

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

Introduction:

From November 2015, Ethiopia has experienced an unprecedented wave of popular mobilisation. The government responded to the protests with a heavy hand, resulting in thousands of casualties and tens of thousands of people arrested, and charged with terrorism offenses. A state of emergency has been extended into July 2017. Further, militant activity has risen in tandem with popular unrest, stemming from both the distraction that civil unrest posed for the Ethiopian military, and also shared grievances. Available data collected from international and local media since November 2015 points to more than 1,200 people reported killed during protests. Approximately 660 fatalities are due to state violence against peaceful protesters, 250 fatalities from state engagement against rioters, and more than 380 people killed by security forces following the declaration of the state of emergency in October 2016.¹

The protests in the Oromia region from November 2015 are generally seen as part of a movement that began in April - May 2014, when students across several locations in the region protested a plan to expand the capital, Addis Ababa (hereafter, the Addis Ababa Master Plan). The 2014 protests, led by university students, were comparatively small and situated in the Western part of Oromia (see Figure 1).² The demonstrations were repressed by the security services ([Amnesty, 10 October 2014](#)).

Protests resumed in November 2015; they were mainly led by students from secondary schools and universities. The demonstrations quickly gained momentum and the students were soon joined by farmers, workers and other citizens ([EHRP, March 2016](#)). An average of 26 protests occurred per week between November 2015 - February 2016. The sharp drop to seven protests per week between March - April 2016 was due to the onset of the sowing season, rather than the Ethiopian government's suspension of the Master Plan. Large-scale demonstrations resumed in May 2016 and continued over the summer, while fresh protests also occurred in the Amhara region from the end of July 2016 (see Figure 2).³ The continuation of the protests beyond the suspension of the Master Plan revealed enduring grievances against the Ethiopian regime among different ethnic groups.

Government violence at the Irecha religious festival in Oromia in early October 2016 sparked outrage among the opposition and catalysed a rapid escalation of the protest movement. Oromo activists called this escalation the "week of rage". The government ultimately declared an unprecedented state of emergency on 8 October 2016, imposing tight restrictions that have since successfully curbed the protests. The number of reported riots and protests dropped from 56 in October 2016 to 7, 4 and 2 in November 2016, December 2016 and January 2017 respectively. The significant reduction in riots and protests accompanied an

“The government ultimately declared an unprecedented state of emergency on 8 October 2016, imposing tight restrictions that have since successfully curbed the protests.”

