10 July 2026, pp. 5-7. Confidential source, 4 August 2026.

¹³¹ AS, *ENDF says diplomatic community briefed on potential response to "Tsimdo" initiative*, 23 May 2026. AI, *Distrust clouds Tsimdo*, 1 June 2026. Al Jazeera, *Ethiopia must not be dragged back into war*, 11 June 2026. The Africa Report, *Tsimdo*, 15 June 2026.

¹³² The Africa Report, *Are Ethiopia, Tigray, and Eritrea preparing for war?*, 22 July 2025. Der Standard, *Alte Fronten, neue Allianzen in äthiopischer Region Tigray*, 3 February 2026. ICG, *Flare-up in Tigray highlights risk of more war in Northern Ethiopia*, 3 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 6.

Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Trouw, *In Ethiopia dreigt een nieuw conflict tussen oude vijanden*, 20 February 2026. The Independent, *Ethiopia's Tigray region is caught between past conflict and fears of another*, 23 February 2026. BBC, *Is Ethiopia heading back to war with the TPLF or Eritrea in Tigray?*, 25 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 11 March 2026.

¹³³ ATC, *EFP seizes 56,000 rounds of ammunition reportedly from Eritrean government*, 15 January 2026. BBC, *Ethiopia says seized ammunition sent by Ethiopia to rebels as tensions rise*, 15 January 2026.

¹³⁴ Trouw, *In Ethiopia dreigt een nieuw conflict tussen oude vijanden*, 20 February 2026. The Independent, *Ethiopia's Tigray region is caught between past conflict and fears of another*, 23 February 2026. BBC, *Is Ethiopia heading back to war with the TPLF or Eritrea in Tigray?*, 25 February 2026.

¹³⁵ ICG, *As the Horn of Africa nears boiling point, time for urgent diplomacy*, 17 July 2026.

of the Sudanese authorities.¹³⁶ He is also Commander-in-Chief of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). Since April 2023, the SAF has been embroiled in an armed conflict with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary movement that has traditionally enjoyed support amongst Arab communities in Darfur and Kordofan. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as 'Hemedti', leads the RSF.¹³⁷

Bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Sudan deteriorated following reports of alleged Ethiopian support for the RSF.¹³⁸ In February 2026, the international news agency *Reuters* published an investigative article stating that there was a camp in the western region of Benishangul-Gumuz where thousands of RSF fighters were reportedly being trained. *Reuters* based its report on satellite images and interviews with Ethiopian government officials and diplomats.¹³⁹

On 2 March 2026, the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that drone attacks had reportedly been carried out from Ethiopia against SAF targets in Sudan. The Sudanese authorities indicated that they were prepared to respond to such acts of aggression. The Ethiopian authorities did not respond to these statements.¹⁴⁰

On 23 March 2025, the RSF and their allies from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)¹⁴¹ captured the town of Kurmuk. This town is situated in the Blue Nile State, in south-eastern Sudan, close to the border with Ethiopia.¹⁴² The Sudanese authorities accused Ethiopia of having provided assistance in the attack on Kurmuk. According to the Sudanese government, combat vehicles are said to have set off from Asosa, the capital of the Ethiopian region of Benishangul-Gumuz.¹⁴³ On 8 July 2026, the SAF recaptured Kurmuk from the RSF and the SPLM-N.¹⁴⁴

On 8 April 2026, international media published satellite and video footage, as well as photographs, which allegedly showed the RSF being supplied through Ethiopian territory. This supply route ran from Berbera, on the Somali coast, by way of Asosa to Kurmuk, supplying vehicles, tents, fuel and other items.¹⁴⁵

On 4 May 2025, drone attacks on Khartoum International Airport as well as on various SAF bases took place. According to Sudan, these attacks were carried out from the airport near Bahir Dar, the capital of Amhara. In response to this, Sudan recalled its ambassador from Ethiopia. Ethiopia described Sudan's accusation as

¹³⁶ The governing body in Port Sudan is known as the Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC).

¹³⁷ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Report on Sudan*, May 2024, pp. 12 and 14. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, December 2025, p. 11. Pronk, *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika*, published in 2025, pp. 431 and 432.

¹³⁸ The Africa Report, *Is Ethiopia playing both sides in Sudan's war?*, 21 April 2026.

¹³⁹ Reuters, *Ethiopia builds secret camp to train Sudan RSF fighters, sources say*, 10 February 2026.

¹⁴⁰ ATC, *Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs warns Ethiopia of drone incursions*, 2 March 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Sudan accuses Ethiopia of 'aggression', threatens action*, 3 March 2026.

¹⁴¹ Abdelaziz Al Hilu leads the SPLM-N. Active in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile, this rebel movement has traditionally enjoyed support amongst the Nuba, a group of African peoples living in the Nuba Mountains. The alliance between the RSF and the SPLM-N is known in Arabic as *Taasis* ('Fundament') and in English as the Sudan Founding Alliance (SFA). Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, December 2025, pp. 12 and 13.

¹⁴² Sudan War Monitor (SWM), *Sudanese rebels overrun army garrison at Ethiopia border*, 24 March 2026.

¹⁴³ ATC, *Residents flee homes amid intense SAF-RSF clashes near border on Monday*, 25 March 2026. The Africa Report, *Sudan accuses Ethiopia of aiding RSF's latest conquest*, 25 March 2026.

¹⁴⁴ Sudan Tribune, *Sudanese army recaptures strategic border town of Kurmuk*, 8 July 2026. SWM, *Sudan army recaptures Kurmuk from rebel coalition*, 8 July 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 1 - 8 July 2026*, published on 10 July 2026, p. 2-4.

¹⁴⁵ ATC, *New satellite imagery identify alleged ENDF supply pipeline to RSF*, 8 April 2026. Middle East Eye (MEE), *The Ethiopian army base covertly supporting Sudan's RSF*, 8 April 2026. Yale School of Public Health, *Military assistance to RSF occurring at ENDF base in Asosa, Ethiopia*, 8 April 2026, pp. 3, 4 and 13-31.

'baseless' and accused Sudan of supporting the TPLF.¹⁴⁶ For its part, the TPLF denied receiving support from Sudan.¹⁴⁷

In response to these developments, Sudan sent reinforcements to the border with Ethiopia. The troops were stationed mainly near Al Fashaga, a fertile border strip between the Sudanese state of Gedaref¹⁴⁸ and the Ethiopian region of Amhara. Both countries have been laying claim to Al Fashaga for some time (see also the map in Section 13.2).¹⁴⁹

On 24 May 2026, the SAF stated that they had shot down a 'hostile drone' near Damazin, the capital of the Sudanese state of Blue Nile. According to the statement, the drone is said to have been launched from the direction of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian authorities have not yet responded to the aforementioned report.¹⁵⁰

1.6.3 Somalia

During the previous reporting period, bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Somalia came under strain. On 1 January 2024, Ethiopia and Somaliland signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), the contents of which were not made public. In the 1990s, Somaliland had unilaterally seceded from Somalia, a move that was not recognised by Ethiopia or the international community.¹⁵¹ Ethiopia and Somaliland reportedly agreed that Ethiopia could lease a 20-kilometre-long stretch of coastline. In return, the country would recognise Somaliland's independence. Somalia interpreted the agreement as an 'act of aggression'.¹⁵² In April 2024, Ethiopia and Somalia severed diplomatic relations.¹⁵³

In December 2024, Ethiopia and Somalia re-established diplomatic relations. The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had mediated between the two countries. Ethiopia and Somalia proposed stepping up their cooperation, including in the fight against *Al Shabaab* (Arabic for 'The Youth').¹⁵⁴ This radical Islamist group posed a security risk to both Somalia and Ethiopia, and particularly the Somali region of Ethiopia (see Subsection 3.6.7).¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁶ ATC, *Sudan accuses UAE and Ethiopia of drone strikes that hit Khartoum's International Airport, early morning of 5 May*, 5 May 2026. BBC, *Sudan accuses Ethiopia and UAE of orchestrating drone attacks on airport*, 5 May 2026. The Africa Report, *Khartoum accuses Ethiopia and UAE of complicity in airport drone attack*, 5 May 2026. The Reporter, *Ethiopia accuses Sudanese military of backing TPLF, territorial violations*, 5 May 2026. Al Jazeera, *Sudan blames Ethiopia, UAE for recent drone attacks: What we know*, 6 May 2026. Confidential source, 8 May 2026.

¹⁴⁷ AS, 'Unfounded, irresponsible': TPLF rejects Ethiopia's Sudan collusion claims, warns of 'dangerous escalation', 6 May 2026. SWM, *Ethiopia's TPLF denies collusion with Sudan army as Tigray peace deal falters*, 8 May 2026.

¹⁴⁸ Also spelt 'al-Qadarif'.

¹⁴⁹ AS, *Sudan reportedly reinforces troops, anti-aircraft defenses along Ethiopia borders in Blue Nile, al-Fashaga after accusations*, 8 May 2026. ATC, *SAF confirms heightened military activity along Ethiopia border in Blue Nile and al-Qadarif states*, 8 May 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Sudan 'deploys troops' to border with Ethiopia amid tension*, 8 May 2026.

¹⁵⁰ AS, *Sudan army says it downed 'hostile drone' near Ethiopian border as U.S. condemns deadly SAF strikes in Kordofan*, 25 May 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 26 May 2026, pp. 1 and 2.

¹⁵¹ On 26 December 2025, Israel recognised Somaliland's independence. AI, *Israel's recognition of Somaliland rattles the Horn*, 14 January 2026.

¹⁵² BBC, *Ethiopia signs agreement with Somaliland paving way to sea access*, 2 January 2024. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 17. The Africa Report, *Will Turkiye-brokered deal between Ethiopia and Somalia lower tensions in the Horn?*, 12 December 2024. Jeune Afrique, *L'Éthiopie et la Somalie vont rétablir leurs relations diplomatiques*, 12 January 2025. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 7.

¹⁵³ Jeune Afrique, *L'Éthiopie et la Somalie vont rétablir leurs relations diplomatiques*, 12 January 2025.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Shabaab was originally the militant youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). In late 2006, the ICU disbanded, and Al Shabaab continued the armed struggle against the Somali authorities through guerrilla warfare and terrorist attacks. Pronk, *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika*, published in 2025, pp. 210-213.

¹⁵⁵ Anadolu Agency (AA), *Ethiopia, Somalia reach agreement in Ankara-mediated peace talks: Turkish president*, 12 December 2024. The Africa Report, *Will Turkiye-brokered deal between Ethiopia and Somalia lower tensions in the Horn?*, 12 December 2024. Jeune Afrique, *L'Éthiopie et la Somalie vont rétablir leurs relations diplomatiques*, 12 January 2025. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, p. 8.

1.6.4 Egypt

During the previous reporting period, there were tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt, particularly regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). This dam is situated in the western region of Benishangul-Gumuz (see the map in Section 13.2) and was opened in September 2025. Egypt feared that Ethiopia could use the GERD to influence the flow of water through the Blue Nile.¹⁵⁶

Relations between Ethiopia and Egypt were strained during the current reporting period as well. For example, the Ethiopian authorities saw Egypt as pursuing a strategy of 'encirclement or siege' against Ethiopia, with the aim of isolating the country. Seen from this perspective, Egypt formed diplomatic alliances with countries that undermined Ethiopia's interests, including Eritrea. For example, Ethiopia was irritated that Egypt and Eritrea had signed an agreement on maritime cooperation on 16 May 2026. Ethiopia also took offence at Egypt's view that only coastal states were entitled to direct access to the Red Sea.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ Borkena, *Egypt's activity in the Horn of Africa appears to be "siege": Ethiopia*, 21 May 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia terms Egypt's manoeuvres in Horn of Africa 'siege attempt'*, 22 May 2026. AS, *Ethiopia accuses Egypt of 'encirclement' strategy, 'provocation' since Addis Abeba raised sea access ambitions*, 23 May 2026. The Africa Report, *Eritrea seeks help from Egypt to counter Abiy's Red Sea ambitions*, 9 June 2026. AI, *Assab port draws Egyptian firms*, 15 June 2026.

2 National identity card

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the national identity card (including the digital version), known as the fayda. This identity document was introduced in 2024.¹⁵⁸ Most of the information in this chapter comes from two confidential sources.

A cardholder can use the fayda card to access services and facilities in various sectors, such as banking, healthcare, education, transport, telecoms and agriculture.¹⁵⁹ In late April 2026, one source reported that more than 41 million people in Ethiopia held a fayda card.¹⁶⁰

2.2 New developments

As far as is known, several changes relating to the fayda card took place during the current reporting period. In the past, applicants had been required to state their mother's name on the application form. This requirement has now been abolished.¹⁶¹

Ethiopian diplomatic missions abroad did not issue fayda cards. Ethiopia's diplomatic mission in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched a pilot scheme to issue fayda cards. Ethiopian nationals who apply are required to present an Ethiopian passport. Applicants who hold a different nationality but were born in Ethiopia must provide an Ethiopian birth certificate.¹⁶²

2.3 Specific features of the fayda card

The fayda card is a bilingual document (Amharic and English), the same shape and size as a bank card. It contains biometric data, including fingerprints, facial recognition and iris scans. The fayda card lists information including the holder's name, dates of birth according to the Gregorian and Ethiopian calendars, nationality, residential address and telephone number. The document also features a unique twelve-digit number: the Fayda Identification Number (FIN). In contrast to previous identity cards, the fayda card does not state the holder's ethnicity.¹⁶³

During the current reporting period, refugees and asylum seekers were assigned a fayda number (see Subsection 7.5.2).

¹⁵⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 42.

¹⁵⁹ World Bank, *The transformative power of Ethiopia's digital ID, Unlocking a better future for all*, 27 February 2025. Confidential source, 14 May 2026.

¹⁶⁰ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

¹⁶¹ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

¹⁶² Confidential source, 25 April 2026. Confidential source, 19 May 2026.

¹⁶³ Confidential source, 25 April 2026. Confidential source, 14 and 19 May 2026.

2.4 Potential for document fraud

There was little verifiable information available regarding the possibility of document fraud when applying for a fayda card. One source stated that the '*kebele* card' serves as the supporting document when applying for a fayda card. A *kebele* is the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia.¹⁶⁴ The *kebele* card is an identity card drawn up and issued by the local authorities at the *kebele* level.¹⁶⁵ The source stated that, when applying for fayda cards, some individuals presented forged *kebele* cards or a *kebele* cards that, although drawn up and issued by the competent authority, had been obtained through bribery and were therefore unlawful.¹⁶⁶ The same source reported that *kebele* cards that had been forged or obtained unlawfully often contained false information. The source provided no further figures for the above.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ In Addis Abeba, the *kebele* has been abolished, and the smallest administrative unit is now known as a 'sub-city'.

¹⁶⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, pp. 41-43.

¹⁶⁶ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

¹⁶⁷ Confidential source, 13 August 2026.

3 Overview of armed conflicts and the security situation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the armed conflicts that took place in Ethiopia during the reporting period. The first part of this chapter describes the various conflict parties. This description is not exhaustive. The political and military landscape in Ethiopia was fragmented to such an extent that only the actors that exerted the greatest influence on the security situation can be discussed. A brief description of each faction is provided, followed by a description of how it related to the other armed actors.

The second part of this chapter explains how the armed conflicts unfolded in the various regions and how the parties to the conflict parties acted. Chapter 4 catalogues the scale and intensity of the violence in more detail, based on quantitative conflict data.

The map in Section 13.3 shows where the various conflict parties exercised control or were present.

3.2 Federal armed forces and affiliated militias

Introduction

The federal government's army is known as the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF). Prime Minister Abiy appointed Birhanu Jula as Commander-in-Chief in November 2020. Birhanu led the Ethiopian armed forces during the war in Tigray (November 2020 – November 2022). Prime Minister Abiy promoted him to field marshal in 2022.¹⁶⁸ The federal armed forces were the only conflict party in Ethiopia with an air force – the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF).

Several militias served alongside the federal armed forces. Providing individual descriptions of all the pro-government militias would exceed the scope of this report. For this reason, this COI Report describes only those militias that were most prominent during the reporting period.

Tekeze Guards

The Tekeze Guards¹⁶⁹ consisted of pro-government Amhara who were active west of the Tekeze. This river forms a more or less natural border between Tigray and Amhara (see also the map in Section 13.2). The Tekeze Guards saw the area west of the Tekeze as belonging to Amhara and not to Tigray.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ The Africa Report, *The moneymen and securocrats behind Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed*, 9 November 2025. AI, *Abiy Ahmed's security strongmen line up against rebel threats*, 26 June 2026.

¹⁶⁹ Known in Amharic as *Tekeze Zeb*.

¹⁷⁰ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis*, 4 March – 11 March 2026, published on 13 March 2026, p. 3.

The Tekeze Guards were primarily equipped with light weapons, although some members also had heavy machine guns.¹⁷¹ During the reporting period, the Tekeze Guards engaged in combat with both the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) and Fano (see Subsection 3.6.4).

Tigray Peace Forces (TPF)

In March 2025, the TPF split off from the TDF. The TPF operated in the border region between south-eastern Tigray and Afar. This armed group sought to put an end to the hegemony of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) within the regional system of Tigray. Within this context, the TPF spoke of a 'separation of party and state' (TPLF and Tigray). This objective bore a strong resemblance to that of Simret, Getachew's political party (see also Subsection 1.5.1).¹⁷² In March 2026, one source estimated that the TPF had no more than a thousand fighters.¹⁷³

The federal government denied providing support to the TPF. One source had nevertheless received reports that the ENDF had supplied this group with weapons and uniforms.¹⁷⁴ Another source reported that, thanks to federal government support, the TPF had access to small arms and mortars. The same source understood that the ENDF provided artillery support to the TPF when the latter engaged in combat with the TDF in early February 2026 on the border between South Tigray and Afar (see also Subsection 3.6.4).¹⁷⁵

Oromo Special Forces (OSF)

The Oromo Special Forces (OSF) were a paramilitary force in Oromia. Although the OSF were to be officially disbanded in 2023, three sources independently stated that they were actively fighting alongside the ENDF during the current reporting period. Two of these three sources stated that the OSF had generally received less training than the ENDF and as therefore said to be less disciplined.¹⁷⁶ In 2023, the OSF was estimated at to have between 30,000 and 50,000 paramilitaries.¹⁷⁷

Gaachana Sirnaa (GS)

In March 2022, the regional authorities in Oromia set up a civilian militia known as *Gaachana Sirnaa* (GS), which literally translates from the Oromo language to 'Shield of the System'.¹⁷⁸ The members of this group were authorised to carry out identity checks and monitor suspicious groups and individuals. The GS was not deployed in offensive operations, but for control duties, such as manning checkpoints and reporting suspicious situations.¹⁷⁹ Whenever the civil militia apprehended suspects, they were required to hand them over to a higher authority – in most cases, the police. The members of the GS were accountable to the regional authorities. They

¹⁷¹ ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis*, 4 March – 11 March 2026, published on 13 March 2026, p. 3.

¹⁷² AI, *Addis Ababa backs creation of armed Tigrayan opposition in Afar region*, 14 May 2025. The Africa Report, *In Tigray, a new armed group emerges*, 13 June 2025. Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

¹⁷³ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

¹⁷⁴ Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

¹⁷⁵ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

¹⁷⁶ Confidential source, 30 June 2026. Confidential source, 5 July 2026. Confidential source, 13 July 2026.

¹⁷⁷ Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

¹⁷⁸ Also spelt *Gachana Sirna*.

¹⁷⁹ AS, *Farm or fight, Farmers in Oromia's Horro Guduru Wollega zone struggle against forced conscription under Gachana Sirna*, 6 September 2024. AS, *Human rights under siege, How security forces in Oromia fuel terror, fear to control residents through lawlessness*, 29 January 2025. AS, *Shadow governance, How coercion, extortion, and impunity are reshaping everyday life in Oromia*, 12 May 2026. Confidential source, 21 May 2026. Confidential source, 27 May 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

operated within their own communities, often at the level of the kebele, the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia.¹⁸⁰

The members of GS were recognisable by their red, white and black vests, the colours of the Oromia regional flag.¹⁸¹ In the available news photographs, the members of GS appeared to be unarmed.¹⁸²

The members of the GS did not receive a salary for performing their security duties.¹⁸³ In late January 2025, *Addis Standard* (AS)¹⁸⁴ reported that members of GS were harassing passers-by at checkpoints and extorting money from them.¹⁸⁵ According to one source, the possibility of extortion was one reason why some unemployed people and those on the margins of society¹⁸⁶ chose to join GS.¹⁸⁷ Another source stated that GS members were given free food as compensation. The members took turns working in shifts, so that they also had time to earn a living, according to the same source.¹⁸⁸

Reports emerged of forced recruitment by GS. Additional information about this is provided in Section 6.2.¹⁸⁹

3.3 Tigray Defence Forces (TDF)

The TDF constitute the formal defence force of the Tigray region and are accountable to the Tigray regional administration – first the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA) and subsequently the Tigray Council. Given that the Tigray regional government was under the strong influence of the TPLF, led by Debretsion, many commentators regarded the TDF as the de facto armed wing of the TPLF (see also Subsection 1.5.1).¹⁹⁰

The TDF were organised as a conventional military force and divided into companies, regiments and brigades. One source noted that this subdivision could take a different form in combat situations. According to the same source, the TDF were experienced in both conventional and guerrilla warfare.¹⁹¹

During the current reporting period, the TDF controlled the majority of Tigray. As stated before, the federal army and pro-government Amhara militias controlled the area west of the Tekeze River, which had previously belonged to Tigray. On the southern flank of Tigray, the security situation was somewhat fluid, with the TDF and the federal forces alternately entering and leaving the area. The Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) continued to maintain a presence in some mountainous areas in northern Tigray (see Subsection 5.10.3).¹⁹²

¹⁸⁰ AS, *Human rights under siege*, 29 January 2025. Confidential source, 21 May 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

¹⁸¹ The flag of the Oromia Region is a horizontal tricolour (red, white and black), with an image of the sacred Odaa tree in the centre.

¹⁸² AS, *Shadow governance*, 12 May 2026.

¹⁸³ AS, *Human rights under siege*, 29 January 2025. Confidential source, 21 May 2026.

¹⁸⁴ AS is a leading, independent newspaper based in Addis Abeba. It publishes in three languages: Amharic, English and Oromo. Additional information is available at <https://addisstandard.com>.

¹⁸⁵ AS, *Human rights under siege*, 29 January 2025.

¹⁸⁶ The source literally used the term 'outcasts'.

¹⁸⁷ Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

¹⁸⁸ Confidential source, 21 May 2026.

¹⁸⁹ AS, *Human rights under siege*, 29 January 2025. AS, *Farm or fight*, 6 September 2024. AS, *Shadow governance*, 12 May 2026. Confidential source, 21 May 2026.

¹⁹⁰ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 9.

¹⁹¹ Confidential source, 5 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026.

¹⁹² Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

¹⁹³ Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

The map in Section 13.4 shows the various areas under control in Tigray during the period from 1 January to 16 June 2026, inclusive.

3.4 Fano

In Amharic folk culture, the term 'Fano' has historically referred to a bandit or rebel with a social conscience. Given the harsh socio-economic conditions, the Fano figure was forced into a life of banditry and highway robbery.¹⁹³

The term 'Fano' currently refers to a loose coalition of Amharic armed groups. Since 2023, these groups have been waging an armed struggle against the federal government in Amhara. They feel overlooked, because they made a significant contribution to the war in Tigray (2020–2022), but were excluded from the Pretoria Peace Agreement (PPA). Afterwards, they refused to disarm (see also Section 1.4).

The Fano movement regarded themselves as the political heir to the ancient Ethiopian state and were in the habit of flying the plain horizontal tricolour of green, gold and red.¹⁹⁴ Most Fano fighters were Orthodox Christians, and many wore a cross on their chests.¹⁹⁵

Various circumstances have shown the Fano group not to be a single, unified entity. For example, it was unclear whether Fano fighters were fighting for an independent Amhara, far-reaching autonomy and/or the overthrow of Prime Minister Abiy's government.¹⁹⁶ According to one source, the size of the various Fano groups could vary considerably. Some groups consisted of dozens of fighters, with others amounting to several thousand.¹⁹⁷

The fact that the Fano movement consisted of various factions also became apparent when the Amhara regional government made peace with one of these factions, namely the Amhara Fano Popular Organisation (AFPO). The peace agreement was signed on two separate occasions: 4 December 2025 and 22 January 2026.¹⁹⁸

Other Fano groups are continuing their armed struggle against the federal government. Some of these groups joined forces in January 2026 to form the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM).¹⁹⁹ At the time of writing, it was still unclear whether the AFNM would succeed in truly uniting the various Fano groups into a single coherent whole.²⁰⁰

It was nevertheless clear that Fano fighters had greater operational freedom in Amhara during the current reporting period. The federal armed forces had deployed troops to the borders with Tigray and Eritrea, as tensions were mounting between

¹⁹³ BBC Monitoring, *Fano, Background*, 15 October 2024. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 28 March 2026.

¹⁹⁴ Within this context, gold is also referred to as 'yellow'.

¹⁹⁵ Confidential source, 24 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. The Africa Report, *Fano's Kingdom*, 12 August 2026.

¹⁹⁶ WPF, *Tigray in the eye of the storm*, 2 January 2024. The Guardian, *Inside Ethiopia's Fano insurgency*, 1 December 2025. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

¹⁹⁷ Confidential source, 27 February 2026.

¹⁹⁸ AS, *Amhara region signs 'peace agreement' with Capitaine Masresha Setie*, 4 December 2025. The Africa Report, *Ethiopia's Amhara region, Fano faction sign breakthrough agreement*, 5 December 2025. ATC, *AFPO, Amhara Regional State sign peace implementation agreement following IGAD and AU mediation*, 24 January 2026.

¹⁹⁹ As far as could be ascertained, the groups involved were a faction of the AFPO, the Amhara Fano Popular Force (AFPF) and Bizamo Fano.

²⁰⁰ Confidential source, 27 February 2026.

Prime Minister Abiy's federal government and Eritrea, with the TPLF led by Debretsion (see Subsections 1.5.1 and 1.6.1).²⁰¹

As a result of the developments mentioned above, Fano succeeded in capturing the town of Debre Tabor, situated in Amhara, on 11 February 2026. Following heavy air strikes by the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF), pro-government militias managed to recapture the town the following day.²⁰² One source made it clear that it was not so much Fano's strategy to hold cities permanently. This movement did not yet have the military capability required. Instead, Fano's aim was to embarrass the federal government with such surprise actions.²⁰³

One source pointed out that Fano fighters were equipped primarily with small arms, although they sometimes also deployed rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and mortars. Fano preferred to carry out lightning attacks on the ENDF that lasted several hours. According to the same source, however, there were occasions when Fano fighters became embroiled in battles lasting several days with the government army and its allies.²⁰⁴

During the reporting period, Fano essentially remained a guerrilla group operating in the rural areas of Amhara. The provincial towns (such as Bahir Dar, Dessie, Gondar and Woldia) and the main motorways remained under the control of the ENDF and the regional authorities.²⁰⁵ One source described the level of control exercised by the Ethiopian authorities in Amhara as 'island control', the areas under government control resembling 'islands'.²⁰⁶ In early April 2026, another source estimated that Fano groups controlled around eighty percent of Amhara,²⁰⁷ which was in line with the figures reported by the AFNM.²⁰⁸

Although Fano fighters operated primarily in rural areas, they did venture into urban areas,²⁰⁹ as demonstrated by the temporary capture of Debre Tabor in February 2026. On 6 June 2026, the AFNM raided the police station in the town of Andabet. Sources linked to Fano stated that seven opponents were killed in the incident.²¹⁰

3.5 Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)

The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) – referred to by the federal government as Shene – has been waging an armed struggle against Prime Minister Abiy's government in its current form since 2018 (see also Section 1.4). The OLA claimed to be fighting for the interests of the Oromo people, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia (see Section 1.1). Many OLA fighters wore dreadlocks as a way of making a revolutionary statement.²¹¹

²⁰¹ BBC Monitoring, *Army mobilisation in Ethiopia's Tigray creates security gaps*, 20 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 11 March 2026.

²⁰² ATC, *Heavy clashes erupt between Fano and ENDF in South Gondar Zone on Saturday*, 21 February 2026. Confidential source, 26 May 2026.

²⁰³ Confidential source, 26 May 2026.

²⁰⁴ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²⁰⁵ Confidential source, 22 January 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026. Confidential source, 26 May 2026.

²⁰⁶ Confidential source, 26 May 2026.

²⁰⁷ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

²⁰⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Amhara rebels and Ethiopian army intensify clashes ahead of election*, 29 May 2026.

²⁰⁹ WPF, *Tigray in the eye of the storm*, 2 January 2024. The Africa Report, *Fano's Kingdom*, 12 August 2026.

²¹⁰ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 9 June 2026, p. 6.

²¹¹ Confidential source, 24 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

There were some similarities between Fano (see Section 3.4) and the OLA. As with the Fano group, the OLA's political objective was not entirely clear. This armed opposition group was purportedly seeking an independent Oromia, far-reaching autonomy and/or greater political representation for the Oromo people.²¹²

Like Fano, the OLA consisted of various factions operating in different locations and independently of one another.²¹³ Evidence of the OLA's loose structure included the conclusion of a peace agreement with the regional authorities of Oromia by a splinter group²¹⁴ in early December 2024. The main force of the OLA rejected this agreement and continued the armed struggle.²¹⁵

The OLA was operating in difficult terrain consisting of woodlands and lowland areas.²¹⁶ Although this armed opposition group had historically operated in Oromia, it also established a presence in the east of Benishangul-Gumuz during the reporting period. The border region between Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz was forested and remote, thus providing suitable hiding places for OLA fighters.²¹⁷

Like Fano, most of the OLA fighters were armed with small arms, such as AK-47s.²¹⁸ They were unable to capture provincial towns. The OLA preferred to attack army convoys and patrols in rural areas. The OLA also focused on abductions for ransom and murders.²¹⁹ One source added that small OLA groups, consisting of between seven and fifteen men, occasionally carried out acts of sabotage on the outskirts of provincial towns. In this case, for example, one might consider shelling or setting fire to power stations.²²⁰

Like Fano, the OLA sometimes ventured into urban areas. For example, OLA fighters attacked the town of Goljota on 4 June 2026. In the process, they fired on the local government building and set it on fire.²²¹

In Oromia, it was not always clear which party was responsible for incidents of violence. Armed individuals or groups carried out armed robberies or abducted people for ransom. Although these individuals or groups claimed to belong to the OLA or were labelled 'OLA' by the Ethiopian authorities, this was not always the case. In that sense, the name 'OLA' had come to be used as a sort of catch-all term.²²²

²¹² BBC, *Ethiopia's PM sees OLA rebellion grow in his own backyard*, 18 December 2022. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²¹³ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Amnesty, *"No one came to my rescue"*, published on 6 March 2026, p. 11. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

²¹⁴ This concerned the faction led by Jaal Sagni, better known as 'Comrade Sagni'.

²¹⁵ Borkena, *Oromia region gov't claims "peace deal" with OLA as factions dismiss agreement*, 2 December 2024. The Africa Report, *Ethiopia signs peace deal with Oromo Liberation Army splinter group*, 3 December 2024.

²¹⁶ The Independent, *'Executions, torture, abductions, rape'*, 2 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

²¹⁷ Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²¹⁸ An AK-47 is a semi-automatic assault rifle, also known as a 'Kalashnikov'.

²¹⁹ Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 10 April 2026.

²²⁰ Confidential source, 10 April 2026.

²²¹ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 5 June 2026, pp. 7 and 8.

²²² Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 10 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

3.6 The security situation

3.6.1 Introduction

This section describes only the security situation in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambela,²²³ Somali and South Ethiopia. During the current reporting period, developments and events relating to the security situation were most notable in these seven regions. The security situation in the other four regions (Afar, Harari, Sidama and South-West Ethiopia) and the two federal cities (Addis Abeba and Dire Dawa) is not addressed separately.

During the current reporting period, Amhara, Oromia and Gambela in particular were the scene of armed conflict and banditry. In Tigray, there was significantly less violence, but the mounting tensions (see Subsection 1.5.1), which had a partly geopolitical dimension (see Subsection 1.6.1), posed a risk of escalating violence.²²⁴

This section provides a qualitative synthesis of patterns of violence and conflict dynamics in Ethiopia during the current reporting period. The following chapter uses the available quantitative data on conflict to provide a clearer overview of the scale and intensity of the violence.

3.6.2 Amhara

Introduction to the level of violence in Amhara

Two sources independently stated that, during the current reporting period, most of the violence took place in Amhara,²²⁵ as is also evident from the quantitative conflict data presented in Chapter 4. Both the federal army and Fano fighters caused civilian casualties,²²⁶ as explained in greater detail below.

Section 7.2 describes the security situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Amhara. Section 7.4 examines incidents of violence against humanitarian workers in Amhara. Subsection 7.5.3 examines the security situation for refugees in Amhara.

Civilian casualties resulting from conflict-related violence perpetrated by the authorities

During the campaign against Fano, the federal armed forces carried out drone strikes.²²⁷ On 15 March 2024, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council reported that the federal armed forces had carried out around a hundred drone strikes throughout Amhara since August 2023.²²⁸ The drone strikes of the federal armed forces were not limited to military targets, but also struck school

²²³ Also spelt 'Gambella'.

²²⁴ WPF, *Tigray in the eye of the storm*, 2 January 2024. Confidential source, 22 January 2026. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), *Fresh clashes renew fears for a return to conflict*, 2 February 2026. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. ICG, *Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigray*, published on 18 February 2026, pp. 1-4, 22 and 23. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 26 May 2026. Al Jazeera, *A visual guide to Ethiopia's ethnic groups and conflict areas*, 29 May 2026. ACLED, *The TPLF's move to fully control Tigray poses a growing and expanding threat in the Horn of Africa*, 2 June 2026. Der Standard, *Sind die Kämpfe in Tigray Vorboten des Großen Kriegs?*, 4 August 2026.

²²⁵ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²²⁶ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

²²⁷ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026.

²²⁸ UN Human Rights Council, *Racial and ethnic-based violence and discrimination against Ethiopia's Amhara*, 15 March 2024, p. 2.

playgrounds, markets, churches and fields. This resulted in civilian casualties, including children, priests and farmers.²²⁹

One source considered it unlikely that the federal army intended to cause civilian casualties during drone strikes. According to the source, the armed forces did not take sufficient account of the protection of civilians (PoC) when carrying out these attacks, and civilian deaths could be regarded as 'collateral damage'.²³⁰

Below are several examples of drone and air strikes in Amhara that resulted in civilian casualties, including deaths. These examples are used solely for illustrative purposes. This should in no way be regarded as an exhaustive list. They refer to drone and air strikes that stood out during the current reporting period.

On 19 February 2024, a drone struck a lorry near the town of Sasit. The vehicle was carrying fifty people. The drone strike killed at least thirty civilians, including sixteen family members who were returning from a baptismal ceremony. According to local residents, Fano was not active in the area at the time of the attack.²³¹

On 17 April 2025, more than a hundred people were reportedly killed in a drone attack in the town of Gedeb. The drone struck a crowd near a primary school. The people had been putting up a fence. The deaths included teachers and pupils, among others.²³² One source suspected that the attack had been directed against Fano, as a battle had taken place with Fano the day before and there were still Fano fighters in the area.²³³

On 27 September 2025, a drone attack struck a medical centre in the town of Sanka. It is reported that four civilians were killed, including a pregnant woman. In addition, eyewitnesses and healthcare workers indicated that more than ten people were injured.²³⁴ According to the same source, in this case as well, a fight with Fano had also taken place the day before.²³⁵

On 22 July 2026, an air strike by the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) struck a monastery in the Mekane Selam district. Two nuns lost their lives in the incident. In addition, eleven people were injured. It was unclear whether, at the time of the attack, fighting had been taking place between federal troops and Fano in the vicinity of the monastery.²³⁶ The World Council of Churches (WCC)²³⁷ condemned the attack on the monastery.²³⁸

It was not only from the air that the federal forces caused civilian casualties. Following a skirmish with Fano, a pattern emerged where the armed forces would move into a nearby community, where soldiers would accuse the local civilian population of passing on intelligence to Fano. Soldiers would drag people from their

²²⁹ AS, *Collateral no more, Amhara civilians face relentless drone strikes, global inaction enables atrocities*, 12 June 2025. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

²³⁰ Confidential source, 27 February 2026.

²³¹ Agenzia Nova, *Ethiopia, "BBC" sources: at least 30 civilians killed in an air raid in the Amhara region*, 21 February 2024. Borkena, *At least 30 civilians were killed in the latest drone strike in the North Shoa Amhara region*, 22 February 2024. Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), *Ethiopia: 30 killed, 18 injured in Ethiopian air strike on passenger truck near Sasit, Amhara*, 23 February 2024.

²³² AS, *More than 100 people killed in drone strike in East Gojjam zone, Amhara region; eyewitnesses report civilian casualties*, 24 April 2025.

²³³ Confidential source, 30 March 2026.

²³⁴ AS, *Drone strike on health post in North Wollo kills four civilians, including pregnant woman, over ten injured*, 1 October 2025.

²³⁵ Confidential source, 30 March 2026.

²³⁶ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 24 July 2026, p. 3.

²³⁷ The WCC is an international, ecumenical organisation that strives for unity within Christianity. Additional information on the WCC is available at <https://www.oikoumene.org>.

²³⁸ WCC, *WCC condemns deadly drone strike on monastery in Ethiopia's Amhara Region*, 28 July 2026.

homes – particularly farmers and young people – after which they would be subjected to extrajudicial detention or summary executions.²³⁹ One source described how, during such operations, the armed forces had targeted civilians in a ‘random’ manner.²⁴⁰

It remained unclear how often such incidents, in which civilians were killed, occurred in Amhara. One source pointed out that independent media were unable to operate in the conflict zones in Amhara, resulting in the under-reporting of such incidents of violence against the civilian population (information on press restrictions in general is presented in Section 5.7). The source nevertheless told of having received reports of such incidents ‘regularly’, without providing further details.²⁴¹ The two illustrative examples presented below should by no means be regarded as an exhaustive list.

In late January 2024, the Ethiopian armed forces executed dozens of civilians in the town of Merawi. Soldiers went from door to door and searched the streets, killing people in the process – mostly men, but women as well. The executions were in response to the attacks that Fano had carried out against Merawi.²⁴²

Following a skirmish with Fano, federal troops marched through Brakat and the surrounding area on 31 March 2025. They went from door to door and searched the streets. During their search for Fano supporters (known or suspected), the federal troops caused more than forty civilian deaths, including those of a church official and women who were returning from the grain mills.²⁴³

One source reported that the Ethiopian authorities had instructed relatives of Fano fighters (known or suspected) to persuade the family member in question to leave the ranks of Fano.²⁴⁴ According to the same source, relatives of known or suspected Fano fighters who failed to comply with this instruction could be subjected to threats, intimidation, house searches and detention.²⁴⁵

Information about conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) committed by pro-government militia members in Amhara is provided in Section 8.2.

Violence by Fano against the civilian population

As mentioned in the introduction to this subsection, Fano also caused civilian casualties. The sources differed slightly in their views on the nature of this violence.

One source stated that when Fano fighters entered a provincial town, they had pressured local dignitaries (such as a headteacher or a doctor) to publicly declare their support for Fano. If they refused, they were shot. The source stated that such violent incidents did not occur ‘on a massive scale’, but was unable to quantify this further, as news coverage at the regional level was limited.²⁴⁶

²³⁹ AS, *Deadly clash in Amhara’s West Gojjam Zone kills four, residents report 14-year-old boy, monk among victims*, 4 February 2025. Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

²⁴⁰ Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

²⁴¹ Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

²⁴² The Guardian, *Dozens of civilians killed by Ethiopian state troops in Amhara region, say reports*, 12 February 2024. Al Jazeera, *Ethiopian forces killed ‘at least 45 citizens’ in Amhara, rights body says*, 13 February 2024. HRW, *Military executes dozens in Amhara Region*, 4 April 2024. Amnesty International, *Merawi killings should be independently investigated*, 12 April 2024.

²⁴³ AS, *Over 40 civilians, including children, allegedly killed by “gov’t security forces” in Amhara’s North Gojjam zone*, 3 April 2025. Confidential source, 30 March 2026.

²⁴⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

²⁴⁵ Confidential source, 17 June 2026.

²⁴⁶ Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

Another source was unaware of any summary executions of local dignitaries carried out by Fano. According to this source, Fano specifically targeted civilians working for the Ethiopian authorities. This source was also aware of incidents in which Fano had launched grenades at school buildings after school hours. The source noted that such actions were not intended to kill civilians, but to intimidate them.²⁴⁷

Fano fighters did not allow schools in their control area to remain open. According to one source, their intention was to demonstrate that they – and not the Ethiopian authorities – were the ones in power.²⁴⁸ In February 2025, Fano abducted thirteen teachers who were still teaching. The kidnappers demanded 50,000.00 birr²⁴⁹ ransom for each hostage.²⁵⁰ In March 2025, Fano fighters killed four teachers in Merawi.²⁵¹ In the same month, it became clear that, due to this lack of security, more than 3,600 schools in Amhara had been closed and more than 4.5 million students in the region were not receiving an education.²⁵² This development affected the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriages. Additional information on these topics is provided in Sections 8.4 and 8.5, respectively.

On a few occasions, major cities (such as Gondar) were struck by violence. On 30 May 2026, unknown attackers launched a grenade at students who were watching a football match on a university campus. At least two students were killed in the incident. In addition, twenty people were injured. Fano was suspected of being behind the grenade attack.²⁵³

Three sources reported that Fano had committed ethnically motivated violence against the Oromo, although their views on the nature of this violence differed.²⁵⁴ According to two of these sources, Fano had committed ethnically motivated acts of violence against Oromo people living in Amhara. Neither source provided further figures on this form of violence.²⁵⁵ The third source stated that Fano had committed ethnically motivated violence against the Oromo when Fano fighters entered Oromia. For example, Fano fighters reportedly killed between three hundred and five hundred people during raids in the Dera district in 2024 and 2025. According to the same source, ten thousand people had been displaced as a result of the violence.²⁵⁶ Another source stated that they were not aware of any ethnically motivated violence by Fano against the Oromo.²⁵⁷

As with the OLA (see Subsection 3.6.3), Fano's violence took on a criminal dimension. The following list of incidents is by no means exhaustive. It is provided purely for illustrative purposes.

- On 11 June 2026, suspected Fano fighters carried out an armed robbery on the motorway between Gondar and Debark, an area known as a Fano

²⁴⁷ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²⁴⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

²⁴⁹ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 19 May 2026, 50,000.00 birr was equivalent to 812.74 euros.

²⁵⁰ AS, *13 teachers held hostage in Amhara's North Gojjam Zone for nearly a week, families say 'Fano militants' demand 50,000 birr ransom per captive*, 18 February 2025.

²⁵¹ AS, *Civilian casualties surge in conflict-hit Amhara region amid renewed Fano-gov't clashes; residents report continued fighting*, 25 March 2025.

²⁵² AS, *Over 4.5 M students still out of school despite extended registration in war-torn Amhara region*, 31 March 2025.

²⁵³ ATC, *Suspected Fano-linked grenade attack kills 2, injures 20 students on Saturday night*, 31 May 2026.

²⁵⁴ Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

²⁵⁵ Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

²⁵⁶ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²⁵⁷ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

stronghold. They stopped a bus and forced the passengers to hand over their personal belongings, including mobile phones and cash.²⁵⁸

- On 25 June 2026, suspected Fano fighters stopped vehicles near the town of Kimirdingay, situated along the B22 motorway. In the process, they abducted six people, including three drivers. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of 50,000.00 birr for each hostage.²⁵⁹ Once the families had paid the ransom demanded, the hostages were released.²⁶⁰
- On 8 July 2026, suspected Fano fighters struck again on the motorway between Gondar and Debark. The attackers stopped passengers and stole their jewellery, mobile phones and cash.²⁶¹

Resurgence of a militia

From 2021 to 2023, the Agew Shengo militia²⁶² waged an armed struggle against the federal government.²⁶³ This militia claimed to defend the interests of the Agew people²⁶⁴ and was active primarily in an area known as Wag Hemra in Amhara. After three years of inactivity, Agew Shengo captured the town of Newuraq²⁶⁵ on 20 April 2026, following clashes with federal security forces. It was unclear how many people were killed in the incident. In response, the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) carried out at least three drone strikes on Newuraq on 21 April. Once again, the number of casualties remained unknown. The Agew Shengo militia is reportedly linked to the TPLF.²⁶⁶

Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC)²⁶⁷ reported that an unknown, armed group had captured the town of Tsata on 26 May 2026. They were presumably fighters from Agew Shengo.²⁶⁸

3.6.3 Oromia

Criminalisation of the OLA and the balance of power on the battlefield

In 2022, the OLA's armed struggle appeared to be gaining momentum. In November of that year, the OLA stormed the town of Nekemte.²⁶⁹ During the incident, OLA fighters stormed the prison and freed an unknown number of prisoners.²⁷⁰ After that, the OLA uprising began to falter. A decisive victory over the

²⁵⁸ ATC, *Suspected Fano fighters robbed public minibus on Thursday morning*, 11 June 2026.

²⁵⁹ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 26 June 2026, 50,000.00 birr was equivalent to 826.34 euros.

²⁶⁰ ATC, *Suspected Fano fighters abduct six civilians along B22 road in South Gondar Zone*, 25 June 2026.

²⁶¹ ATC, *Suspected Fano fighters ambush passengers along B30 route on Wednesday*, 9 July 2026.

²⁶² *Shengo* is an Amharic term and can be translated as 'conference', 'meeting' or 'council'. Confidential source, 4 June 2026.

²⁶³ The political wing of this militant group was known as the Agew Democratic Movement (ADM).

²⁶⁴ The Agew, also spelt 'Agaw', have traditionally spoken a Cushitic language. Olson, *The peoples of Africa*, published in 1996, p. 13.

²⁶⁵ Also spelt 'Niruwaq'.

²⁶⁶ ATC, *Suspected Agew Shengo fighters siege town in Wag Hemra Zone on Monday, D23 road disputed*, 20 April 2026. ATC, *Suspected Agew Shengo fighters seize town following morning clashes*, 20 April 2026. ATC, *ETAF launches drone strikes following reported TPLF-linked violence*, 22 April 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis*, 22- 29 April 2026, published on 1 May 2026, p. 8 and 9.

²⁶⁷ ATC is an independent company that collects data on conflict and security through its own research teams. It focuses on countries in Africa and the Middle East. Its network of sources includes journalists, aid workers, academics, diplomats and members of the security services. Based in Dubai, ATC has its own website: <https://aldebaran-tc.com>.

²⁶⁸ ATC, *Suspected Agew Shengo fighters seizes Tsata town in Wag Hemra, restricts movement toward Sekota*, 28 May 2026.

²⁶⁹ Also spelt 'Naqamte'.

²⁷⁰ BBC, *Ethiopia's PM sees OLA rebellion grow in his own backyard*, 18 December 2022. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

federal government remained out of reach, and the OLA was weakened by internal divisions and defections.²⁷¹

The OLA turned ransom kidnappings into a revenue stream.²⁷² According to one source, the OLA made no distinction between individuals in such abductions. In the case of an abducted businessman, the OLA demanded ransoms of up to one hundred thousand US dollars,²⁷³ according to the same source.²⁷⁴ On 19 May 2026, ATC reported that the OLA had abducted well over a thousand people in the preceding eighteen months.²⁷⁵ Another source stated that the OLA in Oromia carried out murders and abductions on a weekly basis.²⁷⁶

During the reporting period, several mass abductions stood out. The following list is by no means exhaustive and is provided solely for illustrative purposes.

- On 5 January 2026, the OLA abducted 25 bus passengers in Ali Doro, a small town situated along the A3 motorway.²⁷⁷
- On 17 March 2026, armed men struck again in the vicinity of Ali Doro. According to reports, they abducted more than 56 bus passengers this time. Given that the attackers were reportedly wearing dreadlocks (see Section 3.5), one eyewitness suspected that they were OLA fighters.²⁷⁸
- On 2 April 2026, OLA fighters stopped two vehicles on the A1, the motorway between Addis Abeba and Djibouti. In the process, they abducted more than fifty people. The OLA then set the vehicles on fire.²⁷⁹
- On 17 May 2026, suspected OLA fighters took 135 seasonal workers hostage at a sugar factory in Oromia. Following negotiations, they released the hostages after a day. One hostage had been injured as a result of ill-treatment.²⁸⁰
- On 19 May 2026, suspected OLA fighters once again abducted dozens of bus passengers in the vicinity of Ali Doro.²⁸¹
- On 28 May 2026, suspected OLA fighters stopped a bus near Gohatsion. The vehicle was travelling from Amhara to Addis Abeba. The armed men then abducted all the bus passengers. At least six people were killed and ten injured in the incident.²⁸²

The western part of Oromia has historically been regarded as a stronghold of the OLA. The OLA units were mobile, however, and their operations extended across the entire region. The ENDF and pro-government paramilitary groups, such as the Oromo Special Forces (OSF), controlled the provincial towns and villages. During the

²⁷¹ Confidential source, 22 January 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

²⁷² Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 10 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

²⁷³ According to CoinMill.com, on 14 April 2026, 100,000.00 US dollars was equivalent to 85,587.15 euros.

²⁷⁴ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²⁷⁵ ATC, *Suspected OLA fighters abduct bus passengers in North Shewa Tuesday*, 19 May 2026.

²⁷⁶ Confidential source, 11 February 2026.

²⁷⁷ ATC, *OLA militants abduct two Prosperity Party officials on Tuesday*, 18 February 2026.

²⁷⁸ AS, *Over 56 passengers abducted in armed attack on bus and route from Addis Abeba to Debre Markos in North Shewa zone, Oromia*, 19 March 2026.

²⁷⁹ ATC, *Traffic restricted to morning hours after over 50 people abducted*, 6 April 2026.

²⁸⁰ ATC, *135 temporary workers released after one-day abduction by suspected OLA militants*, 22 May 2026.

²⁸¹ ATC, *Suspected OLA fighters abduct bus passengers in North Shewa Tuesday*, 19 May 2026. Borkena, *Gunmen in Oromia Region attack passenger bus, Dozens reportedly kidnapped*, published on 19 May 2026, updated on 21 May 2026. AS, *Passengers on Addis Abeba-Debre Markos bus abducted by gunmen in North Shewa, Oromia Region*, 21 May 2026.

²⁸² ATC, *Suspected OLA hijack commercial bus, kidnap passengers on Thursday morning; at least 6 killed, 10 injured*, 28 May 2026.

day, the main roads in Oromia were relatively safe, but not at night. The OLA carried out inspections in rural areas.²⁸³

²⁸³ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 10 April 2026.

Other violence of the OLA against the civilian population

In addition to abductions for ransom, the OLA committed other acts of violence against the civilian population, as discussed below.

Four sources agreed that the OLA had carried out ethnically motivated violence against Amharas in Oromia. They provided no further figures on this form of violence.²⁸⁴ One of these four sources added that the OLA had mainly targeted Amharas in the border region between Oromia and Amhara.²⁸⁵ Another source indicated that the ethnically motivated violence of the OLA against the Amhara appeared to have decreased in recent years.²⁸⁶

The OLA also targeted individuals who had links with the Ethiopian authorities.²⁸⁷ For example, on 17 February 2026, the OLA abducted two officials from the Prosperity Party (PP) in the vicinity of Fiche, a small town in Oromia.²⁸⁸ The group demanded a ransom for each PP official. Although the families of both officials paid the ransom demanded, one official was killed and the other remained in captivity, according to one source.²⁸⁹

In addition, the OLA committed conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) against girls and women.²⁹⁰ Additional information about this is provided in Section 8.2. Refer to Subsection 5.10.4 for information on violence with a religious dimension (actual or perceived) in East Arsi, a region in Oromia.

Violence by the authorities against the civilian population

Ethiopian government forces caused civilian casualties while fighting the OLA. For example, on 7 April 2026, the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) carried out two attacks 41 kilometres south of the town of Bishoftu. According to reports, 28 civilians were killed in the incident. The attacks were presumably directed against the OLA. According to local residents, however, no OLA fighters were present at the time of the airstrikes.²⁹¹

One source reported that the Ethiopian authorities had instructed relatives of OLA fighters (known or alleged) to persuade the family member in question to leave the ranks of the OLA.²⁹² According to the same source, relatives of known or suspected OLA fighters who failed to comply with this instruction could be subjected to threats, intimidation, house searches and detention.²⁹³

Another source indicated that the Ethiopian authorities were swift to suspect individuals of having ties to the OLA. Anyone criticising the government, providing food to the OLA or having relatives working for the OLA were at risk of arrest. The same applied to anyone visiting a provincial town from a rural area where the OLA was active, according to the same source.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁴ Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

²⁸⁵ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

²⁸⁶ Confidential source, 25 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

²⁸⁷ Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

²⁸⁸ ATC, *OLA militants abduct two Prosperity Party officials on Tuesday*, 18 February 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

²⁸⁹ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

²⁹⁰ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

²⁹¹ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 10 April 2026, p. 9.

²⁹² Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

²⁹³ Confidential source, 17 June 2026.

²⁹⁴ Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

Inter-communal violence

In May 2026, inter-communal violence raged for days in the border region between Oromia and Sidama. In the process, several houses went up in flames and livestock was stolen. An unknown number of people were displaced as a result.²⁹⁵

The conflict stemmed from a disagreement over the boundaries of the electoral constituencies. According to *Addis Standard* (AS), more than ten people were killed and over twenty were injured on the Oromo side. On the Sidama side, the casualties were estimated at more than eleven dead and many injured. The reports did not explicitly state how many unarmed civilians were among the victims.²⁹⁶ Like the Oromo, the Sidama²⁹⁷ speak a Cushitic language.²⁹⁸

As reported by ATC on 25 July 2026, violence broke out once again in the border region between Oromia and Sidama. According to ATC, 'several' people were killed in the incident.²⁹⁹

3.6.4 Tigray

Compared to Amhara and Oromia, and with the 2020–2022 war, the level of violence in Tigray during the current reporting period was significantly lower, as is also evident from the quantitative conflict data in the following chapter. Sources described the frequency of the violence in Tigray as 'sporadic'. They nevertheless regarded the escalating tensions in Tigray as highly risky, partly because they were intertwined with the deteriorating relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea (see Subsection 1.6.1).

An overview of the most notable incidents of violence taking place in Tigray during the current reporting period is presented below. This is not an exhaustive list.

In late January 2026, fighting broke out in several places between the TDF on one side and the ENDF and pro-government militias on the other. For example, the TDF crossed the Tekeze River and entered an area claimed by both Tigray and Amhara. There, the TDF clashed with the ENDF and militias loyal to the government consisting of Amhara. In south-east Tigray and Afar, fighting took place between the TDF on one side and the ENDF and the TPF – a militia of pro-government Tigrayans – on the other (see Section 3.2). The TDF also entered Alamata and Korem. The ENDF withdrew from these areas, after which the TDF were able to capture both of them.³⁰⁰ The number of casualties at the end of January 2026 remained unknown.³⁰¹

In response to the TDF's ground operations, the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) carried out drone strikes in Central and South-East Tigray in late January 2026. The attacks targeted two vehicles, leaving at least one person dead and one injured. According

²⁹⁵ ATC, *Intercommunal violence spreads across Eastern Sidama following market attack in Sidama-Oromia border area*, 21 May 2026. AS, *Days-long deadly clashes in Oromia's East Guji, Sidama region border areas subside after destruction, displacement*, 25 May 2026. ATC, *Renewed intercommunal clashes erupt on Sunday, several houses burned as residents flee*, 25 May 2026.

²⁹⁶ AS, *Days-long deadly clashes in Oromia's East Guji, Sidama region border areas subside after destruction, displacement*, 25 May 2026.

²⁹⁷ Also spelt 'Sadama' and 'Sidamo'.

²⁹⁸ Olson, *The peoples of Africa*, published in 1996, pp. 502 and 503.

²⁹⁹ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 28 July 2026, pp. 9 and 10.

³⁰⁰ Al Jazeera, *Clashes between government troops and Tigrayan forces erupt in Ethiopia*, 29 January 2026. The Africa Report, *Fears of renewed civil war as clashes erupt in western Tigray*, 29 January 2026. Confidential source, 30 January 2026. ACLED, *Fresh clashes renew fears for a return to conflict*, 2 February 2026. ICG, *Flare-up in Tigray highlights risk of more war in Northern Ethiopia*, 3 February 2026.

³⁰¹ Confidential source, 30 January 2026.

to local Tigrayan officials, the vehicles were carrying food supplies, while pro-government sources claimed that the vehicles were carrying weapons.³⁰²

On 6 March 2026, Fano fighters attacked the Tekeze Guards, a militia of pro-government Amharas (see Section 3.2). It was the first time Fano had attacked the Tekeze Guards. After the attack, the Fano warriors withdrew. It remained unclear how many casualties there were in this armed encounter and which tactics Fano had employed during the attack.³⁰³

On 27 May 2026, TDF fighters loyal to the TPLF engaged in combat in southern Tigray with a combined force of the ENDF and the TPF (see Section 3.2). One person – a TPF commander – was reportedly killed.³⁰⁴

On 5 June 2026, the ETAF carried out a drone attack near Sheraro, a small town in north-western Tigray, close to the border with Eritrea. The drone strikes caused an explosion, which may have indicated the presence and detonation of a TDF weapons cache. At the time of writing, there was no precise information on the number of casualties, although local residents had reportedly seen wounded TDF fighters.³⁰⁵

The map in Section 13.4 shows various combat operations in Tigray during the period from 1 January to 16 June 2026, inclusive. This map does not provide an exhaustive overview.