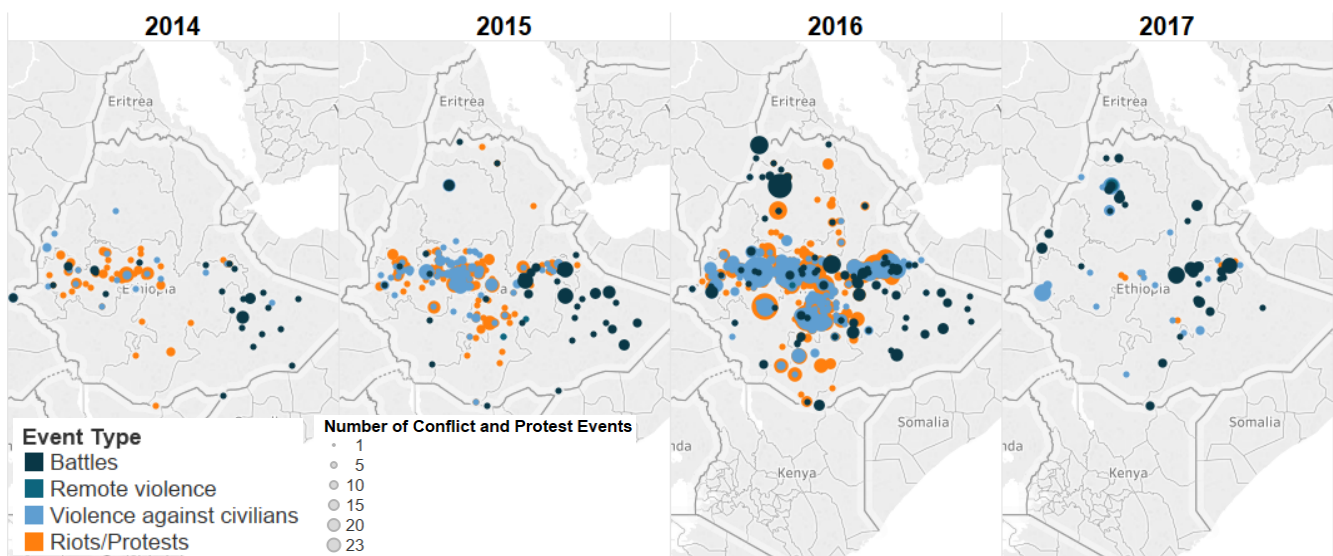


Figure 1: Number of Conflict and Riots/Protests by Location in Ethiopia, from January 2014 - May 2017.



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

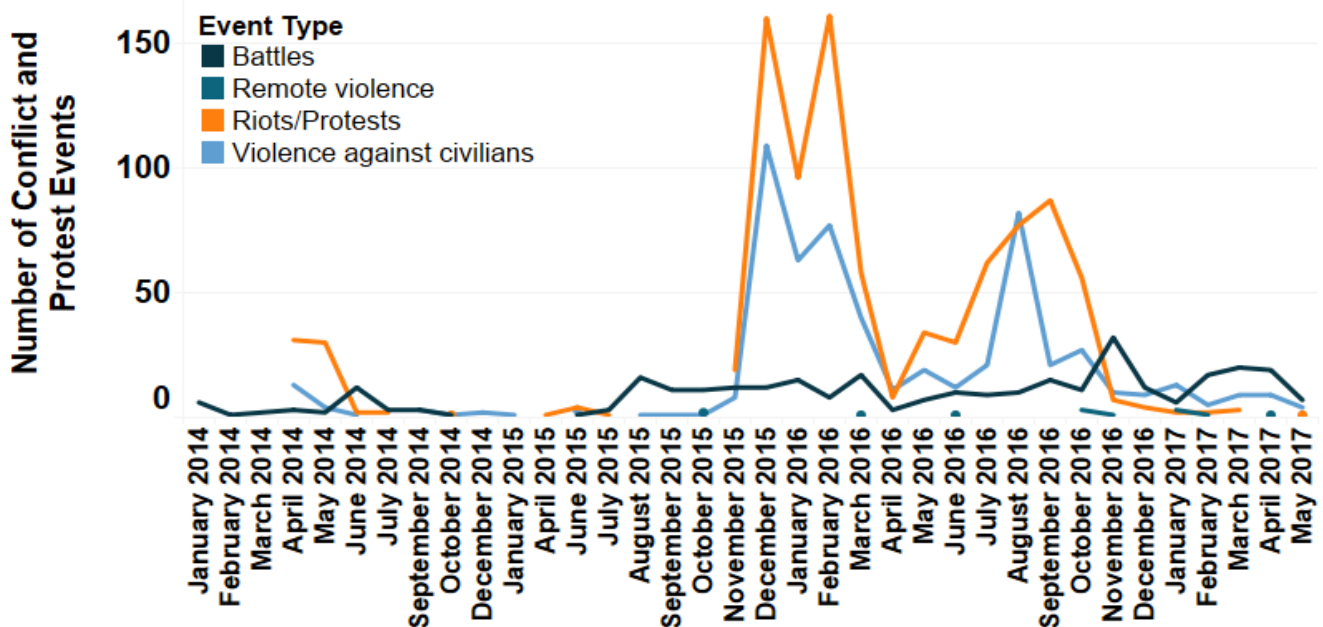


Figure 2: Political Violence and Protest in Ethiopia, from January 2014 - May 2017.

increase in political and ethnic militia activity, and in battles involving security forces and foreign-based rebel groups, especially in Oromia, Amhara and Tigray (see Figure 3⁴; [ACLED, February 2017](#)). Though the link between the protesters and the various armed groups remains unclear, these trends point to an escalation from peaceful unrest to an armed struggle taken up by local armed militias and rebel movements united in their aim to remove the government. The government prolonged the state of emergency until the end of July 2017, aiming to control the remaining pockets of instability in the country.