On 1 August 2026, fighting broke out between federal troops and the TDF in Shererina, a small town in western Tigray, close to the border with Sudan. The battle lasted for hours, with federal troops deploying heavy artillery and air strikes. The number of casualties was unclear.³⁰⁶ As a result of the violence, hundreds of people, including wounded TDF fighters, crossed the border into Sudan.³⁰⁷ Amnesty International (hereinafter: Amnesty)³⁰⁸ expressed concern about this outbreak of violence in Tigray.³⁰⁹

3.6.5 Benishangul-Gumuz

Prior to the current reporting period, Benishangul-Gumuz had been the scene of armed uprisings. This western region has traditionally been inhabited by various groups, including the Benishangul and the Gumuz, two Nilo-Saharan ethnic groups. As more Amharas and Oromos settled in Benishangul-Gumuz, the demographic composition of the region changed significantly.³¹⁰ In response, various groups took

³⁰² Al Jazeera, *Drone strikes in Ethiopia's Tigray kill one amid fears of renewed conflict*, 31 January 2026. AS, *Drone strikes reported in Central Tigray zone, one killed*, 31 January 2026. ATC, *ETAF launches two separate airstrikes in Central and Southeastern Tigray on Saturday*, 31 January 2026. ACLED, *Fresh clashes renew fears for a return to conflict*, 2 February 2026.

³⁰³ ATC, *Fano fighters reportedly attack Tekeze Guards in Western Tigray on Friday*, 6 March 2026.

³⁰⁴ ATC, *Armed clashes erupt between TDF and ENDF on 27 May, 1 killed*, 28 May 2026.

³⁰⁵ AS, *Residents report drone strike near Sheraro town in Northwestern Tigray*, 6 June 2026. ATC, *ETAF drone strikes reportedly targeted suspected TDF weapons depot near Sheraro town*, 6 June 2026. Borkena, *Drone strike reported as TPLF leader warns about another devastating war*, 6 June 2026. Wegahta Facts, *Reported drone strike near Sheraro raises fears of renewed conflict in Tigray*, 6 June 2026.

³⁰⁶ Al Jazeera, *Fighting breaks out in western Tigray as Ethiopia and TPLF trade blame*, 1 August 2026. Der Standard, *Tigray-rebellen melden Gefechte mit äthiopischen Regierungstruppen*, 1 August 2026. Wegahta Facts, *Fighting reported in Western Tigray as fears of renewed war between TPLF and the federal government mount*, 1 August 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 4 August 2026, pp. 1-3. Confidential source, 7 August 2026.

³⁰⁷ Al Jazeera, *Tigray refugees flee into Sudan after deadly violence on Ethiopian border*, 3 August 2026. BBC, *Hundreds flee fighting in northern Ethiopia as fears rise of return to civil war*, 3 August 2026.

³⁰⁸ Amnesty maintains a dedicated overview page on the human rights situation in Ethiopia: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/ethiopia/>.

³⁰⁹ Amnesty, *Tigray residents at renewed risk of human rights violations as violence returns to the region*, 3 August 2026.

³¹⁰ According to the Rift Valley Institute (RVI), in January 2025 the Amhara and Oromo accounted for approximately forty percent of the population in Benishangul-Gumuz. The RVI is a research institute focusing on Sudan and South

up arms, including the Gumuz People's Democratic Movement (GPDM) and the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM). In addition to fighting against the federal government, these armed groups attacked migrants from Amhara and Oromia. They claimed to be standing up for the indigenous peoples of Benishangul-Gumuz and fighting against the marginalisation of these groups (whether actual or alleged).³¹¹

In late 2022, the Ethiopian authorities signed peace agreements with the GPDM and the BPLM. Since then, violence in Benishangul-Gumuz has decreased sharply.³¹² The risk of a resurgence of violence has nevertheless remained. Some fighters from the GPDM and the BPLM refused to disarm and took refuge in wooded areas. Furthermore, the grievances of the indigenous communities, which were at the root of the conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz, had not been fully resolved. The situation in this region therefore remained tense and unpredictable.³¹³

One source reported that the towns in Benishangul-Gumuz, including the capital, Asosa, were relatively calm. According to the same source, there was a proliferation of 'fragmented armed groups' in the outlying parts of the region, including the OLA, which had moved into the east of Benishangul-Gumuz from Oromia (see Section 3.5).³¹⁴

The following two incidents of violence stood out most during the current reporting period. These examples are used solely for illustrative purposes. This should in no way be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 24 April 2026, armed individuals carried out a raid on a prison in the town of Gilgel Beles.³¹⁵ Security forces repelled the attack, killing two of the attackers in the process. In addition, at least seven civilians were killed. They had been caught in the crossfire between the attackers and the security forces. One pro-government militia member was also killed in the fighting. The attack was attributed to the Gumuz People's Unity Front (GPUF). This new group is said to be a splinter group of the GPDM and to maintain ties to the AFNM. It was not known how many fighters the GPUF had, but it was known that its members belonged to the Gumuz community.³¹⁶

On 12 May 2026, unidentified gunmen opened fire on several buses near Gilgel Beles. Reports indicated that at least 30 people had been killed and 54 injured. It could not be ascertained which group had carried out the attack, but it was thought that the GPUF was behind it. This militant group had previously struck in the same area with a failed prison raid.³¹⁷

Sudan, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and East Africa. Additional information is available at <https://riftvalley.net>.

³¹¹ RVI, *Political uncertainty and continuing conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz*, published in January 2025, pp. 3 and 5. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

³¹² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 37. RVI, *Political uncertainty and continuing conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz*, published in January 2025, p. 9. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³¹³ RVI, *Political uncertainty and continuing conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz*, January 2025, pp. 10 and 11. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³¹⁴ Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

³¹⁵ Also spelt 'Gelgel Beles'.

³¹⁶ ATC, *Suspected Gumuz militiamen raid prison in Metekel Zone on Friday; 7 civilians killed*, 25 April 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis*, 22–29 April 2026, published on 1 May 2026, pp. 5 and 6.

³¹⁷ AS, *More than 30 reportedly killed in armed attack on public vehicles in Benishangul-Gumuz*, 13 May 2026. Borkena, *At least 30 reportedly killed, Over 50 others wounded in passenger bus attack in Benishangul Gumuz Region*, 14 May 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 15 May 2026, p. 13.

Benishangul-Gumuz was situated close to the fighting in neighbouring Sudan. On 23 March 2026, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) captured the Sudanese part of Kurmuk, a town on the border between Sudan and Ethiopia, from the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), as discussed in Subsection 1.6.2. The Ethiopian government stated that no armed groups or refugees had crossed the border as a result of the fighting. There had nevertheless been shrapnel damage to three houses on the side of the Ethiopian border.³¹⁸

On 29 April 2026, a drone struck the Ethiopian part of Kurmuk. At least eight civilians were killed, including an aid worker from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).³¹⁹ According to witnesses, the drone had purportedly been launched by Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) from Blue Nile, a state in south-eastern Sudan.³²⁰

3.6.6 Gambela

Situated in western Ethiopia, Gambela is home to various groups, including the Anuak and the Nuer, two Nilo-Saharan ethnic groups (see Section 1.1). The long-standing inter-communal conflict between the Anuak and the Nuer centred on issues including access to and ownership of land.³²¹

The Anuak regarded themselves as the indigenous³²² people of Gambela, but due to the large influx of Nuer refugees from South Sudan, the Nuer came to form the majority in Gambela.³²³ According to a 1994 census, the Nuer accounted for around 40% of the population in Gambela, with the Anuak comprising 27%. A census in 2007 indicates that the proportion of the Nuer had increased to 46% and that of the Anuak had decreased to 26%.³²⁴ In early March 2026, one source estimated that the Nuer made up about half of the population in Gambela, and the Anuak a quarter.³²⁵

The incidents of violence listed below are provided solely for illustrative purposes and should in no way be regarded as an exhaustive list.

During the current reporting period, the conflict between the Anuak and the Nuer flared up.³²⁶ The 'White Army', a South Sudanese militia that enjoyed particular support amongst the Nuer,³²⁷ came to the aid of their kin in Gambela.³²⁸ In early April 2024, the White Army launched a surprise attack on four Anuak villages in Gambela. More than a hundred villagers were killed in the incident. Furthermore, members of the Nuer militia abducted many children and stole hundreds of cattle.³²⁹

³¹⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Officials say no armed group entered Ethiopia from Sudan amid clashes*, 26 March 2026.

³¹⁹ This UN migration agency has a webpage dedicated to its work in Ethiopia: <https://ethiopia.iom.int>.

³²⁰ AS, *Sudanese drone strike in Ethiopia's Kurmuk town kills civilians, injures aid workers amid spillover from Sudan war*, 14 May 2026.

³²¹ As early as 1940, the British anthropologist Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard noted that the Nuer and the Anuak had a troubled relationship, with the Nuer expanding their territory at the expense of the Anuak. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer, A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*, published in 1940, pp. 132 and 133.

³²² Within this context, also referred to as 'indigenous' or 'native'.

³²³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 37. Horn Review, *Gambella Region, Ethnic dynamics and the challenge in cross-border security*, 28 July 2025.

³²⁴ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 24 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³²⁵ Horn Review, *Gambella Region*, 28 July 2025.

³²⁶ Confidential source, 5 March 2026.

³²⁷ Confidential source, 22 January 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³²⁸ The name refers to the Nuer custom of rubbing white ash onto the body to repel mosquitoes.

³²⁹ RVI, *Conflict trends in Gambella State (2018-2024)*, published in February 2025, p. 1.

³³⁰ RVI, *Conflict trends in Gambella State*, published in February 2025, p. 9. Cultural Survival, *"We belong to this land", The Anywaa peoples' fight for survival, dignity and recognition in Ethiopia*, 16 July 2025.

In December 2025, a wave of violence broke out in Gambela that would last for around three weeks. According to ATC, more than a hundred people were killed as a result. ATC did not break down the casualty figures further into combatants and civilians.³³⁰ One source noted that, in the regional context of Gambela, the distinction between combatants and civilians was blurred. Combatants were often mobilised on the actual day and, in effect, were 'armed civilians', according to the same source.³³¹

One particularly striking incident of violence was the murder of the police chief in the capital of the same name, Gambela.³³² He was a member of the Anuak community and was shot dead at the police station on 16 December 2025, presumably by a Nuer co-worker.³³³

In the first half of April 2026, ATC documented five attacks on Nuer people, including police officers. The attacks were believed to have been carried out by gunmen belonging to the Anuak community. ATC did not state how many people had been killed in this series of violent incidents.³³⁴

One source stated that the perpetrators of the violence in Gambela were not directed from any central authority. They also did not perform under any particular group name or banner. In some cases, the violence took on an opportunistic and criminal character. According to the same source, killings took place in Gambela on a weekly basis, with the death toll often being in the single digits..³³⁵

3.6.7 Somali

Somali, the Somali region in Ethiopia, has a long history of conflict. In the 1970s, the West Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) launched an armed struggle against the Ethiopian government. The WSLF espoused the 'Greater Somali' ideology³³⁶ and sought secession from Ethiopia and union with Somalia. In 1984, a faction of the WSLF split off to form the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). The ONLF gradually took over the WSLF's guerrilla struggle and revised its objective to seek far-reaching autonomy within Ethiopia's federal system.³³⁷

After Prime Minister Abiy came to power, the ONLF was removed from the list of terrorist organisations in the summer of 2018. The ONLF subsequently registered as a political party and pursued its aim of greater autonomy for the Somali people within Ethiopia through non-violent means.³³⁸ As a result, the level of violence in the Somali region decreased sharply.³³⁹

In early 2025, a faction of the ONLF withdrew from the 2018 peace agreement. This faction, led from abroad by Abdirahman Mahdi, called for a resumption of the armed struggle. The majority of the ONLF was led by Abdikarin Sheikh Muse and remained

³³⁰ ATC, *Regional authorities order police disarmament and mandatory rehabilitation training*, 15 January 2026.

³³¹ Confidential source, 23 April 2026.

³³² The name of the police chief who was killed was Umod Ujulu.

³³³ AS, *Conflict escalates following killing of Gambella City police chief as security structure fractures*, 17 December 2025. Ethiopia Observer, *Uneasy calm in Gambela after police chief assassinated*, 17 December 2025. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026.

³³⁴ ATC, *Gunmen ambush Gambela police on Thursday*, 16 April 2026.

³³⁵ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³³⁶ Also referred to as the 'pan-Somali ideology'.

³³⁷ Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (NRC), *Bevrijdingsfront in Ogaden raakt in de verdrukking*, 5 September 1980. RVI, *Talking peace in the Ogaden*, published in 2014, pp. 17, 18 and 37. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 12 March 2026. Confidential source, 19 March 2026.

³³⁸ The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) underwent a similar development (see Section 1.4)

³³⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021, pp. 15 and 21. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 12 March 2026.

committed to the agreement. At the time of writing, the call by the breakaway faction had not led to a resumption of guerrilla fighting in Somalia. The faction in question was small in size and seemed to enjoy support mainly abroad.³⁴⁰

In 2022, Al-Shabaab, a radical Islamist group from Somalia (see also Subsection 1.6.3), succeeded in invading the Somali region of Ethiopia. Following a series of battles, the Ethiopian federal armed forces managed to drive the invaders back into Somalia.³⁴¹ Afterwards, Ethiopia had stepped up security along the border with Somalia, and Al-Shabaab had not attempted another raid. As far as is known, Al-Shabaab did not engage in any violence in the Somali region during the current reporting period.³⁴²

Although Somalia was not the scene of any armed insurgencies during the current reporting period, the region did face persistent drought. This led to inter-communal conflicts over access to pastureland and water sources.³⁴³ Nevertheless, the level of violence in Somali during the reporting period was relatively low, in comparison with Amhara, Oromia and Gambela, as well as in terms of the region's own history prior to the current reporting period.³⁴⁴

3.6.8 South Ethiopia

South Ethiopia is a region in the south-west of Ethiopia. Like Somalia, it was plagued by persistent drought and sudden flooding. These climate shocks led to inter-communal conflicts over access to pastureland and water sources.³⁴⁵

These conflicts did not stop at national borders. For example, the Nyangatom in South Ethiopia and the Turkana in north-western Kenya – two Nilo-Saharan ethnic groups that are closely related in cultural and linguistic terms (see also Section 1.1) – came into conflict with one another over access to grazing land and water. The Ethiopian Institute of Peace (EIP), a peace organisation based in Addis Abeba,³⁴⁶ mediated between the two communities during the current reporting period and initiated a peace dialogue. In doing so, the Nyangatom and Turkana reached agreements on the sharing and use of scarce resources (such as pastureland and water). The EIP reported that inter-communal violence between the two population groups had since declined significantly. The EIP did not quantify the level of violence before and after the mediation process.³⁴⁷

One source confirmed that climate change had led to conflict over the use of pastureland and water sources in the border region between Ethiopia and Kenya, but that peace initiatives by village elders, churches and local peace (and other) organisations had defused tensions between the Nyangatom and Turkana.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁰ The Reporter, *ONLF denounces call for armed struggle, recommit to peace deal with fed*, 5 February 2025. AI, *Somali region leader Mustafa Omer aligns with Addis Ababa*, 16 May 2025. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁴¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022, pp. 11 and 32. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³⁴² Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

³⁴³ Confidential source, 5 March 2026. ATC, *Liyu police reportedly kills pastoralist in Korahe, Locals protest escalating violence*, 26 March 2026.

³⁴⁴ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 27 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 26 May 2026.

³⁴⁵ EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, p. 44.

³⁴⁶ The EIP was originally known as the Peace and Development Center (PDC). Additional information on this peace institute is available at <https://eipethiopia.org>.

³⁴⁷ EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, pp. 45-50.

³⁴⁸ Confidential source, 17 May 2026.

4 Quantitative conflict data

4.1 Introduction

It was impossible to obtain a complete picture of the scale of the violence in Ethiopia. Due to the poor internet coverage and the restrictive media environment in the country, newsgathering was limited, particularly at the regional level (press restrictions in general are addressed in Section 5.7). As a result, not all incidents of violence made the news. The national and international media were unable to carry out their work freely, particularly in conflict zones, such as Amhara).³⁴⁹ One source pointed out that the parties to the conflict tended to exaggerate the number of opponents killed. This further clouded the picture.³⁵⁰

To provide the best corroborated overview possible of the scale and intensity of the violence, this chapter examines the quantitative conflict data recorded by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC). The incidents of violence and casualties recorded by ACLED and ATC are discussed in Section 4.2 and Section 4.3, respectively.

ACLED is an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) that collects, analyses and maps conflict data.³⁵¹ ATC is an independent company that collects data on conflict and security issues using its own research teams, focusing on countries in Africa and the Middle East. ATC's network of sources includes journalists, aid workers, academics, diplomats and members of the security services, among others.³⁵²

This chapter addresses only the quantitative conflict data collected in relation to Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Gambela. The armed conflicts in these four regions were the most notable during the current reporting period (see also Subsection 3.6.1). The data collected cover three periods: 2024, 2025 and the first half of 2026 (1 January to 30 June, inclusive). The total presented at the bottom of each table refers to the total for the four regions surveyed (Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Gambela), and not to the country as a whole. Finally, Section 4.4 presents several conclusions regarding the similarities and differences between the quantitative conflict data from ACLED and ATC.

4.2 Violent incidents and deaths recorded by ACLED

On 9 July 2026, data on violent incidents were extracted from the ACLED database. To that end, three types of violence were selected over the period from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2026. The data relate to the following three types of violence:

³⁴⁹ ACLED, *How does ACLED source events in Ethiopia?*, published on 2 March 2023, updated on 29 November 2023. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 17 July 2026.

³⁵⁰ Confidential source, 17 July 2026.

³⁵¹ ACLED has a web page dedicated specifically to Ethiopia: <https://acleddata.com/country/ethiopia>.

³⁵² Email correspondence with ATC, 5 February 2026.

1. Battles;
2. Explosions/remote violence;
3. Violence against civilians.

A 'battle' is an armed encounter between warring parties. 'Explosions/remote violence' refers to a use of force to which the target cannot respond. This may include artillery and grenade shelling, missile and drone strikes, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).³⁵³ If the adversary seeks to intercept drones with an air defence system, ACLED codes the violence as a 'battle'.³⁵⁴ 'Violence against civilians' refers to the deliberate use of force by an armed group against unarmed civilians. It concerns violence within the context of an armed conflict.³⁵⁵

Given that ACLED relies primarily on secondary reporting, there may be issues of underreporting, particularly in less densely populated or less accessible areas. Based on the data presented below, no concrete distinction can be made between the numbers of incidents of random and of targeted violence. This is because violent incidents are not coded on the basis of this distinction.³⁵⁶

Below is an overview of the number of violent incidents recorded by ACLED by region for the period from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2026, inclusive. These data were exported from the ACLED database on 9 July 2026. The disclaimer provided above should be taken very seriously when considering the information presented below.

**Numbers of violent incidents recorded by ACLED, by region
(1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026)**

Region	2024	2025	2026 (up to and including 30 June)
Amhara (total)	1,487	1,368	756
Battles	1,143	1,139	669
Explosions/remote violence	92	67	30
Violence against civilians	252	162	57
Oromia (total)	854	660	307
Battles	490	411	188
Explosions/remote violence	30	7	5
Violence against civilians	334	242	114

³⁵³ Roadside bombs are an example of IEDs.

³⁵⁴ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, December 2025, p. 59.

³⁵⁵ ACLED, *ACLED introduces new event types and sub-event types*, 14 March 2019.

³⁵⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Report on Syria*, May 2025, p. 161.

Tigray (total)	70	55	61
Battles	36	23	32
Explosions/remote violence	1	4	8
Violence against civilians	33	28	21
Gambela (total)	29	33	5
Battles	11	13	2
Explosions/remote violence	-	-	-
Violence against civilians	18	20	3
Total	2,440	2,171	1,129

Source: ACLED Database, accessed 9 July 2026.

In its own explanation of the methodologies used, ACLED states that data on deaths are often the least accurate component of conflict reports. The organisation states that it relies on the most conservative estimates and bases its figures primarily on public, secondary reporting. If the death toll in a reported incident of violence is unknown, ACLED records no deaths. Reports referring to 'dozens' or 'hundreds' of deaths are translated into records of ten and one hundred deaths, respectively. ACLED data are therefore underreported. In addition, ACLED records only deaths caused by violence. Although information on injuries and victims of plundering, abduction and sexual violence may be included in the database, this information does not appear in the reports and infographics published by ACLED. The ACLED data can be used to illustrate trends, and they are not absolute.³⁵⁷

Below is an overview of the death tolls recorded by ACLED by region during the same period, from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2026. These data were exported from the ACLED database on 9 July 2026. The death tolls are not broken down into civilian casualties and combatants killed in action. The disclaimer provided above should be taken into account when considering the information presented below.

**Numbers of deaths recorded by ACLED, by region
(1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026)**

Region	2024	2025	2026 (up to and including 30 June)
Amhara	4,680	4,372	2,421
Oromia	2,299	1,385	1,020
Tigray	78	85	94
Gambela	97	106	15
Total	7,154	5,948	3,550

Source: ACLED Database, accessed 9 July 2026.

³⁵⁷ ACLED, *Fatalities*, published on 27 February 2023, updated on 7 May 2024.

4.3 Violence and security incidents, deaths and injuries recorded by ATC

The ATC database is organised differently from that of ACLED. To obtain an understanding of the various forms of violence within the context of an armed conflict, the following categories were selected: air strikes, anti-aircraft fire, shelling, IEDs, indirect fire, abductions, drone strikes, acts of sabotage, small arms fire (SAF)³⁵⁸ and security responses. Within this context, 'small arms' refers to such arms as semi-automatic assault rifles,³⁵⁹ light machine guns (LMGs) and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). The category of 'security responses' encompasses various events, such as troop movements and redeployments, patrols, arrests, the establishment of checkpoints, the flying of fighter jets over an area to intimidate, and the combing of an area. Incidents of violence and security incidents caused by criminal actors have been excluded from the analysis.³⁶⁰

Below is an overview of the numbers of violent and security incidents recorded by ATC by region for the period from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2026, inclusive. These data were exported from the ATC database on 8 July 2026. As with ACLED, the ATC data may be subject to under-reporting. In the ATC database, the description of violent incidents may indicate whether an incident was targeted or random in nature. Like ACLED, ATC does not explicitly distinguish between random and targeted violence.³⁶¹

Numbers of violent incidents recorded by ATC, by region (1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026)

Region	2024	2025	2026 (up to and including 30 June)
Amhara (total)	2,922	2,906	1,091
Incidents of violence against civilians	298	269	75
Oromia (total)	2,421	1,831	743
Incidents of violence against civilians	1,127	936	332
Tigray (total)	105	190	95
Incidents of violence against civilians	22	36	15
Gambela (total)	42	49	29
Incidents of violence against civilians	6	9	2
Total	5,490	4,976	1,958

Source: ATC Database, accessed 8 July 2026.

Below is an overview of the conflict-related death tolls recorded by ATC, by region, during the same period of 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026. These data were exported from the ATC database on 8 July 2026. Like ACLED, ATC relies on the most conservative estimates. If the death toll remains unclear, ATC does not record any deaths. In some cases, the ATC also counts the number of bodies visible in a verified photograph in order to develop an idea of the death toll. Where possible,

³⁵⁸ This abbreviation should not be confused with the same abbreviation used for the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF).

³⁵⁹ The AK-47 is a well-known example of a semi-automatic assault rifle.

³⁶⁰ Email correspondence met ATC, 6 July and 12 August 2026.

³⁶¹ Email correspondence with ATC, 17 July 2026.

ATC distinguishes between combatants killed in action and civilians killed, whereas ACLED does not.³⁶²

**Numbers of deaths recorded by ATC, by region
(1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026)**

Region	2024	2025	2026 (up to and including 30 June)
Amhara (total)	5,149	14,945	6,322
Civilian deaths	648	501	104
Oromia (total)	6,150	5,474	2,153
Civilian deaths	990	588	252
Tigray (total)	33	28	129
Civilian deaths	4	3	4
Gambela (total)	4	7	3
Civilian deaths	0	5	0
Total	11,336	20,454	8,607

Source: ATC Database, accessed 8 July 2026.

Unlike ACLED, ATC also records the number of people injured in violent and security incidents. Within the context of an armed conflict, ATC defines 'injured person' as a person who has been injured as a result of an incident involving violence. Sick people are not included in this category. If an injured person dies as a result of the injuries, and this comes to the attention of ATC, the database is updated accordingly.³⁶³

Below is an overview of the conflict-related injuries recorded by ATC, by region, during the same period of 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026. These data were exported from the ATC database on 8 July 2026. Where possible, ATC distinguishes between civilians and combatants.³⁶⁴

**Numbers of injuries recorded by ATC, by region
(1 January 2024 – 30 June 2026)**

Region	2024	2025	2026 (up to and including 30 June)
Amhara (total)	1,643	6,914	3,060
Civilians injured	280	131	65
Oromia (total)	3,335	3,741	1,355
Civilians injured	204	83	63
Tigray (total)	27	77	23
Civilians injured	0	28	0
Gambela (total)	2	3	0
Civilians injured	0	3	0
Total	5,007	10,735	4,438

Source: ATC Database, accessed 8 July 2026.

³⁶² Email correspondence with ATC, 17 July 2026.

³⁶³ Email correspondence with ATC, 13 August 2026.

³⁶⁴ Email correspondence with ATC, 17 July 2026.

Although ATC recorded fewer incidents of violence and security incidents in 2025 than in 2024, it recorded more deaths and injuries in 2025 than in 2024. ATC attributed this apparent contradiction in part to the fact that violent incidents resulting in higher numbers of victims occurred in 2025. Within this context, for example, this might include drone strikes by the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF).³⁶⁵

4.4 Conclusion

The quantitative conflict data from ACLED and ATC show a number of similarities and differences. Data from both parties show that most of the violence during the current reporting period took place in Amhara. It also appeared that most of the casualties had occurred in this region. After Amhara, Oromia experienced the most violence. Data from ACLED and ATC also show that the number of violent incidents decreased in 2025 and that the civilian population was affected by the conflict-related violence.

Several differences can also be observed between the quantitative data from ACLED and ATC. The latter generally recorded more violent and security incidents, as well as more deaths. Furthermore, the data from the two parties reveal a different trend with regard to the number of deaths resulting from violence. According to ACLED data, the number of deaths decreased in 2025, whereas the ATC data indicate an increase in the death toll in the same year. Efforts to determine how these differences arose would exceed the scope of this report. The differences may nevertheless be attributable to the methodology and access to information of both parties.

³⁶⁵ Email correspondence with ATC, 17 July 2026.

5 Human rights

5.1 Introduction

During the current reporting period, the human rights situation in Ethiopia came under pressure. For example, the Ethiopian authorities curtailed freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly and demonstration. In addition, the space for civil society shrank, and civil society organisations (CSOs), human rights defenders and critical journalists were subjected to various forms of repression. Both the European Union (EU) and international human rights organisations have expressed concerns about the human rights situation in Ethiopia.³⁶⁶

Section 5.2 describes the functioning of the rule of law in Ethiopia and the extent to which citizens were able to seek protection from the Ethiopian authorities. Section 5.3 examines the various forms of state repression, focusing in particular on detention, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. Section 5.4 addresses the situation of political opponents. In this COI Report, this refers to members and supporters of the political opposition. Section 5.5 describes the situation of civil society and human rights defenders. Section 5.6 examines the treatment of relatives of dissidents. In this COI Report, the term 'dissident' refers to a person who has come under scrutiny from the Ethiopian authorities because of their activism and/or criticism (for example an opposition figure or a human rights defender). Section 5.7 focuses on freedom of the press and freedom of (online) expression. This applies in particular to the situation of independent media, critical journalists and social media users. Section 5.8 examines the extent to which the authorities regulated and monitored the telecommunications sector, the internet, social media and mobile telephony. Section 5.9 sets out freedom of movement, in particular the international border crossings with Eritrea and Sudan, practices at internal checkpoints and travel bans. Section 5.10 examines the situation of specific population groups: Tigrayans in the disputed border region between Tigray and Amhara, Ethiopian citizens in the border area between Tigray and Eritrea, and Orthodox Christians in East Arsi (a region in Oromia).

5.2 The rule of law and legal protection

As far as could be ascertained, there were few public sources available that specifically monitored legal proceedings and legal protection in Ethiopia. This section is therefore based largely on information from confidential sources.

In most cases, individuals reported crimes in person at the police station.³⁶⁷ If the individuals were in hospital, relatives could file reports on their behalf. It was also possible for a person to be represented by a solicitor.³⁶⁸ In the latter case, the report was made in writing.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Permanent Representation of the EU to the UN and other international organisations, *Joint statement on the human rights situation in Ethiopia*, 9 September 2025. Amnesty, *The state of the world's human rights*, published in April 2026, pp. 169-171. Human Rights Watch (HRW), *EU's relations with Ethiopia ignore grim human rights reality*, 22 April 2026.

³⁶⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

³⁶⁸ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

³⁶⁹ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

Until seven years ago, declarants were required to state their ethnicity. Since then, this information has no longer been recorded. In April 2026, three sources independently stated that a person's ethnicity was not routinely asked for when a report was taken.³⁷⁰ In June 2026, however, one of these sources reported that the subject of ethnicity³⁷¹ had once again been included on the declarant's registration form. Apparently, the earlier change had been reversed, according to the same source.³⁷²

Declarants did not receive written confirmation of their reports.³⁷³ It was possible for individuals to be summoned in writing to appear as a witness.³⁷⁴ If the report was submitted in writing, the declarant could receive a written acknowledgement of receipt.³⁷⁵

On 9 February 2026, the police launched a pilot scheme involving a digital, unstaffed police station³⁷⁶ in Bole, a district of Addis Abeba. Here, members of the public could file reports online. Once an individual had filled in the subject field, an officer on duty appeared on the screen to draw up the report. The initiative was designed to reduce long queues and improve the responsiveness of the police.³⁷⁷ At the time of writing, it was not known how this pilot project would work out in practice.³⁷⁸

Whether a report was investigated depended on various factors, including the police's available resources, the priority they attached to the report, and the nature of the offence.³⁷⁹ One source indicated that the police were reluctant to investigate crimes in a remote locations. In that case, victims would have to pay off the police before they would go to the scene of the crime.³⁸⁰ Another source indicated that the police tended to downplay 'minor crimes'. If a female victim reported gender-based violence (GBV), but had not been raped or seriously injured, the police would ask: 'Can't you sort things out [with your partner/spouse]?'³⁸¹ Additional information on the options available to women for seeking protection against GBV is provided in Section 8.3.

The previous COI Report stated that a complaint would not be investigated if the case had a political dimension.³⁸² According to one source, this pattern continued during the current reporting period. According to the same source, complaints against the police or corrupt government officials were generally not investigated.³⁸³

If the local police failed to act, a person could turn to a higher police authority or a court.³⁸⁴ In cases with a political dimension, this was generally of little or no use. For example, one source was aware of a serious traffic accident caused by a

³⁷⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

³⁷¹ Referred to within the Ethiopian context as 'nationality'.

³⁷² Confidential source, 10 June 2026.

³⁷³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

³⁷⁴ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

³⁷⁵ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁷⁶ Known as a 'smart police station' (SPS).

³⁷⁷ BBC, *Ethiopia experiments with 'smart' police stations that have no officers*, 5 March 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁷⁸ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁷⁹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁸⁰ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁸¹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁸² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 66 and 67.

³⁸³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁸⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

government official. One person had been seriously injured in the incident. According to the same source, the perpetrator was ultimately not held to account.³⁸⁵

One source described the level of impunity in Ethiopia as 'very high'. Government officials who had committed serious offences (such as assault, torture and rape) were rarely prosecuted and convicted. This source was aware of twelve convictions in 2025. Those convicted were government soldiers, police officers and pro-government militia members who had committed murder or rape.³⁸⁶

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Individuals could also turn to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)³⁸⁷ – a federal government body that is accountable to Parliament³⁸⁸ – for legal protection. Anyone was free to lodge a complaint with the EHRC. This could be done either in person or online.³⁸⁹

Following a complaint, the EHRC was able to make a recommendation to the relevant public authority or authorities. These recommendations were not binding and were not always followed. If a recommendation was not acted upon by the relevant public authority or authorities, the EHRC could inform Parliament of this. This committee could also step up the pressure by reporting on the matter (for example, in an annual report).³⁹⁰

One source was aware of several asylum seekers who had been denied access to the asylum procedure. The EHRC made a number of recommendations to the Immigration and Citizenship Service (ICS)³⁹¹ and the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS),³⁹² but they did not receive any official response.³⁹³ Additional information on the asylum procedure in Ethiopia and the role of the RRS within it is provided in Section 7.5.

Between 2021 and July 2026, the EHRC processed a total of 6,246 complaints. According to the commission, 5,303 of these complaints had been resolved. It was not clear from the reports exactly what was meant by 'resolved'. The EHRC also reported that, during the same period, its efforts had resulted in the release of more than 17,300 people who had been unlawfully or arbitrarily detained. The EHRC also stated that it had ensured that 541 people had been released on bail and that 901 people had been brought before a court.³⁹⁴ According to one source, most of the complaints received by the EHRC concerned detentions (lawful or unlawful) and cases of prolonged pre-trial detention. The same source noted that political opponents (see Section 5.4) and critical journalists (see Section 5.7) were the main victims of this.³⁹⁵

³⁸⁵ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁸⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁸⁷ Additional information on this federal government commission is available at <https://ehrc.org>.

³⁸⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

³⁸⁹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁹⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁹¹ Additional information on this Ethiopian government agency is available at <https://ics.gov.et>.

³⁹² The RRS was formerly known as the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). Additional information on the RRS is available at <https://rrs.et>.

³⁹³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁹⁴ The Reporter, *Rights Commission closes chapter, embarks on new five-year strategy*, 11 July 2026.

³⁹⁵ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

On 5 July 2024, Daniel Bekele stepped down as Chief Commissioner of the EHRC after five years in the post. On 30 January 2025, Parliament appointed Berhanu Adelo as his successor.³⁹⁶ Various sources indicated that Bekele's approach was more 'activist', whereas Adelo tended to adopt a 'diplomatic' stance. In contrast to Bekele, who presented himself as a rapporteur and prosecutor, Adelo was more inclined to engage in dialogue with the various government bodies.³⁹⁷ At the time of writing, it was too early to determine how Adelo's new leadership style was affecting the work of the EHRC.³⁹⁸

The *Organisation mondiale contre la torture* (World Organisation Against Torture, OMCT)³⁹⁹ is an international human rights organisation dedicated to combating torture. The OMCT expressed concern about the insufficient resources and limited mandate of the EHRC and questioned the extent to which this government commission could operate independently.⁴⁰⁰

5.3 Detentions, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions

5.3.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned, the Ethiopian armed forces caused civilian casualties during their counterinsurgency (COIN) against Fano in Amhara (see Subsection 3.6.2) and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Oromia (see Subsection 3.6.3). This section examines citizens who were victims of state repression and violence, where there was no local armed conflict.

During the current reporting period, individuals voicing criticism of the government were particularly likely to be subjected to state repression. Within this context, such individuals could include members and supporters of the political opposition (see Section 5.4), human rights defenders (see Section 5.5), critical journalists and social media users (see Section 5.7), and academics.⁴⁰¹

State repression could take various forms, including surveillance, intimidation, arrests, (extrajudicial) detentions, torture, enforced disappearances and, in the most extreme cases, extrajudicial executions. These various forms of repression are discussed in greater detail below.

5.3.2 Detentions

A person who has been arrested must be brought before a judge within 48 hours. This is specified in Article 29(1) of the Ethiopian Code of Criminal Procedure⁴⁰² and in Article 19(3) of the Ethiopian Constitution.⁴⁰³ The previous COI Report stated that the authorities did not always observe the procedural safeguards during detentions.

³⁹⁶ In the interim, Rakeb Melese acted as the deputy commissioner. AS, *Parliament appoints Berhanu Adelo as new Chief of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission*, 30 January 2025. EHRC, *Appointment of Chief Commissioner for the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission*, 30 January 2025.

³⁹⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 21 April 2026.

³⁹⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

³⁹⁹ The OMCT has a webpage dedicated specifically to Ethiopia: <https://www.omct.org/en/global-torture-index?country=ethiopia>.

⁴⁰⁰ OMCT, *Global torture index 2025, Ethiopia factsheet*, no date, downloaded on 26 May 2026, p. 2.

⁴⁰¹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. OMCT, *Ethiopia factsheet*, no date, downloaded on 26 May 2026, pp. 1 and 3. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁰² Ethiopian Empire, *Criminal Procedure Code of Ethiopia*, published in 1961, p. 25. The text of the Ethiopian Code of Criminal Procedure can be accessed on the [website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#).

⁴⁰³ FDRE, *Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 21 August 1995, p. 6.

As a result, it was not uncommon for detainees not to be brought before a court within the 48 hours prescribed by law. Furthermore, detainees did not always have access to a lawyer or were not given the opportunity to inform a relative of their arrest,⁴⁰⁴ a situation known as 'incommunicado detention'.⁴⁰⁵

The situation described above continued during the current reporting period.⁴⁰⁶ One source stated that detainees were sometimes held in custody for a month without their family being aware of it. According to this source, corrupt police officers were trying to extort money from the detainees in this way. The source noted that the detainees would be released after paying bribes.⁴⁰⁷

There were concerns about the conditions of detention for those arrested. Detention centres were often overcrowded; there was a lack of food, sanitary and medical facilities; and detainees had limited access to lawyers.⁴⁰⁸

In May 2026, the EHRC expressed concerns about detention conditions in Amhara. After visiting 32 police stations in this region, the EHRC concluded that suspects were not brought before a court within 48 hours and that they were sometimes held in custody for months on end. While in custody, they were subjected to intimidation, threats, verbal abuse and physical abuse by police officers. Furthermore, detainees were not given the opportunity to receive visitors.⁴⁰⁹

5.3.3 Torture

As far as is known, no quantitative data were available on the extent of torture in Ethiopia. One source stated that this was because cases of torture were under-reported and access to detention centres was restricted.⁴¹⁰

The OMCT found that detainees in Ethiopia were at 'very high risk' of torture or ill-treatment. In its assessment, this organisation took various circumstances into account. To begin with, the Ethiopian authorities showed little political will to put a stop to torture and ill-treatment within the prison system. Within this context, the OMCT noted that the country had not ratified various international anti-torture treaties, conventions and protocols.⁴¹¹ In addition, there were other circumstances that contributed to the increased risk of ill-treatment and torture. As mentioned in the previous subsection, the detention centres were overcrowded. In addition, detainees were denied access to lawyers or their relatives for weeks or months on end.⁴¹²

Based on data collected in 2023 and 2024, the OMCT concluded that, in Ethiopia, torture was 'widespread' and 'systemic'. The organisation also noted that cases of torture were under-reported due to limited access to the prison system and reluctance of victims to report acts of torture for fear of reprisals.⁴¹³ The OMCT's findings did not reveal what data it had collected in 2023 and 2024, nor how,

⁴⁰⁴ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 67.

⁴⁰⁵ Amnesty, *Incommunicado gevangenschap*, no date, accessed 6 June 2026.

⁴⁰⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁰⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁴⁰⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁰⁹ AS, *Ethiopia Rights Commission raises alarm over unlawful detention, abuse of suspects in Amhara police stations*, 28 May 2026.

⁴¹⁰ Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴¹¹ Examples in this regard include the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

⁴¹² OMCT, *Ethiopia factsheet*, no date, downloaded on 26 May 2026, pp. 1-3.

⁴¹³ OMCT, *Ethiopia factsheet*, no date, downloaded on 26 May 2026, p. 1.

despite the aforementioned obstacles, it had reached the conclusion that torture was 'widespread' and 'systemic' in Ethiopia.

5.3.4 *Enforced disappearances*

During the current reporting period, there were cases of enforced disappearances of individuals who had criticised the government.⁴¹⁴ As far as is known, no up-to-date information was available concerning the number of enforced disappearances not linked to regional armed conflicts.⁴¹⁵ On 17 September 2024, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHCR) reported to the UN Human Rights Council that it had documented more than two hundred enforced disappearances over the past three years.

5.3.5 *Extrajudicial killings*

In this subsection, the term 'extrajudicial killings' refers to politically motivated killings committed by government officials.⁴¹⁶ As far as is known, no information was available on the number of extrajudicial executions. One source was aware of 'a few cases'. Most of these executions were committed within the context of a regional armed conflict, such as in Amhara (see Subsection 3.6.2) and Oromia (see Subsection 3.6.3).⁴¹⁷ The killing of a prominent opposition politician in Oromia in April 2024 attracted a great deal of (media) attention (see Section 5.4).

In February 2024, the international news agency *Reuters* published an investigative article on the existence of an unofficial security body operating at the regional level in Oromia. Known as the *Koree Nageenyaa* ('Security Committee' in Oromo),⁴¹⁸ this body consisted of members of the security apparatus and the ruling party, the Prosperity Party (PP). This committee was established shortly after Abiy came to power in 2018, with the aim of quelling the OLA's armed insurgency. *Reuters* reported that Koree Nageenyaa had ordered dozens of murders and hundreds of arrests. It could be inferred from the context of the article that members and supporters of the OLA (known or alleged) had been targeted. The fatalities included fourteen shepherds. The news service based its report on thirty interviews with federal and regional officials, judges, lawyers and victims of state violence. Bekele, who was then Chief Commissioner of the EHRC (see Section 5.2), confirmed the existence of this committee.⁴¹⁹

5.4 **Political opponents**

This section discusses the situation of political opponents in Ethiopia. As mentioned before, the reporting period was largely dominated by the general election held on 1 June 2026 (see Subsection 1.5.2). It was in the federal government's interest for as many political parties as possible to participate in the elections. That would enhance the legitimacy of the election results, whereas most opposition parties were too weakened to pose a genuine threat to Prime Minister Abiy's ruling PP.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ AS, *Enforced disappearance, The hallmark of a decaying tyranny that must end*, 5 September 2025.

⁴¹⁵ Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴¹⁶ Amnesty, *Buitengerechtigde executies (politieke moorden)*, no date, accessed 16 June 2026.

⁴¹⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁴¹⁸ Also spelt *Kore Negegna*.

⁴¹⁹ Reuters, *In Ethiopia, a secret committee orders killings and arrests to crush rebels*, 23 February 2024.

⁴²⁰ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026. AI, *Abiy Ahmed's token electoral gestures keep opposition on tight leash*, 28 May 2026.

During the reporting period, the federal government and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) sought rapprochement.⁴²¹ The OLF is a prominent opposition party that champions the interests of the Oromo. It is a legal political party and should not be confused with the illegal OLA, which is waging an armed struggle against the government (see Section 1.4).

In a sense, the federal government and the OLF needed each other. As mentioned before, the government wanted as many opposition parties as possible – including the OLF – to participate in the elections, as this would enhance the inclusiveness and legitimacy of the electoral process. Conversely, it was in the interest of the OLF to participate in the elections, as it would otherwise run the risk of losing its legal right to exist.⁴²²

One key moment in the aforementioned reconciliation process was the handover of the national headquarters in Addis Abeba to the OLF in June 2025. Since a police raid in August 2020, the OLF had no longer had access to this building.⁴²³ As a result of the improved relationship between the government and the OLF, the OLF fielded 163 candidates in the federal and regional elections.⁴²⁴

Despite the rapprochement between the government and the OLF, members and supporters of the OLF were targeted with extrajudicial detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings. The authorities were inclined to regard the OLF, within the regional context of Oromia, as an extension of the OLA (see Subsection 3.6.3).⁴²⁵

During the reporting period, the killing of Bate Urgessa (hereinafter: Bate), a prominent OLF official, stood out. Bate was known as an outspoken critic of the federal government. Because of his critical stance, he encountered various problems with the Ethiopian authorities. In February 2024, he gave an interview to a French journalist.⁴²⁶ Both Bate and the journalist were arrested at the time. The French national was released and returned to France, and Bate was released on bail. On 9 April 2024, unknown individuals took him from a hotel in Meki, Bate's original hometown in Oromia. The following day, Bate's lifeless body was found by the side of the road. He had been tied up and shot dead.⁴²⁷

The EHRC, a federal government commission (see Section 5.2), investigated Bate's killing, but the investigation stalled after a while. The regional authorities in Oromia refused to cooperate. EHRC staff were barred from visiting certain locations and were followed by the police when they spoke to people about the killing. As a result, witnesses were afraid to testify.⁴²⁸

According to two sources, it appeared that the government had been behind Bate's killing.⁴²⁹ One source noted that Bate's killing had sent shockwaves through civil society and the political opposition in general. This had strengthened the Ethiopian

⁴²¹ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴²² Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴²³ AS, *OLF regains access to its Finfinne HQ after four-year forced closure*, 9 June 2025. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴²⁴ AS, *OLF warns country's problems cannot be solved by elections alone, flags alignment of "Tsimdoo" forces targeting Northern Oromia*, 22 June 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

⁴²⁵ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

⁴²⁶ The name of this journalist was Antoine Galindo.

⁴²⁷ AS, *OLF political officer, French journalist detained over alleged 'conspiracy with armed groups'*, 26 February 2024. AS, *Rights Commission calls for prompt, impartial investigation into Bate Urgessa's killing*, 10 April 2024. BBC, *Bate Urgessa, Ethiopian opposition OLF figure shot dead and dumped by road*, 10 April 2024. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

⁴²⁸ AS, *Justice denied, One year since the assassination of Bate Urgessa, Still no accountability, Time to break the silence and end impunity!*, 11 April 2025. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴²⁹ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

government's grip on civil society and the opposition, according to the same source.⁴³⁰

The OLF was not the only opposition party to face state repression during the current reporting period. For example, in early August 2026, the Ethiopian authorities arrested Yishak⁴³¹ Wolday (hereinafter: Yishak) and Abebe Akalu. Yishak was the head of Public Relations for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), a prominent opposition party.⁴³² Abebe Akalu was merely a member of the EPRP, but had emerged as a prominent critic in the media. In addition, during the same period, the authorities arrested Abera Nigus, a lawyer representing prominent political prisoners.⁴³³ At the time of writing, these three people were not allowed to receive visitors, and it was unclear why they had been arrested.⁴³⁴

The previous COI Report stated that the political opposition had been weakened or neutralised, partly as a result of intimidation and co-optation.⁴³⁵ The aforementioned situation continued during the current reporting period. The *Balderas* Party, once a significant political force, had lost much of its strength and relevance due to internal divisions.⁴³⁶ *Qeerro*, which had once been a protest movement of Oromo youths, no longer existed. Some had joined the ruling PP, others the OLA, and yet others had turned to a life of crime. The latter group carried out bank robberies and abductions for ransom.⁴³⁷ As already mentioned, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) had also been weakened by the split of a faction (see Subsection 3.6.7).

5.5 Civil society and human rights defenders

During the reporting period, civil society in Ethiopia was under pressure.⁴³⁸ When Prime Minister Abiy addressed parliament on 4 July 2024, he insinuated that human rights organisations had a hidden political agenda and were contributing to instability and conflict in the country.⁴³⁹

The Authority for Civil Society Organisations (ACSO) is a federal government body that oversees civil society.⁴⁴⁰ On 19 July 2024, the *Fédération internationale pour les droits humains* (International Federation for Human Rights, FIDH)⁴⁴¹ reported that the ACSO had dissolved at least 1,504 civil society organisations in the preceding weeks. These organisations had not submitted an annual report on time. The FIDH pointed out that many civil society organisations were struggling with financial shortfalls and that they simply did not have the capacity to submit an

⁴³⁰ Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

⁴³¹ Also spelt 'Yisak'.

⁴³² The EPRP is a social-democratic party and enjoys particular support in the northern regions of Amhara and Tigray. The party has a small base of support in the south of the country. Confidential source, 12 August 2026.

⁴³³ Abera represented clients including Taye Dendea (hereinafter: Taye), the former State Secretary for Peace. Taye had been incarcerated since December 2023 because of his criticism of Prime Minister Abiy. AS, *Fed. Court sentences former State Minister Taye Dendea to seven years; defense says trial proceeded without key witnesses PM Abiy, Mayor Adanech*, 5 December 2025. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁴³⁴ AS, *Opposition EPRP says three associates detained by Federal Police without explanation, demands immediate release*, 4 August 2026. Borkena, *Ethiopian government arrests lawyer and opposition figures in Addis Ababa*, 4 August 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 7 August 2026, p. 5.

⁴³⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 56.

⁴³⁶ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁴³⁷ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴³⁸ AS, *Reform in reverse, Ethiopia's CSO law amendments undercut basic freedoms, shrink democratic space*, 23 September 2025. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴³⁹ The Reporter, *Outgoing human rights commissioner rejects PM's political motive allegations*, 6 July 2024.

⁴⁴⁰ Additional information on the ACSO is available at <https://acso.gov.et/en>.

⁴⁴¹ Almost two hundred human rights organisations worldwide are members of this international federation. The FIDH has a web page dedicated specifically to Ethiopia: <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/ethiopia/>.

annual report (at least not on time). The dissolution of so many organisations created a 'climate of fear', according to the FIDH.⁴⁴²

On 14 November 2024, the ACSO suspended the activities of three independent human rights organisations, including the Centre for Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD). According to the ACSO, these organisations lacked 'political neutrality', and their activities were said to be detrimental to 'national interests'.⁴⁴³ The CARD was a prominent human rights organisation, whose actions had included criticising the National Dialogue (see Subsection 1.5.3) and denouncing human rights abuses in Oromia.⁴⁴⁴ On 11 December 2024, the ACSO lifted the suspension of the three organisations.⁴⁴⁵ A few days later, however, the ACSO suspended the CARD once again, as the organisation 'had apparently not learnt from the previous warning'.⁴⁴⁶

In late December 2024, the ACSO suspended the activities of two other prominent human rights organisations, including the Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Center (EHRDC).⁴⁴⁷ According to the ACSO, neither organisation was independent, and neither was adhering to its mandate.⁴⁴⁸ On 30 July 2025, Yared Hailemariam (hereinafter: Yared) resigned as Executive Director of the EHRDC. Yared stated that intimidation, threats, surveillance and suspicious phone calls had prompted him to do so. The resignation took effect on 1 August 2025.⁴⁴⁹

During the current reporting period, organisations and individual human rights defenders found themselves in a difficult situation.⁴⁵⁰ In December 2025, The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (hereinafter: The Observatory)⁴⁵¹ published a report on the repression of human rights defenders in Ethiopia. The study found that the situation facing human rights defenders in Ethiopia had deteriorated since 2020, the year the war in Tigray broke out.⁴⁵² The Observatory based its findings on, among other things, interviews with 42 people, including staff from the EHRC and human rights defenders.⁴⁵³

The Observatory reported that human rights defenders were subjected to arrests, extrajudicial detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and, in the most extreme cases, extrajudicial killings. The observatory reported that the number of arrests of human rights defenders had decreased in 2024, without providing further figures. This decline in arrests in no way reflected an improvement in the human rights situation in Ethiopia. The Observatory attributed the decline to three developments. First, many human rights activists and critical journalists were – and still are – in prison already. Second, some activists chose either to censor themselves from then

⁴⁴² FIDH, *Ethiopia, Massive crackdown on civil society organisations*, 19 July 2024.

⁴⁴³ AS, *Civil society authority suspends CARD, citing 'lack of political neutrality'; rights group 'categorically contests' allegations*, 22 November 2024. Amnesty, *Ethiopia, Suspension of three human rights organizations highlights growing crackdown on civic space*, 26 November 2024. OMCT, *Arbitrary suspension of human rights organisations in Ethiopia is a major setback to civic space*, 28 November 2024. HRW, *Ethiopia, Authorities suspend three rights groups*, 2 December 2024.

⁴⁴⁴ AS, *Civil society authority suspends CARD, citing 'lack of political neutrality'*, 22 November 2024.

⁴⁴⁵ AS, *Suspension on three rights groups lifted amid criticism of civil society crackdown*, 11 December 2024.

⁴⁴⁶ AS, *CARD faces renewed suspension by civil society authority after recent lifting of ban*, 18 December 2024.

⁴⁴⁷ Additional information on the EHRDC is available at <https://ethdefenders.org>.

⁴⁴⁸ HRW, *Ethiopia, Key rights groups suspended*, 29 January 2025. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁴⁹ AS, *Director of rights organization resigns over surveillance, intimidation*, 31 July 2025. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁵⁰ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁵¹ The Observatory is a partnership between the FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The Observatory has a web page dedicated specifically to Ethiopia: <https://observatoryfordefenders.org/country/ethiopia/>.

⁴⁵² The Observatory, *The illusion of progress, Ethiopia's human rights defenders under attack*, December 2025, p. 6.

⁴⁵³ The Observatory, *The illusion of progress*, December 2025, p. 8.

on or to start working for the Ethiopian government. Third, many human rights defenders and critical journalists have fled abroad for fear of repression.⁴⁵⁴

5.6 Relatives of dissidents

This section examines the situation of the relatives of dissidents. In this regard, the term 'dissidents' refer to individuals who were under scrutiny by the Ethiopian authorities because of their activism and/or criticism (for example, opposition figures or human rights defenders). As far as is known, no studies specifically focusing on the situation of dissidents' relatives were published during the reporting period. As a result, the information in this section remains fragmented in nature.

The Observatory reported that relatives of critical journalists who had fled abroad had been subjected to abuses including intimidation, arrest and beatings by the security services.⁴⁵⁵ The same observatory reported that the family of the OLF official Bate, who was killed (see Section 5.4), had fled abroad for fear of persecution.⁴⁵⁶

One source was aware of a story about a former government administrator who had fallen out with the federal government because of his critical stance. As a result, the bank accounts of his relatives were frozen, according to the source.⁴⁵⁷

Another source reported that relatives of dissidents had occasionally been subjected to intimidation, interrogation and surveillance. This source specifically mentioned spouses, parents and siblings.⁴⁵⁸

At the time of writing, no further information on this subject was available. The ways in which the Ethiopian authorities treated the relatives of Fano and OLA members are discussed in Subsection 3.6.2 and Subsection 3.6.3, respectively.

5.7 Freedom of the press and freedom of expression (including online)

5.7.1 Introduction

During the reporting period, freedom of the press and freedom of expression (including online) in Ethiopia came under pressure. Critical, independent journalists were subjected to enforced disappearances, arrests, detention without due process, criminal prosecution and prison sentences.⁴⁵⁹ Press restrictions appeared to be mounting in the run-up to the elections on 1 June 2026.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁴ The Observatory, *The illusion of progress*, December 2025, pp. 25-27, 30, 31 and 35.

⁴⁵⁵ The Observatory, *The illusion of progress*, December 2025, p. 27.

⁴⁵⁶ The Observatory, *The illusion of progress*, December 2025, p. 36.

⁴⁵⁷ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁴⁵⁸ Confidential source, 29 June 2026.

⁴⁵⁹ The Reporter, *The cost of speaking truth to power in Ethiopia, Abductions, arbitrary arrests, and a dim outlook*, 23 August 2025. HRW, *Ethiopia, Surge in arrest of journalists, media workers*, 22 September 2025. Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Borkena, *Deteriorating press freedom in Ethiopia, How Abiy tricked the world*, published on 1 March 2026, updated on 2 March 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. The Economist, *Abiy Ahmed is throttling free expression in Ethiopia*, 23 April 2026. AS, *Abducted, banned, prosecuted, Systematic war on Ethiopia's independent media*, 11 May 2026.

⁴⁶⁰ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Amnesty, *Ethiopia, International community must act to safeguard press freedom ahead of national election*, 29 May 2026. ATC, *Media personnel denied access to multiple polling stations in the capital on election day*, 1 June 2026.

On the World Press Freedom Index of *Reporters sans frontières* (Reporters Without Borders, RSF),⁴⁶¹ Ethiopia dropped from 145th place in 2025 to 148th place in 2026. This ranking comprises a total of 180 countries. According to data from Reporters Without Borders (RSF), five journalists were being held in custody in Ethiopia in early June 2026.⁴⁶²

5.7.2 Press restrictions in practice

During the reporting period, independent, critical journalists and news organisations encountered difficulties with the Ethiopian authorities. Several notable examples are presented below. These examples are provided solely for illustrative purposes. They should in no way be regarded as an exhaustive list.

The Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA)⁴⁶³ monitors the media landscape. The EMA is a federal government body that is accountable to the federal parliament.⁴⁶⁴ On 24 February 2026, the EMA revoked the press licence of *Addis Standard* (AS), a leading independent news platform. According to the government agency, the publications of AS were detrimental to the national interest.⁴⁶⁵ The AS publishing company⁴⁶⁶ submitted an application for a review of the revocation of the press licence. It also requested that this revocation be suspended until the court had reached a final decision.⁴⁶⁷ Pending a court ruling, AS continued to publish.⁴⁶⁸

On 13 August 2025, masked men abducted Yonas Amare (hereinafter: Yonas) from his home in a suburb of Addis Abeba. Yonas had been working as a senior editor at *The Reporter*, an independent online news magazine.⁴⁶⁹ After just over a week, Yonas was released on 22 August 2025. The identity of his abductors and the location where he was being held remained unknown.⁴⁷⁰

On 15 April 2026, three unidentified men in plain clothes stormed into the AS office and took Million Beyene, a journalist and editor, away to an unknown location.⁴⁷¹ The authorities released him thirteen days later, on 28 April 2026.⁴⁷²

On 8 June 2026, the Ethiopian authorities arrested a journalist named Salsawit Baynesagn (hereinafter: Salsawit). The reason for her arrest was unknown. In her social media videos, she had spoken out against the violence directed at Orthodox Christians in East Arsi, a region in Oromia (see Subsection 5.10.4). As a result,

⁴⁶¹ Reporters Without Borders (RSF) works to promote press freedom worldwide.

⁴⁶² Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has a webpage dedicated to Ethiopia: <https://rsf.org/en/country/ethiopia>. This page was accessed on 3 June 2026 for the purposes of this COI Report.

⁴⁶³ Additional information on the EMA is available at <https://www.ema.gov.et/en>.

⁴⁶⁴ EMA, *About, Who we are*, no date, accessed 1 June 2026.

⁴⁶⁵ AS, *Ethiopian Media Authority revokes Addis Standard's online media registration; Editor-in-Chief disputes claims*, 24 February 2026. ATC, *EMA revokes Addis Standard's media license*, 24 February 2026. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), *Ethiopia revokes Addis Standard's license amid escalating crackdown on independent media*, 24 February 2026. HRW, *Ethiopia shuts key news outlet*, 25 February 2026.

⁴⁶⁶ The AS publishing company is known as JAKENN Publishing PLC.

⁴⁶⁷ AS, *Publisher files court challenge, injunction against EMA decision revoking Addis Standard registration*, 3 June 2026.

⁴⁶⁸ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴⁶⁹ This news platform has its own website: <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com>.