Why did protests erupt? Background on Ethiopia

Lack of economic opportunities and resource ownership

Since the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in 1991, it has governed by the principle that national security will best be served by an intrinsic combination of rapid economic growth and democratic advancement. The establishment and consolidation of an effective development state, combined with a form of democratic federalism ensuring peoples’ participation in administering their own affairs, have been seen

as the two key pillars driving Ethiopia’s “renaissance” from 1991 ([Government, 13 December 2010](#); [Chatham House, 23 October 2015](#)).

Through the promotion of a development-statist vision, and the state controlling many sources of rent and owning around two-thirds of businesses in the country, Ethiopia registers an annual economic growth rates close to 10% ([World Bank, 2017](#); [Dittgen and Demissie, January 2017](#)). At the national level, the EPRDF regime is focused on improving agricultural inputs, building roads, promoting large-scale land deals and investing in education and health in rural areas – which hold close to 80% of the overall country’s population. Regionally and internationally, it has also invested in key transport links to improve commercial corridors with

“The significant reduction in riots and protests accompanied an increase in political and ethnic militia activity, and in battles involving security forces and foreign-based rebel groups, especially in Oromia, Amhara and Tigray.”

countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya; asserted its role as a leading regional electric power and water provider; and opened some sectors to foreign investments to boost economic activities. As part of the five year Growth and Transformation Plans, which have run since 2010, the EPRDF has envisaged for Ethiopia to become a food-secure and middle-income country by 2025 ([Government, 2010](#); [Government, 2016](#); [Dittgen and Demissie, January 2017](#)). The most tangible results have been a reduction in the number of people living below the

¹ ACLED recorded more than 3,400 fatalities from overall conflict activity and riots and protests from November 2015-May 2017. This includes deaths from combat with armed non-state groups, and other forms of violence against civilians.

² Figure 1 shows the localisation of conflict and riot and protest events in Ethiopia over January 2014-May 2017. The colours represent the various event types recorded in each location. The size of the circles varies depending on the number of events recorded per event type in each location.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