⁴⁷⁰ CPJ, *Ethiopian journalist abducted by masked men; 2 others detained*, 20 August 2025. Borkena, *Two abducted journalists reportedly released*, published on 23 August 2025, updated on 24 August 2025. *The Reporter*, *Ethiopian Reporter's Yonas Amare walks free*, 23 August 2025.

⁴⁷¹ AS, *Statement on the abduction of Addis Standard Managing Editor by plainclothes men from his workplace*, 15 April 2026. ATC, *Plainclothes men abduct Addis Standard Editor Million Beyene as authorities deny custody*, 16 April 2026. CPJ, *Ethiopian editor seized from Addis Standard newsroom by unidentified men*, 16 April 2026. *The Reporter*, *Addis Standard's Managing Editor abducted from newsroom, whereabouts remain unknown*, 16 April 2026. Amnesty, *Journalist's fate unknown after abduction*, 27 April 2026.

⁴⁷² Amnesty, *Abducted journalist found and released*, 21 May 2026.

Salsawit's family suspected that her arrest was linked to this.⁴⁷³ The authorities released her on 20 June 2026.⁴⁷⁴

In early August 2026, AS once again encountered problems with the Ethiopian authorities. On 1 August 2026, the security services arrested Yonas Kedir (hereinafter: Yonas), the AS editor-in-chief, and detained him for 24 hours. During this period, Yonas was beaten and interrogated. According to his own account, he was questioned primarily about his journalistic work on Tigray and Ethiopia's alleged involvement in the conflict in Sudan. On 2 August 2026, the authorities raided the AS offices. Recording and transmission equipment was seized and damaged in the process. On 3 August 2026, AS received a written notice from the landlord to vacate the office premises within three days. AS suspected that the landlord was acting under pressure from the police.⁴⁷⁵

Various issues attracted negative attention from the authorities (for example, in the form of arrests). This applied to both traditional and social media. Several examples of politically sensitive topics are presented below. This list should by no means be regarded as exhaustive:

- Ethiopia's involvement (actual or alleged) in the conflict in Sudan (see Subsection 1.6.2);
- The strained relationship between Tigray and the federal government (see Subsection 1.5.1);
- Human rights violations in general;
- Armed regional conflicts, such as those in Amhara and Oromia;
- Ethnic tensions;
- Criticism of the performance of the national and regional authorities;
- The lack of basic services, such as clean drinking water and electricity.⁴⁷⁶

One source pointed out that the Ethiopian government also created bureaucratic obstacles in order to exercise control over the media. For example, the EMA did not recognise the concept of freelance work. A press pass could be linked to no more than one news organisation. Consequently, a freelance journalist was not allowed to take on assignments from different news organisations at the same time, according to the same source.⁴⁷⁷

5.7.3 Social media

Various Ethiopian state bodies, including the EMA and the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), actively monitored social media platforms. Critical journalists, human rights defenders, political opponents, activists, as well as 'ordinary' social media users were arrested, prosecuted and convicted of cybercrimes or terrorist offences, hate speech, incitement to violence, the dissemination of disinformation and the disruption of public order, all because of

⁴⁷³ AS, *Journalist Salsawit Baynesagn detained by Addis Abeba police, has not yet appeared in court, family says*, 17 June 2026. Borkena, *Ethiopian Gov't arrests journalist Salsawit Baynesagn Yimer*, 17 June 2026. CPJ, *Ethiopian journalist Salsawit Baynesagn detained without charge*, 19 June 2026.

⁴⁷⁴ Borkena, *Ethiopian journalist Salsawit Baynesagn Yimer released on bail in Addis Ababa*, 20 June 2026. Ethiopia Observer, *Journalist released after 14 days in detention*, 21 June 2026.

⁴⁷⁵ AS, *Addis Standard Editor-in-Chief abducted, offices raided, equipment seized as pressure on independent media in Ethiopia escalated*, 6 August 2026. Borkena, *Editor-in-Chief of Addis Standard assaulted and detained, newsroom raided*, 6 August 2026. CPJ, *Ethiopian security detain Addis Standard editor, raid newsroom, seize equipment*, 6 August 2026. HRW, *Ethiopia's growing assault on independent media*, 6 August 2026. The Reporter, *Addis Standard editor secures release, Publisher's office raided by security forces*, 6 August 2026. ATC, *JAKENN reports three-day crackdown targeting Addis Standard*, 7 August 2026.

⁴⁷⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 June 2026.

⁴⁷⁷ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

their posts on social media.⁴⁷⁸ Listing the various penalties for each offence would exceed the scope of this report.

During the reporting period, the problems faced by Ahmed Abdi Omar (hereinafter: Ahmed), better known as 'Ahmed Awga', stood out.⁴⁷⁹ This journalist had attracted attention when he interviewed a father whose son had been killed as a result of police brutality. On 23 April 2025, the police arrested him in eastern Somali. On 22 May 2025, Ahmed was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for 'spreading disinformation and inciting hatred'. The conviction was not based on the interview, but on a number of posts on Ahmed's Facebook page. It later transpired that these posts had not been made by Ahmed himself, but by others. Ahmed was released on 26 August 2025.⁴⁸⁰ According to one source, this had been preceded by mediation by the EHRC.⁴⁸¹

Mawliid Omar Siyad, better known as 'Bisle Omar', also encountered problems as a result of his social media activity. This popular TikToker was known for his critical stance towards the regional authorities in Somali. On 25 April 2026, the federal police arrested him at a hotel in Addis Abeba and took him to Jigjiga, the regional capital of Somali. Bisle Omar was held there for nineteen days. According to a relative, he was beaten while in detention, including on the soles of his feet. A few days after his release, Bisle Omar was arrested again.⁴⁸² On 25 June 2026, AS reported that a court in Somali had sentenced him to five years and six months' imprisonment. At the time of writing, it was not known where Bisle Omar was being held in detention, on what legal grounds he had been convicted, or whether he would lodge an appeal.⁴⁸³

The two examples above are provided for illustrative purposes only and should by no means be regarded as exhaustive.

Social media users were temporarily detained if they failed to comply with the standards set by the authorities. For example, one source was aware of a number of TikTok users who had been temporarily detained because they were scantily clad in their videos. According to the government, this ran counter to 'national culture'. The same source was aware of the case of a woman who had been temporarily detained because she had sparked a debate on social media about the sexually inappropriate behaviour of well-known men. In both cases, it remained unclear why these particular social media users had been temporarily detained and how many followers they had.⁴⁸⁴

According to the same source, the authorities were inclined to arrest social media users who posted undesirable messages on Friday afternoons, as the courts were closed during the weekend. Those arrested then had to spend the weekend at the police station before they could be brought before a court. The source noted that such an approach was intended to instil fear.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁸ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 June 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁴⁷⁹ Ahmed was the founder of the Jigjiga Television Network (JTN).

⁴⁸⁰ CPJ, *Ahmed Abdi Omar*, no date, accessed 4 June 2026.

⁴⁸¹ Confidential source, 4 June 2026.

⁴⁸² AS, *Young TikToker detained in Jigjiga after arrest in Addis Abeba amid allegations of abuse, due process violations*, 14 May 2026. AS, *Family raises concerns over safety, due process after re-arrest of TikToker Bisle Omer, Somali Region says case tied to clan incitement*, 22 May 2026.

⁴⁸³ AS, *Young TikToker Bisle Omer sentenced to 5 years, 6 months as family says whereabouts unknown after hearing*, 25 June 2026.

⁴⁸⁴ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴⁸⁵ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

5.8 Surveillance of telecommunications and the internet

As far as could be ascertained, few public sources were available on the surveillance of telecommunications and the internet in Ethiopia. For this reason, most of the information in this subsection comes from confidential sources.

In Ethiopia, two telecoms providers were operating during the current reporting period: Ethio Telecom and Safaricom (which is based in Kenya). This situation was described as a 'duopoly'. Ethio Telecom was a state-owned company, whereas Safaricom was a private organisation.⁴⁸⁶

The Computer Crime Proclamation No. 958/2016⁴⁸⁷ is one of the laws that establishes the legal framework for telecom providers.⁴⁸⁸ The text of the Act makes no distinction between telecom providers that are privately owned and those that are state-owned. Article 24(1) stipulates that telecom providers (referred to as 'service providers') must retain data for one year. Under Article 24(2), they must treat data as confidential, unless a court order requires the telecom provider to disclose it.⁴⁸⁹ Article 25(1) stipulates that the Ethiopian authorities may apply for a court warrant to gain access to data.⁴⁹⁰ Under Article 25(3), if critical infrastructure is under threat, the Attorney General may authorise the authorities to intercept real-time data or retrieve data without a court order.⁴⁹¹

On 1 August 2025, *Borkena*⁴⁹² published an article claiming that government bodies (such as the federal police and the NISS), in collaboration with Ethio Telecom and Safaricom, were monitoring communications between citizens.⁴⁹³ In a written statement,⁴⁹⁴ Safaricom categorically denied cooperating with the Ethiopian government to monitor communications between citizens.⁴⁹⁵ One source doubted whether Safaricom could evade surveillance by the authorities, given that this provider used the same infrastructure as the state-owned company Ethio Telecom.⁴⁹⁶

Private users were not required to install internet filters. If citizens were arrested for their activities on social media, their laptops and mobile phones were confiscated and they were forced to hand over their passwords. It was compulsory to register a SIM card in the user's own name.⁴⁹⁷

According to two sources, Wi-Fi networks offered no protection against surveillance by the Ethiopian authorities. These two sources also indicated that the Ethiopian authorities were able to monitor mobile phone traffic. Both sources stated that the Ethiopian judiciary has jurisdiction over offences committed from abroad that

⁴⁸⁶ CIO Africa, *Safaricom in Ethiopia, The disruptor turned underdog*, 8 October 2025. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 June 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁴⁸⁷ The full text of the Act can be accessed in two languages – Amharic and English – at the [website of the International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#).

⁴⁸⁸ Borkena, *Abiy Ahmed's government, Weaponizing digital tools to silence critics*, 1 August 2025. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 June 2026.

⁴⁸⁹ FDRE, *Computer Crime Proclamation*, published on 7 July 2016, p. 17.

⁴⁹⁰ This includes both real-time data and data from the recent past.

⁴⁹¹ FDRE, *Computer Crime Proclamation*, published on 7 July 2016, p. 17.

⁴⁹² Borkena often publishes news articles and opinion pieces that are critical of the Ethiopian authorities. The platform is based in Canada and, as such, gives a voice to Ethiopians in the diaspora who are critical of Prime Minister Abiy's government. Confidential source, 26 May 2026. Additional information is available at <https://borkena.com>.

⁴⁹³ Borkena, *Weaponizing digital tools to silence critics*, 1 August 2025.

⁴⁹⁴ Safaricom's written response can be read on the website of the [Business and Human Rights Centre \(BHRC\)](#). This international organisation operates at the intersection of the business world and human rights.

⁴⁹⁵ Safaricom, *Safaricom's response a media report suggesting it collaborates with Ethiopian state agencies to monitor communications using Deep Packet Inspection*, no date, accessed 1 June 2026.

⁴⁹⁶ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁴⁹⁷ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 June 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

undermine national security, national interests or public order in Ethiopia. These primarily concerned offences such as those referred to in the Computer Crime Proclamation No. 958/2016, Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes Proclamation No. 1176/2020, Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation No. 1185/2020 and Personal Data Protection No. 1321/2024.⁴⁹⁸ Within this context, one of the two sources stated that there were instances in which Ethiopian bloggers, journalists and activists in the diaspora had been tried in absentia in Ethiopia. According to this source, these individuals would be at risk of detention if they were to return to Ethiopia or be extradited to Ethiopia.⁴⁹⁹

5.9 Freedom of movement

5.9.1 International border crossings

Introduction

As far as could be ascertained, few public sources were available during the current reporting period concerning border crossings between Ethiopia and its neighbouring countries. For this reason, most of the information in this subsection comes from confidential sources.

Border with Eritrea

The Ethiopian federal government had no control over the border between Tigray and Eritrea. On the Ethiopian side, this border was administered by the regional authorities of Tigray; first the TIRA and then the Tigray Council (see Subsection 1.5.1).⁵⁰⁰ As part of Tsimdo, the informal rapprochement process between Tigray and Eritrea (see Subsection 1.6.1), the border crossing at Zalambessa between Ethiopia and Eritrea was informally opened in June 2025. This border crossing had previously been closed.⁵⁰¹ As far as could be ascertained, the border at Zalambessa remained open.⁵⁰² One source stated that the border between Afar and Eritrea was effectively closed.⁵⁰³

Border with Sudan

As a result of the war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan, the security situation on the border between the Ethiopian region of Benishangul-Gumuz and the Sudanese state of Blue Nile was tense (see also Subsections 1.6.2 and 3.6.5).⁵⁰⁴

In early April 2026, one source reported that the Ethiopian-Sudanese border had been closed.⁵⁰⁵ In June 2026, *The Reporter* reported that the official border crossings between Benishangul-Gumuz and Blue Nile were closed. Within this context, *The Reporter* mentioned Kurmuk, Almahal, Bamza and Gizen.⁵⁰⁶

⁴⁹⁸ Confidential source, 18 June 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁴⁹⁹ Confidential source, 18 June 2026.

⁵⁰⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵⁰¹ AS, *Ethiopia-Eritrea informal border opening*, 17 July 2025. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁵⁰² Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁵⁰³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Reporter*, *Borderland frontiers: bridges or barriers?*, 20 June 2026. Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

⁵⁰⁵ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵⁰⁶ *The Reporter*, *Borderland frontiers*, 20 June 2026.

5.9.2 *Domestic freedom of movement*

As far as could be ascertained, few public sources were available on freedom of movement within the country during the current reporting period. This subsection is therefore based largely on information from confidential sources.

The sources agreed that it was problematic for individuals to leave their own region and settle in another. Given the country's violent past and present, ethnic tensions had intensified (see Sections 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4). For example, it was difficult for a Tigrayan to settle in Amhara or for an Oromo to build a new life in Somali.⁵⁰⁷

Addis Abeba had a multi-ethnic population. Given that all population groups were represented in the Ethiopian capital, a person's ethnicity did not, in principle, constitute an obstacle to freedom of movement.⁵⁰⁸ Two sources nevertheless pointed out that this freedom of movement in Addis Abeba was relative. In times of political tension, people of a particular ethnic background could face difficulties in the capital.⁵⁰⁹ One of these two sources cited as an example the fact that more than a thousand Tigrayans had been arrested and detained in Addis Abeba. This wave of arrests followed the fighting that took place in Tigray in January 2026 (see Subsection 3.6.4). The source suspected that they had been released in the meantime, but did not say what this suspicion was based on. The source also did not clarify the age and socio-economic profile of the Tigrayans who had been arrested.⁵¹⁰

Sources stated, independently of one another, that it was particularly difficult for men of military age from Tigray and Amhara to travel to Addis Abeba by bus. The sources did not specify the socio-economic profile of these men. They were often stopped at checkpoints. These checkpoints were located outside the city limits of Addis Abeba and were manned by federal police officers or members of pro-government militias. During checks, these police officers and militia members singled out young men whose names, accents, identity cards and/or facial features could be traced to Tigray or Amhara. These indicators could lead to an interrogation, detention and/or an order to return to Tigray or Amhara (see Section 1.1 for further information on how Ethiopians believed they could recognise one another's regional or ethnic background). The sources did not quantify this practice in any further detail, but indicated that it occurred 'frequently'. This issue was less prevalent among children, women and older people from Tigray and Amhara.⁵¹¹ Two sources stated that it was possible to evade checkpoints on bus journeys by taking domestic flights to Addis Abeba. This entailed higher costs.⁵¹²

On 10 July 2026, it was reported that the TDF had set up a checkpoint outside Alamata, a small town in southern Tigray. There, they stopped six passenger coaches that were on their way to Addis Abeba. All passengers were required to get off the bus and show their identity cards. Anyone with an identity card issued in Tigray was sent back. Passengers holding an identity card issued outside Tigray

⁵⁰⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁵⁰⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁵⁰⁹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁵¹⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵¹¹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 18 May 2026.

⁵¹² Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 4 August 2026.

were allowed to continue their journey. The TDF's actions were presumably aimed at combating evasion of compulsory military service (see Section 6.3).⁵¹³

Nevertheless, it was possible to leave Tigray by land at the time of writing.⁵¹⁴ For example, Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC) reported that, by the end of July 2026, 72,000 people had fled from southern Tigray to Kobo, a small town in Amhara. Among them were many young people seeking to evade conscription in Tigray (see Section 6.3).⁵¹⁵

5.9.3 *Travel ban*

As far as could be ascertained, there were no publicly available sources regarding travel bans during the reporting period. This subsection is therefore based on information from confidential sources.

A travel ban could be imposed on different individuals by different authorities.⁵¹⁶ A court could impose a travel ban on a defendant in a criminal case if there was a flight risk. The court did not apply any objective, verifiable criteria to determine whether there was a flight risk. Such an assessment was left to the discretion of the court. As a result, leaders and members of opposition groups – who had been prosecuted for 'overthrowing the constitutional order', 'high treason' or 'attempting a *coup d'état*' – were placed under a travel ban. According to one source, these criminal cases had been politically motivated. The court informed the Immigration and Citizenship Service (ICS) of the measure taken, following which the departure ban was entered into a central database.⁵¹⁷

If the Ethiopian security and intelligence services regarded someone as a security threat, they could also instruct the ICS to record a travel ban in the database. Even then, most of these decisions were politically motivated, with leaders and members of opposition groups subject to travel bans.⁵¹⁸

In addition, the ICS itself was able to impose travel bans on foreign nationals who had entered Ethiopia illegally or had overstayed the duration of their visa or residence permit. Foreign nationals with outstanding debts, ongoing legal proceedings and outstanding exit fines (see Section 11.3) were also subject to travel bans.⁵¹⁹

As far as could be ascertained, a travel ban came into force immediately. Once it had been entered into the aforementioned database, the ban was accessible to customs officers at both international airports and border crossings.⁵²⁰ A source stated that there were also printed lists in circulation containing the names of people subject to a travel ban. These lists were also checked by officials, according to the same source.⁵²¹

⁵¹³ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 10 July 2026, pp. 1 and 2. Wegahta Facts, *Travellers say authorities prevented passengers with Tigray IDs from leaving region*, 10 July 2026.

⁵¹⁴ Confidential source, 14 August 2026.

⁵¹⁵ ATC, *Heightened TDF-federal forces tensions reported in Southern Tigray as civilians flee to Amhara*, 2 August 2026.

⁵¹⁶ Confidential source, 25 April 2026. Confidential source, 14 May 2026.

⁵¹⁷ Confidential source, 25 and 27 April 2026.

⁵¹⁸ Confidential source, 25 and 27 April 2026.

⁵¹⁹ Confidential source, 25 April 2026. Confidential source, 14 May 2026.

⁵²⁰ Confidential source, 25 and 27 April 2026. Confidential source, 14 May 2026.

⁵²¹ Confidential source, 27 April 2026.

5.10 Specific population groups

5.10.1 Introduction

Depending on the context and location, people in Ethiopia may have faced difficulties during the current reporting period because of their ethnicity and/or religion. Reports emerged of Fano fighters who had committed ethnically motivated acts of violence against the Oromo (see Subsection 3.6.2). Inter-communal violence occurred as well. Examples took place in the border region between Oromia and Sidama (see Subsection 3.6.3) and between the Anuak and the Nuer in Gambela (see Subsection 3.6.6). The Ethiopian authorities were also particularly likely to stop young men from Amhara and Tigray who were attempting to travel by bus to Addis Abeba (see Subsection 5.9.2).

This section examines in more detail communities that have faced difficulties due to their geographical location, ethnicity and/or religion.

5.10.2 *The situation of Tigrayans in disputed areas between Tigray and Amhara*

As a result of the war in Tigray (2020–2022), some areas that had previously belonged to Tigray came under the joint control of the federal armed forces (ENDF) and pro-government Amharic militias (see Subsection 1.5.2). These areas were extremely difficult for humanitarian organisations and journalists to access, and as a result, little information was available about the situation of the Tigrayans living there under the control of the ENDF and pro-government Amharic militias.⁵²²

The Economist and Human Rights Watch (HRW)⁵²³ reported that Tigrayans in the disputed areas had been forced to live as second-class citizens. For example, they were unable to apply for identity documents. They were also not allowed to own land or earn an income from their own labour. Tigrayans were forced to work as day labourers, according to *The Economist* and HRW.⁵²⁴ A source with access to the areas in question was not able to corroborate the reports from *The Economist* and HRW.⁵²⁵

No further information was available regarding the situation of Tigrayans in the disputed region area between Tigray and Amhara.

5.10.3 *Eritrean presence in Tigray*

During the previous reporting period, Eritrean troops were present in Tigray and committed human rights violations against the local population, including looting, abductions, killings, and arbitrary arrests and detentions.⁵²⁶

During the current reporting period, little information was available regarding the Eritrean presence on Ethiopian territory. Access to the border region between Tigray and Eritrea was actually restricted.⁵²⁷

⁵²² The Economist, *The forgotten horror of Western Tigray*, 9 October 2025. AS, *Limits of Pretoria*, 6 May 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵²³ HRW has a webpage dedicated specifically to Ethiopia: <https://www.hrw.org/africa/ethiopia>.

⁵²⁴ The Economist, *The forgotten horror of Western Tigray*, 9 October 2025. HRW, *Persecution of Tigrayans unrelenting, Rights abusers still in power in Western Tigray, Returns unsafe*, 22 April 2026.

⁵²⁵ Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

⁵²⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 25–27.

⁵²⁷ Confidential source, 1 July 2026.

One source reported that the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) had largely withdrawn from Tigray in May 2025. This source attributed the withdrawal to the informal rapprochement process between Eritrea and the TPLF, known as Tsimdo (see Subsection 1.6.1). According to the same source, Eritrean soldiers remained in a number of villages on the Ethiopian side of the border. These villages were situated in the vicinity of Irob and Zalambessa, as well as in Tahtay Adyabo and Adi Ageray, two districts in north-western Tigray.⁵²⁸

Two sources indicated that, during the current reporting period, Eritrean soldiers had adopted a less repressive attitude towards the local population. This development was also attributed to the process of rapprochement between Eritrea and the TPLF. Neither source provided any further details on the extent to which human rights violations by Eritrean soldiers had decreased.⁵²⁹ One of the two sources reported not having received any recent reports of arrests or looting in the areas where Eritrean soldiers were present.⁵³⁰

5.10.4 *Violence against Orthodox Christians in East Arsi, Oromia*

During the current reporting period, Orthodox Christians in eastern Arsi, a region in Oromia, in particular appeared to be targeted because of their religion.⁵³¹ The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), a human rights organisation that should not be confused with the EHRC,⁵³² documented the deaths of at least 432 civilians in East Arsi between 2021 and 1 June 2026. According to the EHRCO, they had been killed by armed groups because of their Orthodox Christian faith.⁵³³

The following section examines two massacres that stood out during the current reporting period. These examples are used solely for illustrative purposes. This should in no way be regarded as an exhaustive list.

On 26 February 2026, 21 Orthodox Christians – including a priest – were killed in East Arsi.⁵³⁴ On 31 May 2026, a new wave of violence broke out in East Arsi, in which 37 Orthodox Christians were killed and two churches were set on fire. Hundreds of people were also displaced as a result of the violence.⁵³⁵

There was some uncertainty regarding the nature of the violence in East Arsi. One source pointed out that most of the victims were Amhara, with most of the perpetrators being Oromo. The violence thus appeared to have an ethnic component as well as a religious one.⁵³⁶

There was also no clear overview of the perpetrators of the violence in East Arsi. Following the massacre at the end of February 2026, the OLA issued a press release in which it blamed Prime Minister Abiy's federal government. According to the OLA, the government had ordered mercenaries to use violence in order to pit communities against one another: Christians against Muslims, and Amharas against Oromos.⁵³⁷ According to the OLA, the government was also responsible for the

⁵²⁸ Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁵²⁹ Confidential source, 8 April 2026. Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁵³⁰ Confidential source, 23 June 2026.

⁵³¹ The Africa Report, *Escalating attacks on Ethiopian Christians reveal a collapsing state duty of care*, 24 July 2026.

⁵³² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 68.

⁵³³ AS, *Local rights group says 432 civilians killed in targeted attacks on Orthodox Christians in East Arsi since 2021; thousands displaced*, 28 July 2026.

⁵³⁴ Borkena, *21 orthodox church followers reportedly killed in the latest attack in Arsi*, 27 February 2026.

⁵³⁵ AS, *Several killed as armed attacks ravage East Arsi, Churches burned, residents seek refuge in forests*, 2 June 2026. ATC, *OLA raid leaves 37 people killed*, 2 June 2026. Borkena, *Orthodox Christians continue to be targeted in Arsi Oromia, at least 37 killed*, 2 June 2026.

⁵³⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵³⁷ Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), *The massacre of Orthodox Christians in Arsi*, 2 March 2026.

massacre in late May 2026.⁵³⁸ Conversely, the federal government accused the OLA of violence against Orthodox Christians in East Arsi. According to the government, the OLA's aim was to disrupt the elections on 1 June 2026 (see Subsection 1.5.2) and to sow division within society.⁵³⁹

One source stated that a faction of the OLA had carried out the massacres in late February 2026. Whereas the main body of the OLA was secular in orientation and did not pursue any religious aims, the motivations of fighters at the local level might have differed from this. Given the loose organisation of the OLA (see Section 3.5), the high command did not have complete control over local fighters and groups. The OLA faction responsible for the violence in East Arsi combined Oromo nationalism with a form of Muslim fundamentalism, according to the same source.⁵⁴⁰ ATC attributed the massacres in late May 2026 to the OLA, without making any explicit distinction between the main organisation and any factional group of a Muslim extremist nature.⁵⁴¹

In early June 2026, representatives of the Orthodox Christian community,⁵⁴² the federal government and the regional authorities of Oromia met to discuss the violence in East Arsi. The Orthodox Christian leaders expressed their concern about the violence and called on the government to investigate the causes of the violence, hold the perpetrators to account and facilitate the return of displaced persons. Mohamed Idris, the minister for Peace, announced that the federal government had sent a fact-finding team to East Arsi. According to the minister, the government would reportedly take 'appropriate measures' based on the team's findings.⁵⁴³

⁵³⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Rebels accuse Ethiopian forces of killing Orthodox believers in Oromia*, 5 June 2026.

⁵³⁹ AS, *PM Office defends election legitimacy, blames OLA, Fano for coordinated attempts to disrupt polls*, 6 June 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia says filed armed groups' attempts to disrupt election*, 6 June 2026.

⁵⁴⁰ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁵⁴¹ ATC, *OLA raid leaves 37 people killed*, 2 June 2026.

⁵⁴² The full English name of the Orthodox Christian church in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC).

⁵⁴³ AS, *Orthodox Church delegation meets federal, Oromia officials after deadly East Arsi attacks*, 5 June 2026.

6 Forced recruitment

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines forced recruitment. Ethiopia does not have compulsory military service.⁵⁴⁴ During the reporting period, there were media reports of forced recruitment by both state and non-state actors. The following sections examine reports of forced recruitment in Oromia (Section 6.2) and Tigray (Section 6.3), respectively. As far as could be ascertained, no reports of forced recruitment in other regions emerged during the current reporting period.

6.2 Forced recruitment in Oromia

Forced recruitment by the authorities

In November 2024, *Addis Standard* (AS) reported that government forces were subjecting young men in Oromia to forced recruitment. According to AS, such forced recruitment took place on a 'widespread' scale. Reports in the newspaper revealed that young men had been arrested and detained. If the relatives did not pay the ransom, the men were sent to a military training camp. The regional authorities in Oromia dismissed the report as 'slander' and 'baseless propaganda'.⁵⁴⁵

In early December 2024, however, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a federal government body (see Section 5.2), concluded that young people in Oromia were being subjected to forced recruitment on a 'massive' scale. In doing so, the EHRC had examined cases of forced recruitment in, amongst others, the towns of Adama, Bishoftu, Jimma and Shashemene. Among other things, the commission documented the forced recruitment of fourteen minors aged between fifteen and sixteen in Shashemene. The EHRC also confirmed that forced recruitment was linked to a revenue model. Defence officials and regional administrators demanded ransoms ranging from twenty thousand to one hundred thousand birr.⁵⁴⁶ If the family were unable to pay the sum, the young man who had been arrested and detained was taken to a military training camp.⁵⁴⁷

It was not known whether there were any circumstances or areas where the risk of forced recruitment was lower. It was also not known whether anyone was exempt from being recruited again if they had paid a ransom.

As mentioned in Section 3.2, the regional authorities in Oromia had established a civilian militia known as the Gaachana Sirnaa (GS). One source had the impression that most members in urban areas maintained links with the Prosperity Party (PP), the ruling party, and served on a voluntary basis, whereas recruitment in rural areas was of a compulsory nature.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁴ Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

⁵⁴⁵ AS, *Oromia residents report widespread forced conscription, allege detentions, 'extortion' by gov't forces*, 20 November 2024.

⁵⁴⁶ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 25 May 2026, 20,000.00 and 100,000.00 birr was equivalent to 326.46 and 1,632.29 euros, respectively.

⁵⁴⁷ AS, *EHRC reports forced conscription, arbitrary detentions and extortion in Oromia with victims including minors as young as 11*, 6 December 2024. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian rights body confirms conscription of youth in Oromia Region*, 6 December 2024.

⁵⁴⁸ Confidential source, 21 May 2026.

As reported by *Addis Standard* (AS) farmers in western Oromia were particularly likely to be subjected to forced recruitment for the GS. For example, one farmer stated that, after visiting the market, the police stopped him for an identity check and took him away. He was then forced to undergo military training against his will for two months. During this period, the farmer was unable to work his land. Another farmer reported that he was not allowed to buy pesticides, fertiliser and seeds unless he had participated in military training. As he was the breadwinner at home, he felt compelled to comply with this demand. His training lasted two weeks.⁵⁴⁹ One source did not refer to such a recruit as a 'volunteer', but as a 'voluntold'.⁵⁵⁰

Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC) reported that on 2 August 2026 a protest took place in the district of Jarso against forced recruitment (actual or alleged) in connection with GS. The security forces responded with gunfire and fatally shot one man, reportedly a conscript.⁵⁵¹

No further information was available on forced recruitment within the context of GS.

Forced recruitment by the OLA

The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) also appeared to be recruiting by force. In early May 2026, media reports emerged that the OLA had rounded up farmers and students in western Oromia, who were then forced to fight alongside them against the rival Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM) from neighbouring Amhara. At least sixteen farmers were killed in subsequent fighting.⁵⁵²

No further information was available regarding forced recruitment by the OLA.

6.3 Forced recruitment in Tigray

In late May 2026, reports emerged that units of the TDF, which were affiliated with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), had resorted to forced recruitment. These reports documented cases of forced recruitment in various locations in Tigray, including Axum and Adwa.⁵⁵³ One source told *Addis Standard* (AS) that around four hundred young people were undergoing military training at a base in Central Tigray. According to the same source, most of them were participating in this training under duress.⁵⁵⁴

In late June 2026, ATC reported that hundreds of young people had been forcibly recruited by the TDF. These involuntary recruits had been taken from public places, such as gold mines, pubs and markets. According to ATC, forced recruitment took place throughout the territory controlled by the TPLF and the TDF, in both urban and rural areas. ATC did not provide any further information on the age, gender or socio-economic status of the forcibly recruited individuals.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁴⁹ AS, *Farm or fight*, 6 September 2024.

⁵⁵⁰ Confidential source, 21 May 2026.

⁵⁵¹ ATC, *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 4 August 2026, pp. 6 and 7.

⁵⁵² BBC Monitoring, *At least 16 killed in Ethiopia's Oromia after forced conscription*, 6 May 2026.

⁵⁵³ AS, *Reports of forced conscription emerge across Tigray as residents, parties, rights groups raise alarm*, 28 May 2026. ATC, *Several families in Tigray Region allege forced recruitment of children by TPLF-aligned forces*, 28 May 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Tigray opposition say Ethiopia's TPLF forcibly conscripting youth*, 28 May 2026.

⁵⁵⁴ AS, *Reports of forced conscription emerge across Tigray as residents, parties, rights groups raise alarm*, 28 May 2026.

⁵⁵⁵ ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 17 -24 June 2026*, published on 26 June 2026, pp. 5 and 6.

In June 2026, the Tigray Council, the regional governing body under TPLF leader Debretsion (see Subsection 1.5.1), passed a law providing for the possibility of a general mobilisation. This Act requires every resident of Tigray who is of military age and in good health to report for duty if called up for military service. Evading compulsory military service is punishable by a fine ranging from 10,000,00 to 15,000,00 birr.⁵⁵⁶ Paying such a fine does not exempt a person from military obligations. The same law restricts freedom of expression for individuals and parties who are critical of compulsory military service. Criticising compulsory military service, inciting desertion or evasion of military service, and harbouring deserters or those evading military service are punishable by a prison sentence of between 5 and 25 years.⁵⁵⁷

In early July 2026, reports emerged that protests against forced conscription were taking place in Mekelle, the capital of Tigray. Residents of the city are said to have chased after buses carrying conscripts. Other residents are said to have pelted these buses with stones in a fit of rage.⁵⁵⁸ A spokesperson for the Tigray Council stated that incidents of forced recruitment would be investigated and that the perpetrators would be held to account.⁵⁵⁹

Around the same time, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that conscription in Tigray was creating a 'climate of fear'. Between April and June 2026, HRW documented six cases of forced recruitment in Tigray. The boys and men were rounded up in the streets and from offices, homes and gold mines. The conscripts included minors fifteen years of age. HRW based its findings on interviews with eighteen people, including witnesses, relatives of involuntary conscripts and people who had evaded forced recruitment.⁵⁶⁰

ATC reported that, on 16 July 2026, police officers, militia members and TDF fighters took more than forty young men away from the town of Hagere Selam. The young people had been taken from coffee houses and amusement arcades and arrested on the street. In response, the mothers of the forced conscripts organised a protest. Security forces linked to the TPLF requested the protesting women to disperse. When they refused to do so, the security forces fired shots into the air and beat the demonstrators. An unknown number of women were injured in the incident, according to ATC.⁵⁶¹

In early August 2026, one source reported that forced recruitment was taking place in a 'systematic' and 'widespread' manner in the area controlled by the TPLF and the TDF. Forced recruitment took place in both cities (such as Adigrat, Axum and Mekelle) and villages. Militias linked to the TPLF went from door to door, in addition to forcibly taking conscripts from public places (such as churches, hotels and city centres). For the time being, forced recruitment has targeted primarily veterans of the 2020–2022 war, but the source was also aware of the forced recruitment of priests, day labourers and students in secondary school. The same source stated

⁵⁵⁶ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 26 June 2026, 10,000.00 birr was equivalent to 165.27 euros. The same currency converter reported a value of 247.90 euros for 15,000.00 birr.

⁵⁵⁷ Borkena, *Regional decree imposes penalties for draft evasion and related offences*, 9 June 2026. The Reporter, *25-year sentences & retroactive laws, Controversial draft law sparks fear of growing authoritarianism in Tigray*, 21 June 2026. HRW, *Tigray authorities should withdraw abusive law*, 23 June 2026. ATC, *Tigray authorities approve mandatory conscription law*, 26 June 2026. Borkena, *Tigray Regional Council orders implementation of controversial security decree*, 26 June 2026.

⁵⁵⁸ ATC, *Residents stay home in protest over forced military conscription, Bus transporting youth pelted with stones*, 3 July 2026. BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia's TPLF faces public outcry over alleged forced recruitment*, 3 July 2026.

⁵⁵⁹ AS, *Tigray authority vows accountability over alleged forced youth conscription as Mekelle residents describe mounting fear*, 4 July 2026.

⁵⁶⁰ HRW, *Tigray authorities forcibly recruiting civilians*, 6 July 2026.

⁵⁶¹ ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 15-22 July 2026*, published on 24 July 2026, pp. 2 and 16.

that the only way to avoid compulsory military service was to leave Tigray (see Subsection 5.9.2) or to go into hiding in Tigray.⁵⁶²

The controversial compulsory military service and the associated forced recruitment generated concerned and critical reactions. Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on the Tigray Council to repeal compulsory military service.⁵⁶³

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a federal government body (see Section 5.2), also expressed concern about the introduction of compulsory military service in Tigray. The Commission stated that this was contrary to Articles 51 and 52 of the Federal Constitution (see also Section 1.3). The EHRC also reported that most of the conscripts were under the age of eighteen, which, according to the commission, was 'potentially a war crime'.⁵⁶⁴

On 12 July 2026, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) called on the Tigray Council to repeal compulsory military service. The EHRCO argued that compulsory military service was contrary to the constitution. This human rights organisation also described the forced recruitment of minors as a violation of children's rights.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² Confidential source, 4 August 2026.

⁵⁶³ HRW, *Tigray authorities should withdraw abusive law*, 23 June 2026.

⁵⁶⁴ Borkena, *Tigray mandatory military conscription raises concern as EHRC says most conscripts are under 18*, 4 July 2026.

⁵⁶⁵ The Reporter, *EHRCO demands halt to forced conscription in Tigray*, 13 July 2026.

7 Humanitarian situation

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia. Section 7.2 examines the causes and scale of displacement, the geographic distribution of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their living conditions. Section 7.3 indicates the level of food insecurity in the country. Section 7.4 sets out the violence against humanitarian actors. Section 7.5 describes the situation of recognised refugees, asylum seekers and unregistered foreign nationals in Ethiopia.

Little recent quantitative data were available on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia, as the Ethiopian authorities and international humanitarian actors were unable to reach agreement on how to define humanitarian needs during the current reporting period. According to the humanitarian arm of the European Union (EU),⁵⁶⁶ 21.4 million people in Ethiopia were in need of humanitarian aid in 2024, including 15.8 million who required food aid (see also Section 7.3).⁵⁶⁷

7.2 Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Introduction

During the current reporting period, it was not possible to obtain a complete overview of the number of IDPs in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian authorities had withdrawn their authorisation for the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), a periodic quantitative survey conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to determine the number of displaced persons by region. The Ethiopian government and the IOM disagreed on the definition of the term 'IDP'. The Ethiopian authorities classified only residents of displacement camps as 'IDPs', whereas the IOM applied a broader definition and also included people who had come to live in host communities as a result of conflict or natural disasters.⁵⁶⁸

The last DTM was conducted in August 2024.⁵⁶⁹ At that time, the IOM counted a total of 1,919,993 IDPs across Ethiopia.⁵⁷⁰ The number of displaced persons by region is shown below. According to these figures, most of the displaced people were in Oromia, Tigray, Amhara and Afar. Due to operational constraints, the regions of Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz and South Ethiopia were excluded from the study. The IOM nevertheless reported that the Somali region had 397,913 displaced people in May 2024. According to the IOM, many people in Somali had been displaced by drought.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁶ Known as the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), this branch of the EU has a web page specifically dedicated to Ethiopia: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/ethiopia_en.

⁵⁶⁷ ECHO, *Ethiopia*, no date, accessed 16 June 2026.

⁵⁶⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. AS, *The invisible crisis, Ethiopia's 'Zero IDP' illusion and the humanitarian cost of statistical sovereignty*, 18 May 2026.

⁵⁶⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. AS, *The invisible crisis*, 18 May 2026.

⁵⁷⁰ IOM, *Ethiopia national displacement*, July-August 2024, pp. 8, 9 and 67.

⁵⁷¹ IOM, *Ethiopia national displacement*, July-August 2024, pp. 3, 4 and 7-10.

Number of IDPs by region (August 2024)

Region	Number of IDPs
Oromia	749,534
Tigray	749,509
Amhara	166,353
Afar	123,767
Central Ethiopia	56,356
Sidama	39,065
Gambela	16,243
Disputed territories	11,775
South West Ethiopia People's Region	6,616
Harari	775
Total	1,919,993

Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM).⁵⁷²

Despite the lack of a more recent DTM, it was possible to gain a limited understanding of the scale of displacement in Ethiopia during the current reporting period. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC),⁵⁷³ at the end of 2025, Ethiopia had 2,378,000 IDPs due to conflict and violence, as well as 757,000 people displaced due to natural disasters. The IDMC did not break these figures down by region.⁵⁷⁴ Both the UN and the IDMC use the same definition for the term 'IDP'.⁵⁷⁵

In early April 2026, one source estimated the total number of IDPs in Ethiopia at around 3.3 million. The source did not provide an estimate of the number of displaced persons by region.⁵⁷⁶ Most of the displaced persons were staying in Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Tigray. The root cause of the displacement was a combination of armed conflict, insecurity and climate shocks, including prolonged drought.⁵⁷⁷

The information on the number of IDPs by region proved to be fragmented during the reporting period. In early April 2026, one source estimated the number of IDPs in Somali at around 700,000, nearly 100,000 of whom were displaced in the Qolaji camp.⁵⁷⁸ According to the same source, they had already been living there for nine to ten years, thus highlighting the long-term nature of their displacement.⁵⁷⁹ On 20 April 2026, *Addis Standard* (AS) estimated the number of displaced people in Tigray at nearly one million.⁵⁸⁰ In June 2026, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN's refugee agency,⁵⁸¹ estimated that 478,931 displaced persons were staying in Amhara, distributed across 18 locations.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷² IOM, *Ethiopia national displacement*, July-August 2024, pp. 57-67.

⁵⁷³ The IDMC collects data on internal displacement and is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The research centre is based in Geneva. Additional information on the IDMC is available at <https://www.internal-displacement.org>.

⁵⁷⁴ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2026*, published on 12 May 2026, p. 82.

⁵⁷⁵ IDMC, *GRID 2026*, published on 12 May 2026, p. V.

⁵⁷⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵⁷⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. AS, *Beyond the "hostage" narrative, Conditioned immorality, politics of displacement in Ethiopia*, 20 April 2026.

⁵⁷⁸ Also spelt 'Qolaji'.

⁵⁷⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁵⁸⁰ AS, *Beyond the "hostage" narrative*, 20 April 2026.

⁵⁸¹ The UNHCR has a web page dedicated to its activities and work in Ethiopia: <https://www.unhcr.org/where-we-work/countries/ethiopia>.

⁵⁸² UNHCR, *Thematic factsheet – Amhara Region – Ethiopia, IDP protection response factsheet*, June 2026.

In Afar, people were also displaced due to climate shocks. In this regard, one source noted that displacement was somewhat relative in the regional context of Afar, given that the nomadic herders living in this region⁵⁸³ were already leading a migratory existence.⁵⁸⁴

Living conditions

A variety of factors made it difficult to provide protection and assistance to IDPs. For example, Ethiopia lacked a legal framework for providing protection and assistance to displaced persons. Although Ethiopia had ratified the Kampala Convention,⁵⁸⁵ it had not transposed it into national legislation and regulations. The aims of this African Union (AU) convention include preventing displacement and protecting displaced persons.⁵⁸⁶

Due to the lack of national legislation and regulations, there was a legal vacuum in Ethiopia regarding the reception and protection of IDPs. For this reason, aid and development organisations were not always sure about which Ethiopian government body they should contact. The Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC),⁵⁸⁷ the Ministry of Peace (MoP) and the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD)⁵⁸⁸ were involved in the reception of displaced persons.⁵⁸⁹

In addition, aid and development organisations faced another practical problem. Due to the lack of current, accurate data on the scale of displacement, vulnerable groups of displaced persons remained 'invisible'. This made it difficult for aid and development organisations to secure financial support from donors, as they were unable to provide a clear picture of the size of the target groups.⁵⁹⁰

The aid and development sector in Ethiopia also faced declining budgets. For example, in early 2025, US President Donald Trump abolished the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the US government's development agency. The withdrawal of USAID had a major impact on the provision of aid to those in need in the country, including IDPs, as Ethiopia was one of the agency's largest recipients.⁵⁹¹ As a result, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations' (UN) food agency,⁵⁹² found itself forced to close the office in Shire. This town in Tigray was home to a large displaced population.⁵⁹³

In view of the factors outlined above, living conditions in camps for displaced persons were generally poor. Although the situation varied from camp to camp, there was insufficient access to basic services in all camps, such as shelter, education, food, healthcare and energy sources (including electricity and fuel).⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁸³ Also referred to as 'pastoralists'.

⁵⁸⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵⁸⁵ The full title of the convention is the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. The Kampala Convention was adopted on 23 October 2009 and entered into force on 6 December 2012. The text of the convention can be accessed at [Refworld](https://refworld.org/docid/5d6b6d6d.html), a UNHCR knowledge base on refugees and statelessness.

⁵⁸⁶ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 21 April 2026.

⁵⁸⁷ This Ethiopian government commission has its own website: <https://edrmc.gov.et>.

⁵⁸⁸ Additional information on this department is available at <https://mopd.gov.et/en/>.

⁵⁸⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 21 April 2026.

⁵⁹⁰ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. AS, *The invisible crisis*, 18 May 2026.

⁵⁹¹ Al Jazeera, *Hunger, death, devastation, No respite in Tigray a year after US aid cuts*, 23 January 2026. TNH, *Ethiopia's blame game after videos reveal starving displaced persons in Tigray*, 10 March 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁵⁹² Additional information on the WFP's activities in Ethiopia is available at <https://www.wfp.org/countries/ethiopia>.

⁵⁹³ Al Jazeera, *Hunger, death, devastation*, 23 January 2026.

⁵⁹⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

The information available on living conditions in the various camps for displaced persons was fragmented. Reports by *Addis Standard* (AS) revealed that the camps in Amhara and Tigray were overcrowded and that there was a severe food shortage. This increased the risk of disease outbreaks. Within this context, the Ethiopian newspaper mentioned locations including Jara (located in the border region between Amhara and Afar), Endabaguna (Tigray) and Shire (Tigray).⁵⁹⁵

In early 2026, the international media reported that the displaced population in Hitsats was suffering from hunger. Hitsats is situated in north-western Tigray, close to the border with Eritrea, and was home to 16,000 displaced persons, distributed across various camps. They had been driven there by Amharic militias during the war in Tigray (2020–2022). As a result of the decline in humanitarian aid, the displaced population in Hitsats was suffering from hunger. According to one estimate, more than three hundred people in Hitsats had died since 2022 as a result of starvation and a lack of healthcare.⁵⁹⁶ Additional information on food insecurity is provided in Section 7.3.

In July 2026, the Shelter, Land and Site Coordination (SLSC) Cluster published a study on the situation in displacement camps in Tigray. This cluster comprised a partnership between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and UN and Ethiopian government agencies.⁵⁹⁷ The study by the SLSC Cluster included 78 displacement camps in Tigray. These camps housed a total of around 307,000 displaced persons. The cluster concluded that there was a widespread lack of food, shelter, protection, healthcare and water in the camps. According to the SLSC Cluster, food aid was available in 95% of the displacement camps surveyed in Tigray, but it was insufficient.⁵⁹⁸

With regard to Qoloji, a large displacement camp in Somali: in April 2026, one source reported that there was a shortage of water, electricity and healthcare. The same source further noted that the camp was overcrowded and that soil erosion was occurring because the inhabitants were cutting down trees for firewood.⁵⁹⁹

Security risks

Little or no information was available on the security situation of IDPs in conflict-affected areas (such as Amhara). The unsafe situation rendered these areas difficult to access, with the result that little information emerged about the security situation there.⁶⁰⁰

7.3 Food insecurity

Ethiopia has a long history of food insecurity. In the recent past, the country has experienced at least one major famine every decade. Chronic food insecurity stems from a combination of various factors, including armed conflicts, soil erosion, persistent droughts and agricultural practices that deplete the soil.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁵ AS, *Over half a million displaced in Amhara face dire conditions as shelters crumble, IDPs in Tigray struggle with overcrowding*, 6 March 2025.

⁵⁹⁶ Al Jazeera, *Hunger, death, devastation*, 23 January 2026. TNH, *Ethiopia's blame game after videos reveal starving displaced persons in Tigray*, 10 March 2026.

⁵⁹⁷ Confidential source, 6 August 2026.

⁵⁹⁸ AS, *Tigray displacement sites see renewed arrivals as aid gaps deepen; humanitarian risks worsen: cluster assessment*, 22 July 2026. ATC, *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 22–29 July 2026*, published on 31 July 2026, p. 6.

⁵⁹⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁰⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁰¹ EIP, *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution*, published in 2025, pp. 121 and 122.

As in the case of internal displacement (see Section 7.2), the Ethiopian government did not provide any official data on the extent of food insecurity in the country.⁶⁰² The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is regarded as an authoritative source on food insecurity and hunger. The most recent IPC estimates and projections for Ethiopia were from May 2021 (see also Section 1.2).⁶⁰³ Due to the lack of current data, information available on food insecurity remained fragmented.

Nevertheless, it was clear that large parts of Ethiopia were facing a food crisis. Widespread food insecurity was linked to climate shocks, armed conflicts and rising prices for food and fuel.⁶⁰⁴ In Amhara, Oromia and Tigray, conflict contributed to food shortages. In Afar, Somali, parts of Oromia and the south and south-east of the country, persistent droughts and floods have led to food insecurity.⁶⁰⁵

On 21 July 2026, various UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO),⁶⁰⁶ published a joint report on the global level of food security (and insecurity). This report revealed that 60.1% of the Ethiopian population had experienced food insecurity during the period 2023–2025. This amounted to 79.4 million people. Between 2014 and 2016, 56.2% of the Ethiopian population (58.4 million people) had faced food insecurity.⁶⁰⁷ The percentages and figures quoted did not take Tigray into account.⁶⁰⁸ The report did not break down the level of food security (and insecurity) further by region.

According to one source, food shortages were most acute in Somali, Central Ethiopia and Oromia, with 64% of households in Somali facing food insecurity. In Central Ethiopia and Oromia, these figures stood at 60% and 56%, respectively. The same source pointed out that there were severe food shortages within the displaced population. In Amhara, Tigray and Somali, 55%, 46% and 60%, respectively, of IDPs were facing food insecurity.⁶⁰⁹

Refugees in Ethiopia also experienced hunger (see Subsection 7.5.3).

7.4 Violence against humanitarian actors

As described previously, the humanitarian aid sector in Ethiopia was facing declining budgets (see Section 7.2). In addition, humanitarian organisations were confronted with an unsafe situation in conflict-affected areas (such as Amhara and Gambela).⁶¹⁰ One source stated that the western part of Oromia, known as Wollega, was particularly difficult for humanitarian organisations to access.⁶¹¹ This area was known to be a stronghold of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA).⁶¹²

⁶⁰² Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁰³ IPC, *The IPC Population Tracking Tool, Ethiopia: Acute Food Insecurity*, May 2021, accessed 27 April 2026.

⁶⁰⁴ WFP, *Ethiopia country brief, July 2026*, published on 24 June 2026, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁵ Confidential source, February 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), *Ethiopia, Food security outlook update, April – September 2026*, published in May 2026, pp. 2 and 3.

⁶⁰⁶ This UN organisation has a webpage dedicated specifically to its programmes and projects in Ethiopia: <https://www.fao.org/ethiopia/en>.

⁶⁰⁷ FAO et al., *The state of food security and nutrition in the world, Understanding and addressing the high cost of a healthy diet*, published on 21 July 2026, pp. 125 and 139.

⁶⁰⁸ FAO et al., *The state of food security and nutrition in the world*, published on 21 July 2026, pp. 137 and 152.

⁶⁰⁹ Confidential source, February 2026.

⁶¹⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. FEWS NET, *Ethiopia, Food security outlook update*, published in May 2026, p. 3.

⁶¹¹ Also spelt 'Wollega'.

⁶¹² Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

During the reporting period, humanitarian actors in Ethiopia were repeatedly subjected to violence. According to data from the publicly available Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB),⁶¹³ 36 care workers were affected in 2024: 7 were abducted, 14 were injured and 15 were killed. By 2025, this figure had increased to 41 care workers: 4 had been arrested, 27 abducted, 6 injured and 4 killed.⁶¹⁴ The AWSDB reported that aid workers were confronted with abductions and small-arms fire (SAF), particularly in the Amhara region.⁶¹⁵ According to the AWSDB definition, a 'care worker' is an employee or volunteer of an aid organisation.⁶¹⁶ The data from the AWSDB did not provide a clear indication of how many care workers had been affected by targeted or random violence.

Several examples of incidents of violence against humanitarian workers are presented below. These are used solely for illustrative purposes and should in no way be regarded as an exhaustive list.

In November 2025, Fano fighters stopped a UN-agency convoy near Alemwach, a refugee camp in Amhara. In the process, they took several staff members captive, both international and Ethiopian. The staff were forced to hand over their mobile phones and money. Most were released after a few hours, but two staff members were held for ransom. One source attributed this to their Oromo names. According to the same source, these two employees were also released after two days.⁶¹⁷

On 9 December 2025, gunmen from the Anuak community in Lare (a village in Gambela) attacked a World Bank vehicle. In the incident, they killed three passengers and left two seriously injured. The gunmen then seized the vehicle.⁶¹⁸ One source suspected that the robbers had acted out of opportunism.⁶¹⁹

On 7 April 2026, three passengers in an ambulance were abducted on the road between Amba Giorgis and Dabat in Amhara. They were a gynaecologist, a pharmacist and the ambulance driver. The abductors left the ambulance and medical supplies at the scene of the robbery.⁶²⁰ One source suspected that the abduction was carried out by Fano fighters, as they were active in this area. According to the source, the perpetrators were presumably seeking ransom or the hostages' medical expertise.⁶²¹

7.5 Refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia

7.5.1 Introduction

This section examines the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia. Subsection 7.5.2 addresses asylum legislation and regulations in the country and provides quantitative data on the size, composition and geographic distribution of the refugee community in Ethiopia. Subsection 7.5.3 describes the extent to which asylum seekers had access to the asylum procedure and the extent to which recognised refugees enjoyed freedom of movement and had access to the labour market. It also describes the living conditions in refugee camps and the situation of

⁶¹³ The AWSDB documents violence against aid workers worldwide. Additional information on the AWSDB is available at <https://www.aidworkersecurity.org>.

⁶¹⁴ AWSDB, *The Aid Worker Security Database, 1997 – present*, accessed 6 July 2026.

⁶¹⁵ AWSDB, *Aid Worker Security Report 2025*, August 2025, p. 5.

⁶¹⁶ AWSDB, *About the data*, no date, accessed 5 July 2026.

⁶¹⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶¹⁸ Confidential source, 3 April 2026.

⁶¹⁹ Confidential source, 10 March 2026.

⁶²⁰ ATC, *Health workers kidnapped along Ambagiorgis-Dabat route on Tuesday*, 7 April 2026.

⁶²¹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

unregistered foreign nationals. Subsection 7.5.4 focuses specifically on the situation of the Eritrean community in Ethiopia.

In this section, the term 'refugee' refers to a person with a citizenship other than Ethiopian (for example, an Eritrean) who is recognised as a refugee in Ethiopia. When the rights and obligations of refugees are described in general terms, it can be assumed that they apply to all refugees, regardless of citizenship.

7.5.2 General asylum context

Legal and policy framework

In Ethiopia, the flow of asylum-seekers is regulated by Refugees Proclamation No. 1110/2019.⁶²² Commentators describe the aforementioned proclamation as one of the most progressive and inclusive asylum laws in Africa, as it grants refugees a range of rights, including freedom of movement, participation in the labour market and access to banking services.⁶²³

The Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) is responsible for duties including registering and determining the status of asylum seekers, as well as for issuing documents to asylum seekers and recognised refugees. This federal government agency performs these tasks in conjunction with the UNHCR.⁶²⁴

During the reporting period, the Ethiopian government, in conjunction with its international partners, developed an action plan known as *Maketet* (Amharic for 'inclusion').⁶²⁵ The plan aimed to integrate refugees into the national systems for healthcare, education and other social services. *Maketet* was officially launched on 18 June 2026.⁶²⁶ At the time of writing, it was too early to determine how this action plan was unfolding in practice.⁶²⁷

One development occurring during the reporting period was in line with the aim of promoting the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees. Both asylum seekers and refugees were eligible for a *fayda* number, which was added to their immigration or residence documents. To be eligible for a *fayda* payment, an individual had to be residing in Ethiopia and registered as either an asylum seeker or a refugee. A *fayda* number was required for many tasks, including banking transactions, registering a business and contacting the tax authorities (see also Section 2.1).⁶²⁸ In early April 2026, one source estimated that more than 130,000 refugees had obtained a *fayda* number.⁶²⁹

⁶²² The full text of the Act, drawn up in Amharic and English, can be accessed at [Refworld](#), a UNHCR knowledge base on refugees and statelessness.

⁶²³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶²⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. RRS, *About us, History of RRS*, no date, accessed on 5 May 2026.

⁶²⁵ Also spelt *Makkatet*.

⁶²⁶ Confidential source, 11 February 2026. Confidential source, 21 February 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 4 May 2026. AS, *Ethiopia launches refugee integration strategy as UNHCR faces over 90% funding shortfall*, 19 June 2026. The Guardian, *As Sudan's war crosses borders and millions are made refugees, could Ethiopia's plan solve 'humanity's migration issue'?*, 21 July 2026. The neighbouring Kenya had already begun implementing a similar action plan known as *Shirika* (Swahili for 'coming together'). Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, December 2025, p. 126.

⁶²⁷ Confidential source, 24 June 2026.

⁶²⁸ Development Action Platform, *Over 9,000 Sudanese refugees receive digital IDs in Ethiopia*, 13 June 2025.

⁶²⁹ BiometricUpdate.com, *UNHCR lauds role of Fayda digital ID in facilitating life for Ethiopia refugees*, 16 January 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶²⁹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

Figures

Ethiopia was home to a large refugee community, particularly consisting of refugees from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea.⁶³⁰ On 31 March 2026, Ethiopia had more than 1.1 million registered refugees and asylum seekers. This figure comprised 484,703 South Sudanese ($\approx 43\%$), 360,257 Somali nationals ($\approx 32\%$) and 170,055 Eritreans ($\approx 15\%$). These figures were provided by the UNHCR and the Ethiopian government.⁶³¹

Most refugees and asylum seekers were staying in Gambela, Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz. The number of refugees and asylum seekers by region is set out below. The data were once again sourced from the UNHCR and the Ethiopian government.