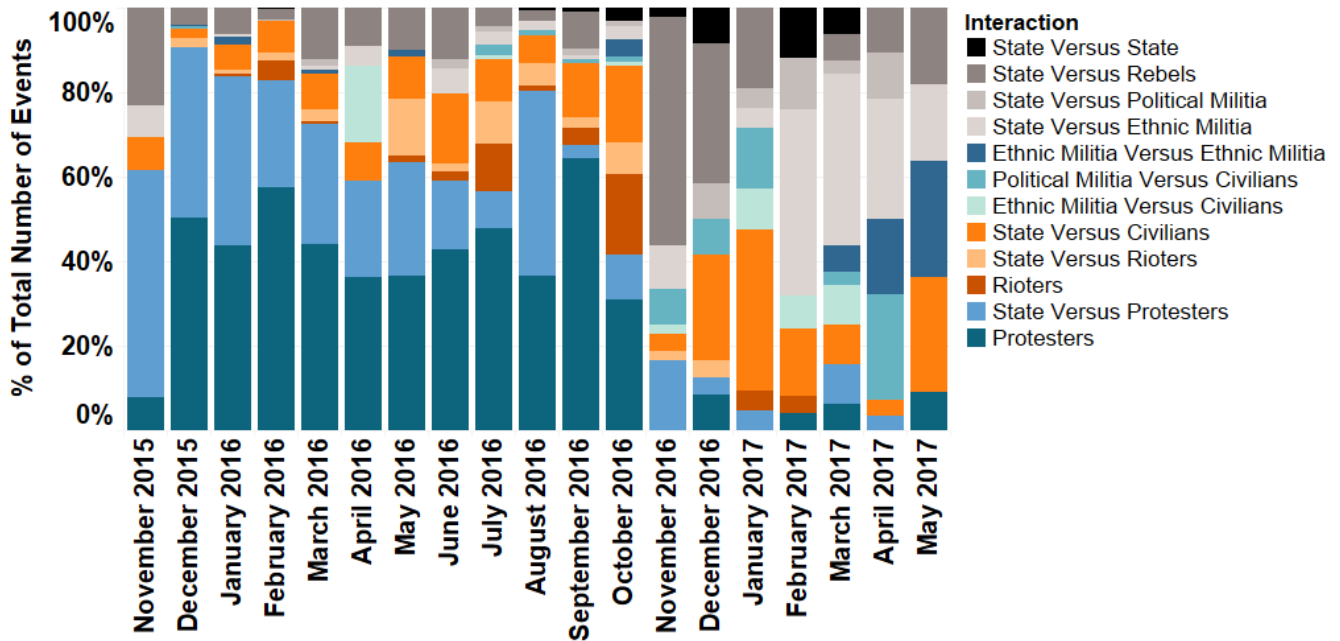


Figure 3: Political Violence and Protest Events by Interaction in Ethiopia, from November 2015 - May 2017.

national poverty line from 45.5% in 1995 to 29.6% in 2010, and significant improvements to the country’s Human Development Index and life expectancies (see Figure 4).

Strong economic growth, however, is accompanied by growing inequalities. With the second largest population on the continent nearing 100 million, the annual per capita Gross National Income is still very low at \$590 in 2015. The economic gap between rich and poor appears to be widening ([World Bank, 2016](#); [Dittgen and Demissie, January 2017](#)). In parallel, unemployment and underemployment have risen, particularly among educated youth in urban areas, and allegations of public corruption have spread ([Broussar and Tekleselassie, August 2012](#); [Transparency International, 2016](#)). Considering the centralised-driven economic growth strategy, populations have suspected the Tigrayan elite – which has dominated the government since the EPRDF came to power – of being the main beneficiary of the economic boom. This has fuelled sentiments of economic marginalisation, particularly among non-Tigrayan people, and fed social tensions ([Africa Research Bulletin, 31 October 2016](#)).

The protests that have rocked Oromia since 2014 have highlighted the fundamental tension between the state’s

centralised development strategy and non-Tigrayan ethnic groups’ desire for more public consultation and localised decision-making in the face of marginalisation and dispossession.

The initial protests erupted in Oromia due to the controversy around the proposed expansion of the capital Addis Ababa’s boundary by up to 1.1 million hectares, an approximate 20-fold increase into Oromia territories. This expansion aimed to accommodate the demands for residential, commercial and industrial properties (see Figure 5) by a growing middle class in the capital as a result of the economic boom. Exploiting the lack of clearly defined boundaries between the capital and the Oromia region, authorities published plans for the proposed expansion (the Addis Ababa Master Plan) without meaningful consultations with the impacted communities. This raised concerns among many Oromos about

“These trends point to an escalation from peaceful unrest to an armed struggle taken up by local armed militias and rebel movements united in their aim to remove the government.”

whether farmers and households facing eviction to make way for land sales would be offered adequate compensation and protections. The plan was also perceived as violating constitutionally-enshrined territorial rights attributed to the region, as the land would be removed from Oromia’s jurisdiction and thus significantly alter the region’s territory ([HRW, June 2016](#); [Amnesty, 13 May 2014](#);

³ Figure 2 shows the evolution of the number of conflict and riot and protest events in Ethiopia between January 2014 and May 2017. The colours represent the different event types.

⁴ Figure 3 shows the main actors in conflict and riot and protest events recorded in Ethiopia between November 2015 and May 2017. For instance, nearly 90% of events involved protesters in December 2015, while protesters were part of only 5% of events in February 2017. Activity in February 2017 was in fact dominated by conflict between government and militias.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