Number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in each region (as of 31 March 2026)

Region	Number
Gambela	446,939
Somali	359,178
Benishangul-Gumuz	112,869
Addis Abeba	70,605
Afar	63,470
Amhara	41,335
Dispersed locations	13,909
Central Ethiopia, Sidama, South Ethiopia and South West Ethiopia ⁶³²	8,339
Oromia	5,665
Tigray	2,346
Total	1,124,655

Source: UNHCR and the Ethiopian government.

7.5.3 Asylum practice

Access to the asylum procedure

Ethiopian asylum legislation and regulations stipulate that, upon arrival in Ethiopia, an asylum seeker may apply to the police or the RRS for international protection. Applications are ultimately processed by the RRS. If the application is rejected, the asylum seeker may lodge an appeal.⁶³³

In practice, however, the process was more difficult. One source was aware of Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers who had been living in Addis Abeba for years, but whose asylum applications had not been processed (see also Section 5.2).⁶³⁴ Another source stated that the registration of individual asylum seekers had been largely suspended since November 2021. According to the same source, the Ethiopian authorities were inclined to open the registration of asylum seekers

⁶³⁰ UNHCR, *Ethiopia*, no date, accessed 5 May 2026.

⁶³¹ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal, Ethiopia*, most recently updated 31 March 2026, accessed 5 May 2026.

⁶³² These four regions previously formed a single region known as the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR).

⁶³³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶³⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

temporarily in the event of an emergency. When Ethiopia faced a large influx of people from South Sudan in 2025,⁶³⁵ the Ethiopian authorities registered the first 50,000 South Sudanese nationals. The remaining 32,000 were not eligible for registration and were living outside the refugee camps. The Ethiopian government had authorised the WFP to provide food aid to the latter group, according to the same source.⁶³⁶

Right to freedom of movement

As mentioned before, the Refugees Proclamation No. 1110/2019 provides for the right to freedom of movement (see Subsection 7.5.2). In practice, this right is subject to restriction. Recognised refugees enjoy freedom of movement within their region of registration. Refugees wishing to visit other regions must obtain what is known as a 'pass permit'. This is explicitly stated on the back of the Refugee Identity Card. The reverse side of this identity document also states the holder's fayda number.⁶³⁷ One source was aware of refugees who had complained that the Ethiopian authorities were reluctant to issue pass permits.⁶³⁸

Right to work

As already mentioned, the Refugees Proclamation No. 1110/2019 provides for the right to work for recognised refugees (see Subsection 7.5.2). There are three types of permit that enable the official participation of refugees in the labour market: the work permit, the business licence and the resident permit. With a business licence, refugees can run their own businesses. The resident permit allows refugees to participate in projects or cooperatives. Such initiatives concern public works (such as waste management and fisheries).⁶³⁹ With regard to the resident permit, one source added that this permit is linked to the project in question. The source noted that the permit would lapse upon termination of the project.⁶⁴⁰ According to another source, 15,856 work permits, 1,395 business licences and 31,071 resident permits were issued between January 2025 and early April 2026.⁶⁴¹

As in the case of the right to freedom of movement, the right to work was subject to restriction in practice. During the reporting period, the Ethiopian economy was facing difficult circumstances, and unemployment was high. Although asylum legislation and regulations entitled refugees to work, they found themselves excluded from the labour market in practice. Furthermore, refugees were not permitted to work in the public sector, the defence sector or the intelligence sector.⁶⁴²

Living conditions in refugee camps

In refugee camps, refugees are entitled to basic services, such as food, water, education and healthcare. Refugees who are financially self-sufficient are permitted to live independently in urban areas.⁶⁴³ In early April 2026, one source estimated

⁶³⁵ Many South Sudanese nationals fled the violence between the South Sudanese government army (South Sudan People's Defence Forces, SSPDF) and the White Army, a militia that enjoyed particular support amongst the Nuer (see also Subsection 3.6.8).

⁶³⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶³⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶³⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶³⁹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁴⁰ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁴¹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶⁴² Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶⁴³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 May 2026. This is known as the Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP). Kenya and Uganda have similar policies. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, December 2025, pp. 125, 132 and 133.

that ninety percent of the refugees in Ethiopia were living in camps.⁶⁴⁴ At the time of writing, Addis Abeba had more than 70,000 'urban refugees' (see Subsection 7.5.2).⁶⁴⁵ In early May 2026, one source estimated that between 96 and 97% of all urban refugees in Ethiopia were living in the capital.⁶⁴⁶

During the reporting period, the provision of shelter for refugees in Ethiopia came under considerable pressure due to funding shortfalls. In December 2025, the RRS, UNHCR and the WFP sounded the alarm. Humanitarian aid to refugees had to be progressively scaled back. Since October 2025, food aid to refugees has consisted of approximately one meal a day. As a result, more than fifteen percent of the refugees in the camps were malnourished. On average, a refugee received fourteen litres of water a day, whereas the minimum in an emergency is fifteen litres a day. In some areas, refugees were given five litres of water a day. Education for refugee children was also at risk of being cut, as it was no longer possible to pay teachers. As a result, refugee children were at risk of being subjected to child labour, child trafficking and/or child marriage.⁶⁴⁷

In addition to food, water and education, access to healthcare in the refugee camps was under pressure. One source stated that refugees in the camps now had access only to paracetamol and malaria treatment.⁶⁴⁸ Another source reported that refugees in the camps received only vaccinations, antenatal and postnatal care, and emergency treatment. The same source further noted that refugees with chronic illnesses were no longer receiving adequate care.⁶⁴⁹ On 21 June 2026, the UNHCR reported that in Jewi (a refugee camp in Gambela) only 1 doctor was available for approximately 70,000 refugees.⁶⁵⁰

The situation was particularly precarious for a group of 100,000 South Sudanese refugees who crossed the border into Ethiopia in early March 2026. This group arrived in Tiergol,⁶⁵¹ a location in Gambela that was deprived of humanitarian aid.⁶⁵² According to one source, the South Sudanese nationals in question were forced to drink river water, which carried an increased risk of cholera.⁶⁵³

In the regional context of Amhara, refugee aid was also hampered by the general lack of security (see Sub-section 3.6.2). As a result, some refugee camps in Amhara were either completely or largely inaccessible to humanitarian organisations.⁶⁵⁴ One source reported that refugees in Amhara were not venturing outside the refugee camps due to the general lack of security in the region.⁶⁵⁵

The unsafe situation in Amhara placed both the host communities and refugees at risk. In October 2024, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that Sudanese refugees in Amhara were subjected to murder, ill-treatment, abduction and forced labour. The refugees were in various camps along the motorway between Gondar and Metemma, close to the border with Sudan. In addition to being attacked by armed

⁶⁴⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Ethiopia*, no date, accessed 5 May 2026.

⁶⁴⁶ Confidential source, 6 May 2026.

⁶⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Refugee response in Ethiopia at breaking point as aid resources dangerously low, putting 1.1 million lives at risk*, 19 December 2025.

⁶⁴⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶⁴⁹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶⁵⁰ AS, *UN refugee chief says one doctor serves 70,000 refugees in Gambella, praises Ethiopia's inclusion policy*, 22 June 2026.

⁶⁵¹ Also spelt 'Tergal'.

⁶⁵² Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *South Sudan: Conflict in Jonglei State, Flash Update No. 12*, published on 13 March 2026, p. 1.

⁶⁵³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶⁵⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶⁵⁵ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

men, these same refugees also found themselves caught in the crossfire between warring factions (such as Fano, government forces and local militias). HRW based its findings on satellite imagery, photographs, videos and interviews with Sudanese refugees in Amhara, Sudanese activists and aid workers.⁶⁵⁶

Fano fighters carried out attacks in the vicinity of Alemwach, a refugee camp in Amhara that was sheltering many Eritreans. Activists and human rights organisations expressed concern about the security situation facing refugees in Alemwach.⁶⁵⁷

Unregistered foreign nationals

Not much information was available on how unregistered foreigners fared in Ethiopia. According to one source, this group worked in the informal economy and/or received financial support from relatives abroad. Unregistered foreign nationals were unable to rent accommodations or access banking services. They also ran the risk of being arrested and detained by the Ethiopian authorities. Unregistered foreign nationals in detention were forced to pay bribes to secure their release. The same source pointed out that unregistered foreign nationals had no intention of staying in Ethiopia for any substantial length of time. They wanted to travel on to other countries. This could only be done illegally, as they did not have lawful residence in Ethiopia. The source noted that this left them vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers.⁶⁵⁸

7.5.4 *Eritreans in Ethiopia*

As mentioned before, Ethiopia was home to a large Eritrean community. In late March 2026, the country had more than 170,000 registered Eritreans (see Subsection 7.5.2). In addition, many unregistered Eritreans were living in Ethiopia. One source spoke of 'tens of thousands' in this context.⁶⁵⁹

During the reporting period, the situation of the Eritrean community in Ethiopia came under pressure. Owing to the growing tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea (see Subsection 1.6.1), the Ethiopian government regarded the Eritrean community as a potential security risk. As a result, the Ethiopian authorities subjected Eritreans to arbitrary arrests and detentions.⁶⁶⁰ One source was aware that between 40 and 120 Eritreans had been detained in a single district of Addis Abeba during the period 2025–2026. According to the same source, most of the Eritrean detainees were either unregistered or had overstayed their residence permits.⁶⁶¹

If the RRS was able to confirm to the police that an Eritrean detainee was registered as a refugee, that detainee was usually released. If the Eritrean in question did not have lawful residence in Ethiopia, however, there was a significant risk of unlawful deportation to Eritrea. In that case, the person concerned would be transported by bus to Eritrea without any procedural safeguards and forced across the border.⁶⁶²

Various quantitative data were available on the scale of deportations of Eritreans to Eritrea. In early March 2025, *Addis Standard* (AS) reported that, in the preceding three months, more than six hundred Eritreans had been deported from Ethiopia to

⁶⁵⁶ HRW, *Ethiopia, Fighting, abuses putting Sudanese refugees at risk*, 17 October 2024.

⁶⁵⁷ AI, *UN special rapporteur concerned by plight of Eritreans in Ethiopia*, 11 June 2026.

⁶⁵⁸ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶⁵⁹ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁶⁶⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶⁶¹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁶⁶² Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

Eritrea. The newspaper report did not clearly state the residence status of these Eritreans in Ethiopia.⁶⁶³

In 2023, a source documented the deportation of 1,306 Eritreans. In 2024, the Ethiopian government deported 714 Eritreans, and 442 in 2025. In early 2026, the Ethiopian authorities deported more than two hundred Eritreans to Eritrea. The same source was aware of a failed attempt to deport 150 Eritreans who were residing in Ethiopia without legal authorisation. They were taken to the border with Eritrea in three buses, but the Eritrean authorities kept the border closed. Following this, the group was dispersed. At the time of writing, it was not known where the individuals in question had gone. According to the same source, they were at increased risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶³ AS, *Amnesty urges UNHCR to condemn forced return of Eritrean refugees, cites over 600 forcibly returned from Ethiopia*, 6 March 2025.

⁶⁶⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

8 Women

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the situation of women in Ethiopia insofar as it is relevant to asylum practice in the Netherlands. Section 8.2 describes the phenomenon of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Ethiopia. Section 8.3 examines gender-based violence (GBV) in general and assesses the extent to which women and girls were able to seek protection against it. Section 8.4 describes the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM), the extent to which girls were able to seek protection against it, and the link between FGM and child marriage. Section 8.5 examines the prevalence of child marriage and indicates the extent to which girls were able to seek protection against it.

8.2 Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)

Ethiopia has a history of CRSV.⁶⁶⁵ During the war in Tigray (2020–2022), Tigrayan women were raped on a massive scale, particularly by Eritrean and Ethiopian government soldiers. The director of the Mukwege Foundation⁶⁶⁶ estimated the number of victims at 120,000, mostly women and girls, in addition to a few men. During the current reporting period, victims of the sexual violence perpetrated during the war at that time continued to experience health problems. For example, during the war, the rapists had forced objects⁶⁶⁷ into their wombs to render them infertile. These objects subsequently had to be surgically removed.⁶⁶⁸

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) also occurred during the current reporting period. Because the armed conflicts were mainly regional in nature – such as those in Amhara and Oromia – they attracted little international media attention, unlike the war in Tigray at the time. As a result, no systematic and consistent research was conducted on recent or current instances of CRSV. For this reason, little quantitative data were available on the scale of CRSV during the current reporting period.⁶⁶⁹

An Amnesty study published in March 2026 revealed that women and girls in Oromia had been subjected to rape (including gang rape) and sexual slavery as a result of the armed conflict. Fighters from the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), in particular, committed these acts of sexual violence. Amnesty based its findings on interviews with ten female victims of CRSV. The rapes (including gang rapes) documented by Amnesty took place between 2020 and 2024.⁶⁷⁰ The OLA rejected Amnesty's findings and claimed that the international human rights organisation had made 'methodological errors'.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁵ TNH, *Ethiopia conflicts trigger surge in rape and violence against women*, 7 August 2024. AfricanFeminism (AF), *Ethiopia's war on women, How gendered violence persists beyond conflict*, 5 November 2024.

⁶⁶⁶ This organisation works worldwide to support victims of CRSV. Additional information on this foundation is available at <https://www.mukwegefoundation.org>.

⁶⁶⁷ Within this context, examples could include rusty screws, nail clippers and handwritten notes wrapped in plastic.

⁶⁶⁸ The Guardian, *Rusted screws, metal spikes and plastic rubbish, The horrific sexual violence used against Tigray's women*, 30 June 2025. Nederlandse Omroep Stichting (NOS), *In Tigray is zelfs de baarmoeder niet veilig*, 26 July 2025.

⁶⁶⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁷⁰ Amnesty, *"No one came to my rescue"*, published on 6 March 2026, pp. 10 and 15.

⁶⁷¹ AS, *OLA outlines factual error in Amnesty report; calls for independent investigation*, 6 March 2026.

Two sources reported that the OLA committed acts of sexual violence during the current reporting period.⁶⁷² One of these sources described how OLA fighters, who often wore dreadlocks (see also Section 3.5), addressed the girls with the remark: 'Come with us to plait your freedom fighter's hair'. Such a situation presented the girl with a dilemma. If she went along, she would be subjected to sexual slavery. If she refused, she ran the risk that the OLA would kill her or her family, burn the house to the ground and/or steal the livestock. According to the same source, this practice was 'very common' in Shewa and Wollega, two regions in Oromia. This source did not quantify this pattern in any further detail.⁶⁷³ The other source stated that no quantitative data were available on acts of sexual violence committed by the OLA.⁶⁷⁴

In 2025, the UN Security Council (UNSC) documented the gang rape of seven women and seven girls in Tigray and Oromia. The perpetrators were members of the OLA, the federal government army (ENDF), pro-government militias and officers from the regional police forces. The Ethiopian authorities announced that two officers from the Oromia regional police and a pro-government militiaman had been sentenced to prison terms ranging from eleven to fifteen years.⁶⁷⁵

A source had ties to an organisation that provided support in Amhara to victims of CRSV and GBV. This organisation reported that CRSV in Amhara was perpetrated primarily by pro-government paramilitaries. They targeted women whom they suspected of supporting Fano fighters.⁶⁷⁶ Such suspicions arose in a haphazard manner. According to the source, a woman could fall victim to sexual violence if a family member served in the ranks of Fano or was suspected of doing so, the same source stated.⁶⁷⁷

8.3 Gender-based violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (GBV) was a widespread phenomenon in Ethiopian society.⁶⁷⁸ The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) for the 2024–2025 period revealed that, of the women who had ever had a husband or sexual partner, thirty percent had experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence.⁶⁷⁹ Most cases of GBV went unreported,⁶⁸⁰ as explained below.

Officially, women had the possibility of reporting GBV to the Ethiopian authorities. In reality, the possibilities for doing so proved limited. First and foremost, women felt ashamed to turn to the authorities, given the social stigma attached to GBV. According to a prevailing cultural ideal, women were expected to be 'pure' and not 'tainted' (for example, by sexual violence).⁶⁸¹

According to one source, there were also instances in which police officers on duty failed to adopt a gender-sensitive approach, with the result that women did not feel safe enough to report the violence. Other obstacles were of a practical nature. Many

⁶⁷² Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

⁶⁷³ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁷⁴ Confidential source, 30 June 2026.

⁶⁷⁵ UNSC, *Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General*, published on 21 April 2026, p. 24.

⁶⁷⁶ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁷⁷ Confidential source, 5 June 2026.

⁶⁷⁸ AF, *Ethiopia's war on women*, 5 November 2024. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁷⁹ Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS), *Ethiopia, Demographic and Health Survey, 2024–2025*, published in January 2026, p. 43.

⁶⁸⁰ TNH, *Ethiopia conflicts trigger surge in rape and violence against women*, 7 August 2024.

⁶⁸¹ TNH, *Ethiopia conflicts trigger surge in rape and violence against women*, 7 August 2024. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

women were not financially independent and could not afford the cost of a solicitor. There were also instances in which the police referred a woman to a shelter, which subsequently turned out to be full. The woman was then forced to return to her unsafe home environment.⁶⁸²

Furthermore, both Ethiopian society and the judicial system placed heavy emphasis on the importance of the family. It was preferable for family ties to remain intact. Within this context, neighbours, police officers, public prosecutors and judges encouraged female victims to reconcile with their violent husbands, even though there was no legal framework for this.⁶⁸³ In this regard, it should be noted that Ethiopian criminal law does not recognise the concept of marital rape.⁶⁸⁴

There were private shelters for victims of GBV, but these facilities struggled with a lack of funding and had limited capacity. For example, in some cases, women's shelters were unable to provide accommodations to women because they were full, as mentioned above.⁶⁸⁵

According to one source, whenever a case of GBV attracted significant public attention, the Ethiopian government did respond appropriately.⁶⁸⁶ For example, the fate of the seven-year-old girl Heaven Awot sparked widespread outrage. In August 2023, she was raped, mutilated, strangled and killed by her landlord in Bahir Dar, the capital of Amhara.⁶⁸⁷ The perpetrator was detained at a police station, but managed to escape when Fano guerrillas raided the station to free their comrades who were being held there. As a result, the mother had to go into hiding⁶⁸⁸ and, under public pressure, the government arranged a safe house for her in Addis Ababa.⁶⁸⁹ The offender was arrested again and, in August 2025, sentenced to 25 years in prison. He lodged an appeal against this sentence.⁶⁹⁰ At the time of writing, the outcome of the appeal was still unknown.⁶⁹¹

Little information was available on the extent to which a woman could relocate elsewhere in the country to escape violence at the hands of a partner (whether current or former). Although this was possible in theory, it remained highly dependent on individual circumstances in practice. One source was aware of a women's rights organisation that could arrange a safe house for women in another city. No further information was available on this matter.⁶⁹²

Online threats against feminists

During the current reporting period, feminists were subjected to online threats. In the eyes of those who sent them, they were said to pose a threat to Ethiopia's 'traditional norms and values'. According to this conspiracy theory, feminists are also said to be undermining an institution such as the family. To further discredit feminists, they were linked to the LGBTIQ+ community. Given the deep-rooted and

⁶⁸² Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁸³ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 5 June 2026.

⁶⁸⁴ Sifter, *Crime or cultural identity?*, 24 February 2026. Confidential source, 5 June 2026. Confidential source, 17 June 2026.

⁶⁸⁵ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁸⁶ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁸⁷ BBC, *Outcry at sentence for man who raped and killed girl of 7*, 19 August 2024. AF, *Ethiopia's war on women*, 5 November 2024.

⁶⁸⁸ BBC, *Outcry at sentence for man who raped and killed girl of 7*, 19 August 2024.

⁶⁸⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁹⁰ BBC, *Outcry at sentence for man who raped and killed girl of 7*, 19 August 2024. AF, *Ethiopia's war on women*, 5 November 2024.

⁶⁹¹ Confidential source, 5 June 2026.

⁶⁹² Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

pervasive phobia towards LGBTIQ+ people in Ethiopian society (see Chapter 10), this narrative struck a deep chord.⁶⁹³

For feminists who had been threatened online, it was difficult to seek protection from the Ethiopian authorities.⁶⁹⁴ According to one source, when a feminist who felt threatened turned to the police, she was told: 'Why don't you go offline? Why are you putting yourself in danger?' The police did not realise that online hate could potentially lead to offline violence, according to the same source.⁶⁹⁵ Another source was aware of a feminist who had been threatened online and 'accused'⁶⁹⁶ of being a lesbian. Because she had been described as a lesbian, she did not dare to go to the police, as homosexuality is illegal (see Chapter 10). As a result, she was forced to flee abroad, according to the same source.⁶⁹⁷

8.4 Female genital mutilation (FGM)

8.4.1 Legal context

Listed in the Ethiopian Criminal Code⁶⁹⁸ as 'female circumcision', FGM is prohibited by law. Article 565 of the Criminal Code provides for a fine of at least five hundred birr⁶⁹⁹ or a prison sentence of at least three months.⁷⁰⁰ Infibulation, classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as 'Type 3',⁷⁰¹ is considered the most extreme form of FGM. In this type of FGM, the vaginal opening is narrowed.⁷⁰² Article 566(1) prescribes a prison sentence of between three and five years for infibulation. Where infibulation has resulted in physical injury or harm to health in general, Article 566(2) provides for a prison sentence of between five and ten years.⁷⁰³

One source had documented 262 criminal prosecutions relating to FGM and child marriage in 2025. The source did not specify how many criminal cases related to FGM and how many to child marriages. The information provided by the source also did not indicate the number of cases in which a conviction had been handed down or what sentence had been imposed. The regional distribution of the number of criminal prosecutions was also unknown.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹³ House of Guramayle, *Violence against Zega/LGBTQIA+ people in Ethiopia*, 20 August 2025. The Guardian, 'Women who speak out must be exterminated', *The rising tide of digital violence facing Ethiopian activists*, 31 March 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 24 April 2026.

⁶⁹⁴ Confidential source, 9 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁹⁵ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁹⁶ This term has deliberately been placed in quotation marks. In the view of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a person's sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) cannot constitute grounds for an accusation. Within the context of this case, the senders used the feminist's alleged lesbian orientation to 'accuse' her.

⁶⁹⁷ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁶⁹⁸ The text of the Ethiopian Criminal Code can be accessed on the [website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#).

⁶⁹⁹ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 20 May 2026, 500.00 birr was equivalent to 8.16 euros.

⁷⁰⁰ FDRE, *The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 9 May 2005, p. 332.

⁷⁰¹ Infibulation is also known as 'Pharaonic circumcision'. De Temmerman, *De Hoorn van Waanzin*, published in 1992, p. 34.

⁷⁰² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Report on Sudan*, May 2024, p. 97.

⁷⁰³ FDRE, *Criminal Code*, published on 9 May 2005, p. 332.

⁷⁰⁴ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

8.4.2 *Prevalence and options for protection*

The most recent figures on the prevalence of FGM in Ethiopia were from 2016.⁷⁰⁵ The DHS for that year clearly indicated that the prevalence of FGM was on a downward trend. In 2000, 80% of women aged between 15 and 49 had undergone FGM. In 2005, this percentage had decreased to 74%, and in 2016 to 65%.⁷⁰⁶ The same study showed that there were regional differences in the prevalence of FGM. In Somali and Afar, 99% and 91%, respectively, of women between the ages of 15 and 49 had undergone FGM. In Tigray and Gambela, these figures were 24% and 33%, respectively.⁷⁰⁷

Female genital mutilation (FGM) occurred in both Muslim and Christian communities. For example, FGM was deeply rooted in both Amhara and southern Ethiopia, two predominantly Christian regions. It was most prevalent in Somali and Afar, where the population was predominantly Muslim.⁷⁰⁸

One source pointed out that FGM had been reduced, particularly in parts of southern and western Ethiopia. The same source added that this progress was 'fragile'. Against a backdrop of poverty, climate shocks and armed conflict, the practice of FGM has been undergoing a resurgence.⁷⁰⁹

The dynamics mentioned above were actually interrelated. Experience had shown that teachers could play a protective role for girls at risk of FGM. This professional group maintained contact with the authorities and was able to take legal action and arrange accommodations for girls at risk of FGM. Girls who did not attend school were therefore at increased risk of FGM.⁷¹⁰

A substantial number of girls did not attend school during the current reporting period. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)⁷¹¹ reported that in October–November 2024, more than 9 million children were out of school in Ethiopia, including 4.4 million in Amhara, 3.2 million in Oromia and 1.2 million in Tigray. More than 6,000 schools were closed, and around 10,000 had been damaged by natural disasters and armed conflict.⁷¹² On 20 May 2026, the regional authorities in Tigray decided to close all schools with effect from 7 June 2026. They attributed this decision to the fact that they were no longer receiving financial support from the federal government in Addis Abeba (see Subsection 1.5.1).⁷¹³

Poverty and child marriages also contributed to the prevalence of FGM. For families living in poverty, the arranged marriage of a minor daughter could offer 'relief'. The family would then receive a dowry and have one less mouth to feed. In communities where child marriage was accepted, there was also a belief that FGM made a girl more marriageable. These dynamics thus reinforced one another.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁵ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁷⁰⁶ Central Statistical Agency (CSA), *Ethiopia, Demographic and Health Survey, 2016*, published in July 2017, p. 317.

⁷⁰⁷ CSA, *Ethiopia, Demographic and Health Survey, 2016*, published in July 2017, pp. 315 and 317.

⁷⁰⁸ Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁷⁰⁹ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁷¹⁰ Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁷¹¹ Additional information about UNICEF's activities and work in Ethiopia is available at <https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/>.

⁷¹² UNICEF, *Ethiopia, Humanitarian Situation Report, No. 9, October–November 2024*, published on 2 January 2025, pp. 1 and 2.

⁷¹³ AS, *Tigray Education Bureau ends academic year early amid fuel, budget crisis*, 20 May 2026. ATC, *Tigray authorities order schools close by 7 June due to funding crisis*, 20 May 2026.

⁷¹⁴ TNH, *Ethiopia conflicts trigger surge in rape and violence against women*, 7 August 2024. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

The options for seeking protection against FGM proved limited. As mentioned above, many school-age girls could not count on protection from a teacher. In regions such as Somali and Afar, where FGM was very widespread, it was virtually impossible to seek protection.⁷¹⁵ In urban areas, where FGM was less common, there were more options for seeking protection. According to one source, however, government bodies were too weak to combat FGM effectively, and the penalties were too lenient to act as a real deterrent to perpetrators (actual or potential).⁷¹⁶

8.5 Child marriage

8.5.1 Legal context

In Ethiopia, the age of legal majority is 18 years (see Section 9.2). It is illegal to marry a minor. Section 648(a) of the Criminal Code provides for a prison sentence of up to three years if a person marries a minor between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. Article 648(b) provides for a prison sentence of up to seven years if a person marries a minor under the age of thirteen. The same article makes an exception for individuals who, with the permission of the Ministry of Justice, marry a minor between the ages of sixteen and eighteen (see Section 9.2).⁷¹⁷

As previously mentioned, one source was aware of 262 criminal prosecutions relating to child marriage and FGM during 2025 (see Subsection 8.4.1). It was unclear how many of these cases related to child marriage and how many to FGM, how often criminal proceedings had led to a conviction, what sentences had been imposed, or what the regional distribution of the aforementioned cases was.

8.5.2 Prevalence and options for protection

The most recent figures on the prevalence of child marriage in Ethiopia were from 2016.⁷¹⁸ The survey from that year reported that the median age at marriage for women in the age group of 25–49 was 17.1 years.⁷¹⁹

As indicated, there was a link between FGM and child marriage (see Subsection 8.4.2). Factors such as climate shocks, poverty and armed conflict could lead families to subject their minor daughters to FGM and/or to marry them off. Girls who did not attend school were at increased risk of child marriage.

One source was aware of family members who had managed to save a girl from being forced into child marriage. Some schools also had what are known as ‘gender clubs’. These small groups were led by a teacher and drew attention to the issues surrounding child marriage. Such initiatives helped to raise awareness that child marriage is illegal. In a few cases, this led to a child marriage being prevented or reversed. Nevertheless, the same source described the existing safeguards as ‘not very effective’.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁵ Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁷¹⁶ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

⁷¹⁷ FDRE, *Criminal Code*, published on 9 May 2005, p. 376.

⁷¹⁸ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁷¹⁹ CSA, *Ethiopia, Demographic and Health Survey, 2016*, published in July 2017, p. 65.

⁷²⁰ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

9 Unaccompanied minors

9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the situation of minors (including unaccompanied minors) in Ethiopia, insofar as it is relevant to asylum practice in the Netherlands. Section 9.2 describes the legal provisions relating to the age of majority and how legal guardianship of unaccompanied minors is regulated by law. Section 9.3 addresses the reception of unaccompanied minors. Given the dearth of publicly available information on minors (including unaccompanied minors) in Ethiopia, most of the information in this chapter comes from confidential sources.

Additional information on girls at risk of FGM is provided in Section 8.4. Section 8.5 examines the risk that girls faced of being forced into child marriage.

9.2 Statutory provisions

Age of majority

According to Article 198 of the Ethiopian Civil Code (CC) of 1960,⁷²¹ in Ethiopia, a person is considered to have reached the age of majority from eighteen years.⁷²² In legal terms, a person may marry from the age of eighteen, but the Ministry of Justice may grant an exemption from this rule from the age of sixteen (see also Subsection 8.5.1).⁷²³

Legal authority over minors (including unaccompanied minors)

Ethiopia has a family law at federal level, known as the Family Code of 2000.⁷²⁴ This applies in the two federal cities: Addis Abeba and Diwe Dara (see Section 1.3). In addition, each region has its own version of this federal family law.⁷²⁵

If a child no longer has parents, parental responsibility is transferred to the grandparents in accordance with Articles 225–227 of the Federal Family Code. If there are no grandparents, parental authority passes to an adult sibling. If there are no siblings, custody passes to an uncle or aunt. If there is no uncle or aunt either, the court may grant parental responsibility to another relative or a suitable person outside the child's family.⁷²⁶

⁷²¹ The full text of the Ethiopian Civil Code can be accessed in English on the [website of the Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative](#).

⁷²² Ethiopian Empire, *Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia*, published on 5 May 1960, p. 35.

⁷²³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 60. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 25 April 2026.

⁷²⁴ The full text of the legislation can be accessed in English at [Refworld](#).

⁷²⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 61. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 27 April 2026.

⁷²⁶ FDRE, *The Revised Family Code*, published on 4 July 2000, pp. 36 and 37.

9.3 Reception of unaccompanied minors

The Ethiopian Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA)⁷²⁷ is responsible for the reception of unaccompanied minors in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government gives priority to care provided by family and close relatives or in foster families, and regards institutionalised care in the form of private or state orphanages as a last resort.⁷²⁸

During the current reporting period, little or no information was available on the quality of services provided by orphanages in Ethiopia. As far as one source was able to ascertain, state-run orphanages were struggling with a lack of financial resources. According to the source, a lack of funds also purportedly played a role in private orphanages, albeit to a lesser extent. This source did not provide any further details on this matter.⁷²⁹

As far as one source was able to ascertain, the MoWSA was, in principle, open to taking in unaccompanied minors returning to Ethiopia from abroad. The same source nevertheless stated that it was not aware of any cases in which an unaccompanied minor had actually returned to Ethiopia and been taken into care by the MoWSA.⁷³⁰

The source cited in this section made it clear that, during the reporting period, the MoWSA was struggling with a lack of capacity. Civil servants received low salaries and were paid irregularly or not at all. Furthermore, there was little or no operational budget for matters such as electricity, computers and office supplies. As a result, there was a high staff turnover. These problems were particularly prevalent at the offices of the MoWSA in the three northern regions of Afar, Amhara and Tigray.⁷³¹

⁷²⁷ The MoWSA has its own website: https://www.mowsa.gov.et/?page_id=147&lang=en.

⁷²⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2026, p. 62. Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁷²⁹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁷³⁰ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

⁷³¹ Confidential source, 7 April 2026.

10 LGBTIQ+ people

10.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in Ethiopia. Section 10.2 describes the Ethiopian state's attitude towards LGBTIQ+ people. Section 10.3 examines Ethiopian society's attitude towards LGBTIQ+ people. In Ethiopia, the climate for LGBTIQ+ people was restrictive. Consequently, most of the information in this chapter is anecdotal in nature and comes from a single source.⁷³²

Anyone exploring the social situation and everyday lives of LGBTIQ+ people in Ethiopia will come across the Amharic term 'zega' ('citizen'). Within the Ethiopian LGBTIQ+ community, this term is used primarily as slang for 'gay man'.⁷³³

10.2 The Ethiopian state's stance towards LGBTIQ+ people

Sexual intercourse between two people of the same sex is a criminal offence under Article 629 of the Ethiopian Criminal Code. Section 630 of the Criminal Code specifies the duration of the prison sentence, which ranges from one to fifteen years, depending on circumstances.⁷³⁴

It was not known whether LGBTIQ+ people were actually prosecuted on the grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) during the current reporting period. One source stated that LGBTIQ+ people who had been arrested were released in return for bribes. The source noted that, in exchange for a bribe, the police did not take the case to court. The scale on which this practice took place was not clear.⁷³⁵

According to the same source, LGBTIQ+ people were unable to turn to the Ethiopian authorities for protection.⁷³⁶ Due to the restrictive environment regarding LGBTIQ+ issues, LGBTIQ+ rights organisations were unable to register officially. They were forced to carry out their work under the radar.⁷³⁷

10.3 Attitudes within Ethiopian society towards LGBTIQ+ people

The source consulted for this chapter described Ethiopian society as 'patriarchal' and 'heteronormative'. LGBTQ+ people felt compelled to keep their SOGI to themselves. Otherwise, they ran the risk of being ostracised by their families and/or discharged by their employers. LGBTQ+ people met in secret and exercised the utmost discretion for fear of arrest, detention, criminal prosecution, blackmail and/or ostracism (see also Section 10.2).⁷³⁸

⁷³² Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁷³³ Confidential source, 18 June 2026.

⁷³⁴ FDRE, *Criminal Code*, published on 9 May 2005, pp. 367 and 368.

⁷³⁵ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁷³⁶ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

⁷³⁷ Confidential source, 18 June 2026.

⁷³⁸ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

There have been instances in which people with homophobic or transphobic motives have created fake profiles on the dating app Grindr. They then lured LGBTIQ+ people into going on dates. Those who 'took the bait' were then blackmailed. If a victim did not hand over any money, the blackmailer threatened to report the person to the police. The scale on which this practice took place was not known.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁹ Confidential source, 8 April 2026.

11 Return

11.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the return of Ethiopian citizens to Ethiopia. Section 11.2 describes patterns of migration and remigration among Ethiopians. This section also examines problems that some Ethiopians may have encountered on their return. Section 11.3 addresses exit fines that the Ethiopian authorities imposed on individuals wishing to leave Ethiopia legally after unauthorised residence in the country.

Most of the information in this chapter comes from confidential sources. Due to the dearth of verifiable information available on return to Ethiopia, the information in this chapter is fragmentary in nature.

11.2 Migration patterns and problems encountered upon return

One source identified two prominent migration routes taken by Ethiopians: the 'Northern Route' and the 'Eastern Route'. The Northern Route ran through Sudan to Libya or Egypt. From these two North African countries, Ethiopian migrants attempted to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe. The Eastern Route ran from Afar to Yemen and, ultimately, Saudi Arabia by way of Djibouti and the internationally unrecognised Somaliland (see Subsection 1.6.3). According to the same source, most Ethiopians left the country because of the difficult economic conditions and, to a lesser extent, because of armed conflicts and natural disasters. The source did not provide further details on this breakdown.⁷⁴⁰

The previous COI Report stated that departure for economic reasons was generally not a cause for negative attention from the authorities upon return.⁷⁴¹ This situation remained unchanged during the current reporting period. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians returned to Ethiopia, including large numbers of low-skilled migrant workers from the Gulf States and Southern Africa. According to one source, the Ethiopian authorities were open to receiving these returnees. Upon their return, this group of returnees faced the practical challenge of building a sustainable life in Ethiopia. Returnees failing to do so risked being adrift once again, which the same source referred to as 'circular migration'.⁷⁴²

The source cited above was not aware of any returnees who had encountered problems with the Ethiopian authorities upon their return because they had applied for asylum abroad.⁷⁴³ Another source was aware of returnees who, upon their return, had been detained and interrogated for hours because they had applied for asylum abroad, had spoken out against the Ethiopian government and/or were suspected of supporting armed opposition groups in the country. The statements of this source did not provide a clear indication of the scale on which this was taking place or what had attracted the negative attention of the Ethiopian authorities.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴⁰ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁷⁴¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 75.

⁷⁴² Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁷⁴³ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁷⁴⁴ Confidential source, 9 April 2026.

11.3 Exit fines following unauthorised residence

The previous COI Report stated that people who had been residing in Ethiopia without authorisation were required to pay an exit fine before they could leave the country legally.⁷⁴⁵ This practice continued during the current reporting period.⁷⁴⁶

The exit fine had to be paid to the Immigration and Citizenship Service (ICS). The length of the unauthorised residence determined the amount of the fine,⁷⁴⁷ as further specified in Article 40 of the Council of Ministers' Immigration Amendment No. 599/2004.⁷⁴⁸ Article 40(1) stipulates that a foreign national must pay thirty US dollars⁷⁴⁹ for every day spent in Ethiopia without a valid visa. Article 40(2) stipulates that an additional fine of three thousand US dollars will be imposed⁷⁵⁰ if the foreign national has resided in Ethiopia without authorisation for less than three years. Foreign nationals who have resided in Ethiopia without authorisation for more than three years must pay a fine of five thousand US dollars⁷⁵¹ – in accordance with Article 40(3) – in addition to the rate of thirty dollars a day.⁷⁵² In some cases, the exit fine amounted to between 30,000 and 40,000 dollars,⁷⁵³ according to one source.⁷⁵⁴

In a directive known as Directive Number 1060/2025, the ICS has specified that individuals may be exempted from exit fines in certain circumstances.⁷⁵⁵ A brief summary of the categories of individuals who may be eligible for such an exemption is provided below:

- Victims of sudden accidents or serious crises;
- Individuals facing serious humanitarian emergencies;
- Unaccompanied minors or children who have been separated from their guardians;
- Students on scholarships who are facing difficult circumstances.⁷⁵⁶

The ICS did not apply these humanitarian grounds for exemption in a consistent manner. There were instances in which the Ethiopian immigration authorities imposed exit fines on individuals wishing to leave Ethiopia for the purposes of family reunification, even though the regulations allow for the possibility of granting exemptions to family members joining their relatives.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁴⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 74.

⁷⁴⁶ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 7 April 2026. Confidential source, 2 June 2026.

⁷⁴⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 2 June 2026.

⁷⁴⁸ The full text, written in Amharic and English, can be accessed on the [website of the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice](#).

⁷⁴⁹ According to the online currency converter CoinMill.com, on 7 June 2026, 30.00 US dollars was equivalent to 25.77 euros.

⁷⁵⁰ According to CoinMill.com, on 7 June 2026, 3,000.00 US dollars was equivalent to 2,577.32 euros.

⁷⁵¹ According to CoinMill.com, on 7 June 2026, 5,000.00 US dollars was equivalent to 4,295.53 euros.

⁷⁵² FDRE, *Council of Ministers Immigration amendment Regulation No. 559/2024*, published on 28 October 2024, pp. 4 and 5.

⁷⁵³ According to CoinMill.com, on 7 June 2026, 30,000.00 US dollars was equivalent to 25,773.20 euros. The same currency converter gave a value of 34,364.27 euros for 40,000.00 US dollars.

⁷⁵⁴ Confidential source, 6 April 2026.

⁷⁵⁵ The full text can be accessed in English on the [website of the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice](#).

⁷⁵⁶ ICS, *Directive Number 1060/2025, Exemption from penalty payments*, published in May 2025, pp. 3 and 4.

⁷⁵⁷ Confidential source, 6 April 2026. Confidential source, 3 June 2026.

12 Appendices

12.1 Abbreviations and foreign terms

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ACSO	Authority for Civil Society Organizations
AFNM	Amhara Fano National Movement
AFPO	Amhara Fano Popular Organization
AI	Africa Intelligence
AS	Addis Standard
ATC	Aldebaran Threat Consultants
AU	African Union
AWSD	Aid Worker Security Database
BPLM	Benishangul People's Liberation Movement
CC	Civil Code
CARD	Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy
CoHa	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (Pretoria Peace Agreement, PPA)
COI	Country of Origin Information
CRSV	conflict-related sexual violence
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EDF	Eritrean Defence Forces
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EMA	Ethiopian Media Authority
ENDC	Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ETAF	Ethiopian Air Force
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
fayda	(digital) national identity card
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FFM	fact-finding mission
FGM	female genital mutilation
FIDH	Fédération internationale pour les droits humains (International Federation for Human Rights)
FIN	Fayda Identification Number
GBV	gender-based violence
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GPDM	Gumuz People's Democratic Movement
GPUF	Gumuz People's Unity Front
GS	Gaachana Sirnaa (Shield of the System)
HoPR	House of People's Representatives (federal parliament of Ethiopia)
ICS	Immigration and Citizenship Service
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device

IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
kebele	smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia
Koree Nageenya	Security Commission (unofficial security organ in Oromia)
Maketet	inclusion (action plan of the Ethiopian government)
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MoWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs
ND	National Dialogue
NEBE	National Electoral Board of Ethiopia
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OMCT	Organisation mondiale contre la torture (World Organisation Against Torture)
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OSF	Oromo Special Forces
PC	Penal Code
PP	Prosperity Party
PPA	Pretoria Peace Agreement
RRS	Refugees and Returnees Service
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
RSF	Reporters sans frontières (Reporters Without Borders)
SAF	small arms fire
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
Shene	Ethiopian government term for the OLA (literally 'Five')
Simret	Solidarity (political party of Getachew Reda)
SLSC	Shelter, Land and Site Coordination
SOGI	sexual orientation and gender identity
SPLM-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
TDF	Tigray Defence Forces
TIRA	Tigray Interim Regional Administration (former regional administration of Tigray)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPF	Tigray Peace Forces
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
Tsimdo	engagement (Tigrinya)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United States Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCC	World Council of Churches
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WSLF	West Somali Liberation Front

12.2 Newspapers and news and knowledge platforms

Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)
 Addis Standard (AS)
 Africa Intelligence (AI)
 African Arguments
 AfricanFeminism (AF)
 Agenzia Novia
 Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB)
 Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC)
 Al Jazeera
 Anadolu Agency (AA)
 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)
 BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)
 BBC Monitoring
 BiometricUpdate.com
 Borkena
 CIO Africa
 Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Elections (CECOE)
 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
 Cultural Survival
 De Volkskrant
 Der Standard
 Development Action Platform
 Ethiopia Observer
 Ethiopia Today
 Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels
 Ethiopian Embassy in Washington D.C.
 Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA)
 Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC)
 Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
 European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
 Horn Review
 House of Guramayle
 Human Rights Watch (HRW)
 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)
 International Crisis Group (ICG)
 International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
 Jeune Afrique
 Martin Plaut
 Minority Rights Group
 MO
 Nederlandse Omroep Stichting (NOS)
 Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant (NRC)
 Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)
 Permanent Representation of the EU to the UN and other international organisations
 Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS)
 Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
 Reuters
 Safaricom
 Sifter
 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
 Sudan Tribune
 Sudan War Monitor (SWM)

The Africa Report
The Economist
The Guardian
The Independent
The New Humanitarian (TNH)
The New York Times
The Reporter
Trouw
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Wegahta Facts
World Bank
World Council of Churches (WCC)
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
World Peace Foundation (WPF)

12.3 Books

Clapham, Christopher (ed.)

- *African guerrillas*, published in 1998.

Ethiopian Institute of Peace (EPI)

- *Thirty five years in building a culture of peace and conflict resolution, 1989-2025*, published in 2025.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.

- *The Nuer, A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*, published in 1940.

Grimes, Barbara F. (ed.)

- *Ethnologue, Volume 1, Languages of the world*, published in 2000.

Kimani, Nicera and Marc Broere

- *Roses will rose, Rael Lomoti's journey to redefine tradition through football*, published in 2026.

Last, Geoffrey, Richard Pankhurst and Eric Robson

- *A history of Ethiopia in pictures, From ancient to modern times*, published in 2014.

Olson, James S.

- *The peoples of Africa, An ethnohistorical dictionary*, published in 1996.

Pronk, Jan

- *Scheuren rond de Hoorn van Afrika, Onderhandelen over autonomie, vrede and hulpverlening*, published in 2025.

Temmerman, Els de

- *De Hoorn van Waanzin, Soedan, Ethiopië, Somalië*, published in 1992.

12.4 Reports and other publications

Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB)

- *Aid Worker Security Report 2025*, August 2025.

Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC)

- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 4 March – 11 March 2026*, published on 13 March 2026.
- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 11 - 18 March 2026*, published on 20 March 2026.
- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 22- 29 April 2026*, published on 1 May 2026.
- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 17 -24 June 2026*, published on 26 June 2026.
- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 1 - 8 July 2026*, published on 10 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 15-22 July 2026*, published on 24 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia weekly analysis, 22-29 July 2026*, published on 31 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 10 April 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 15 May 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 26 May 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 5 June 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 9 June 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 26 June 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 10 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 19 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 24 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 28 July 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 4 August 2026.
- *Ethiopia sitrep*, published on 7 August 2026.

Amnesty International

- *"No one came to my rescue", Gang rape, sexual slavery, and mass displacement of women in Oromia, Ethiopia*, published on 6 March 2026.
- *The state of the world's human rights*, published in April 2026.

Central Statistical Agency (CSA)

- *Ethiopia, Demographic and Health Survey, 2016*, published in July 2017.

Clingendael Institute

- *Rethinking Ethiopia's National Dialogue, Navigating conflict and growing repression ahead of 2026 elections*, July 2025.

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Eritrea*, December 2025.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, July 2018.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, February 2021.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, November 2022.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, December 2025.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan*, May 2024.
- *General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria*, May 2025.

Ethiopian Empire

- *Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia*, published on 5 May 1960.
- *Criminal Procedure Code of Ethiopia*, published in 1961.

Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS)

- *Ethiopia, Demographic and Health Survey, 2024-2025*, published in January 2026.

Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)

- *Ethiopia, Food security outlook update, April – September 2026*, published in May 2026.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE)

- *Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 21 August 1995.
- *The Revised Family Code*, published on 4 July 2000.
- *The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, published on 9 May 2005.
- *Computer Crime Proclamation*, published on 7 July 2016.
- *Council of Ministers Immigration amendment Regulation No. 559/2024*, published on 28 October 2024.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

- *The state of food security and nutrition in the world, Understanding and addressing the high cost of a healthy diet*, published on 21 July 2026.

Immigration and Citizenship Services (ICS)

- *Directive Number 1060/2025, Exemption from penalty payments*, published in May 2025.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

- *Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2026*, published on 12 May 2026.

International Crisis Group (ICG)

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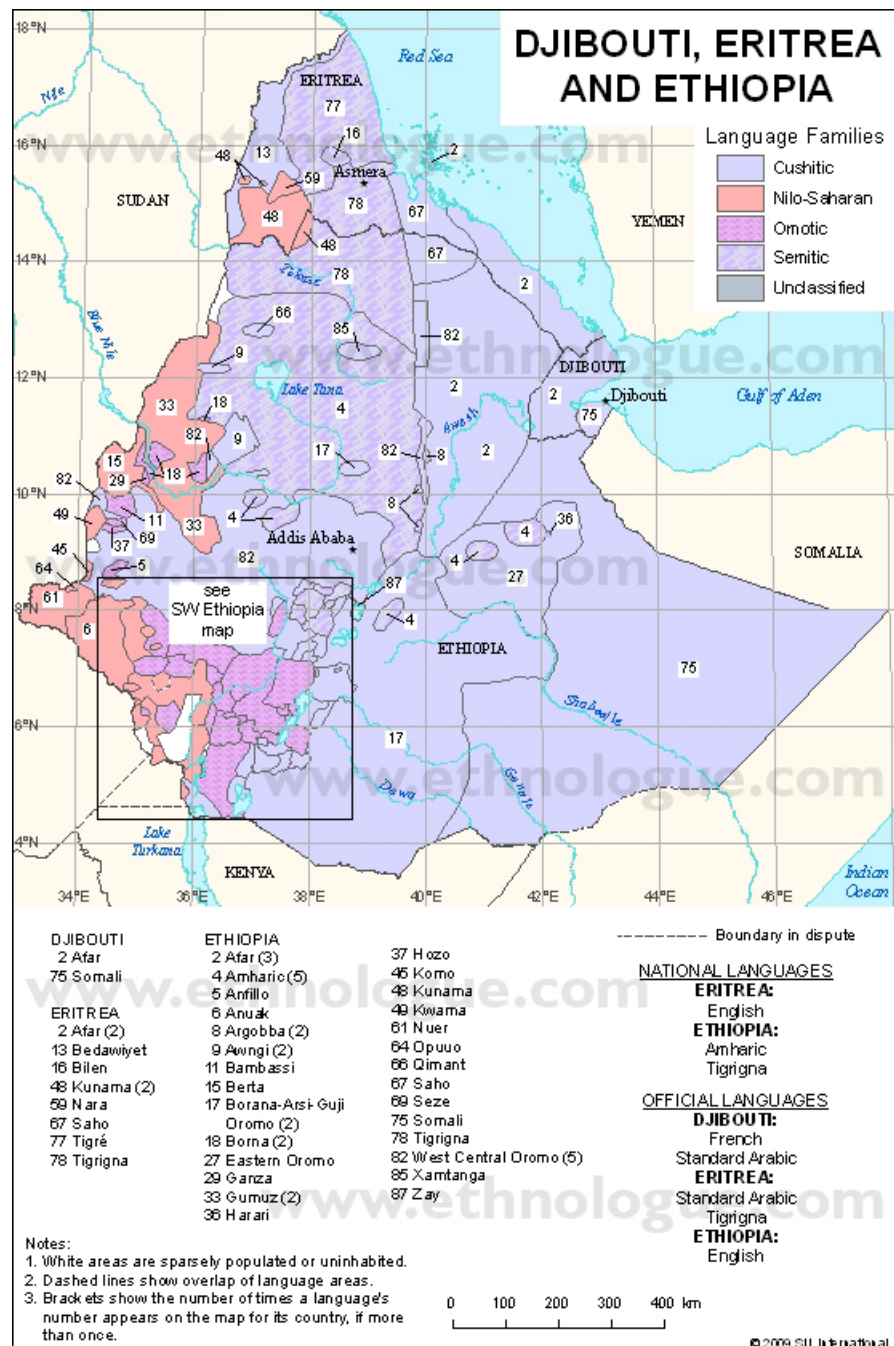
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Yale School of Public Health

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13 Maps

13.1 Ethnolinguistic map of Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia



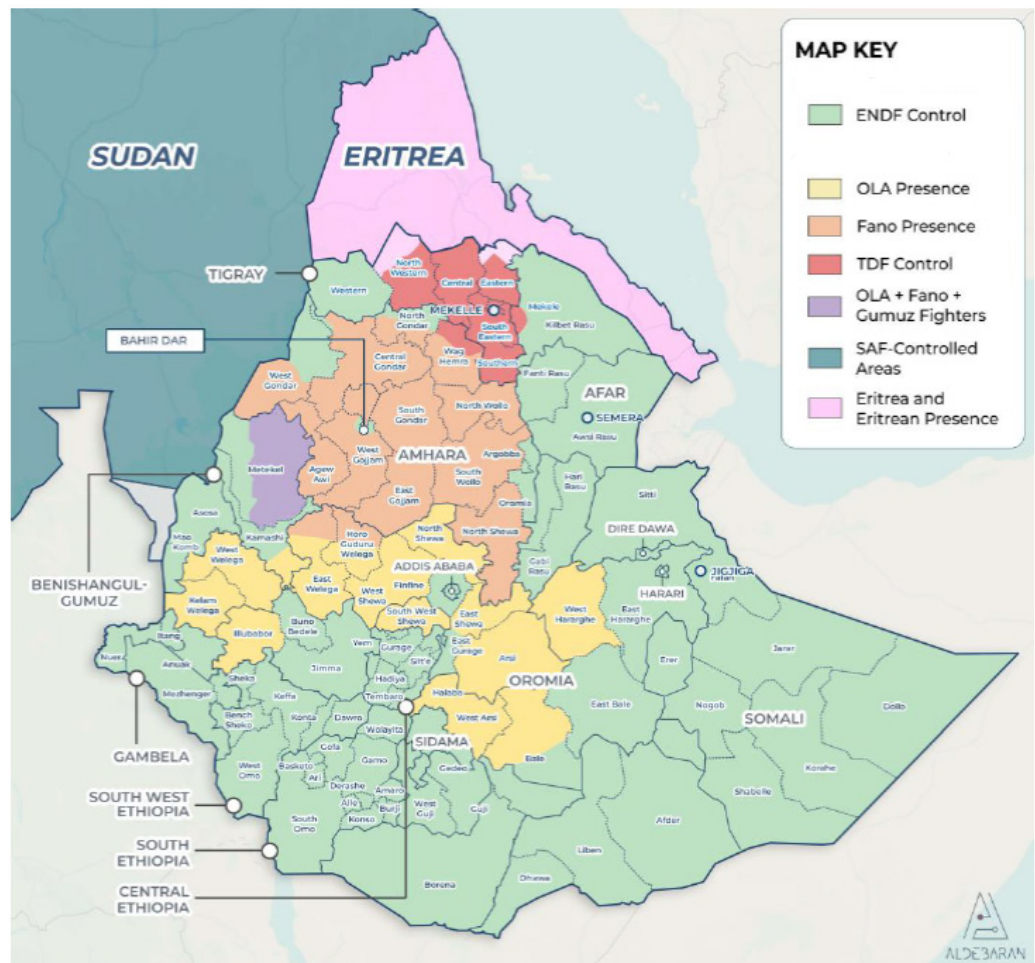
This map illustrates the ethnolinguistic diversity of Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia. The information on the official and regional languages may be out of date. The boundaries, names and symbols shown on the map do not in any way imply their formal acceptance or recognition by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Used by permission, © SIL International, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 2011, further redistribution prohibited without permission.

13.2 Administrative map of Ethiopia



Ethiopia is a federal republic consisting of several regions. The regional division roughly follows the linguistic boundaries between the ethnolinguistic population groups. Oromia is the largest region in Ethiopia, followed by Somali. The borders, names and symbols shown on the map do not in any way imply formal acceptance or recognition of them by the Kingdom of the Netherlands (this map was produced by Cartodesign).

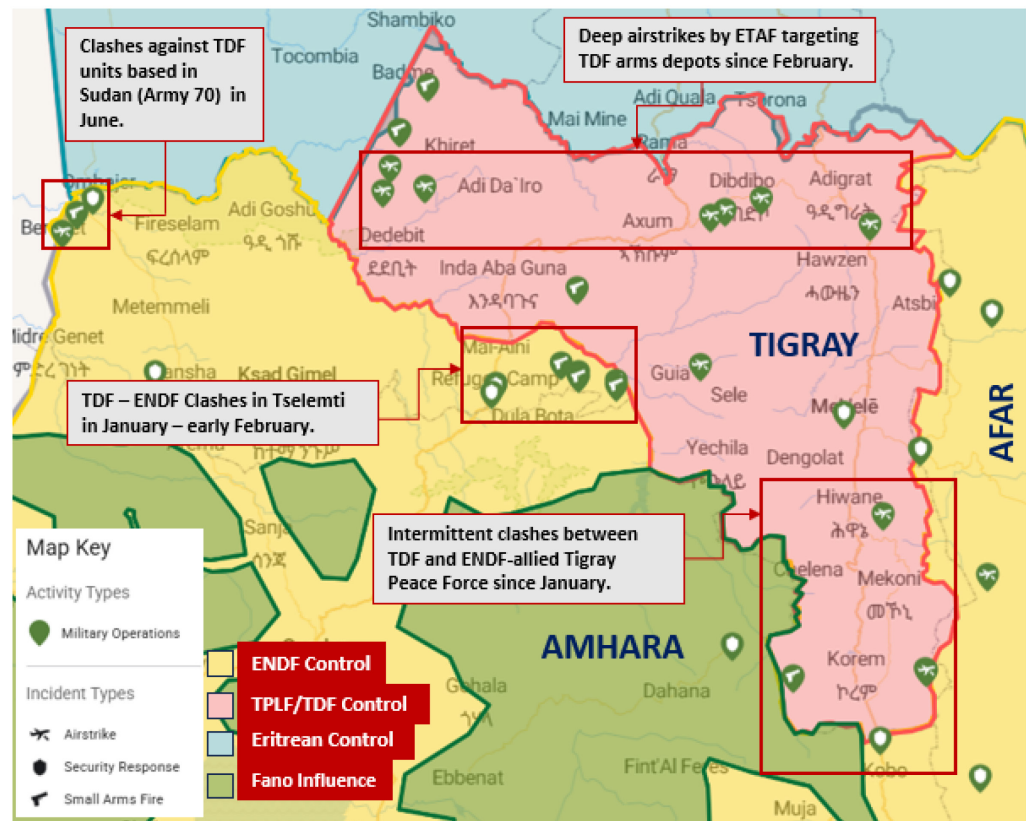
13.3 Map showing the control areas in Ethiopia (8 July 2026)



This map has been included in this Country of Origin Information (COI) Report with the permission of its creator. The Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), shown in green, controlled most of the country. The Tigray Defence Forces (TDF), shown in red, controlled most of Tigray. Fano (orange) and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), shown in yellow, did not so much exercise control in the traditional sense of the word, but had a significant presence in Amhara and Oromia respectively. In the western region of Benishangul-Gumuz, Fano, OLA and local fighters were present (purple). Eritrea (pink) was present in a number of mountainous enclaves in the north of Tigray (see also Subsection 5.10.3). The southern part of Blue Nile (shown in grey), a state in south-eastern Sudan, was under the control of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). These two groups were engaged in a war with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), shown in blue-green.⁷⁵⁸ The boundaries, names and symbols shown on the map do not in any way imply their formal acceptance or recognition by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This map was produced by Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC).

⁷⁵⁸ Also known as 'petrol'.

13.4 Control areas and combat operations in Tigray (1 January–16 June 2026)



This map has been included in this COI Report with its creator's permission. It shows the control areas and various combat operations in Tigray during the period from 1 January to 16 June 2026, inclusive (see also Subsection 3.6.4). The boundaries, names and symbols shown on the map do not in any way imply their formal acceptance or recognition by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This map was produced by Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC).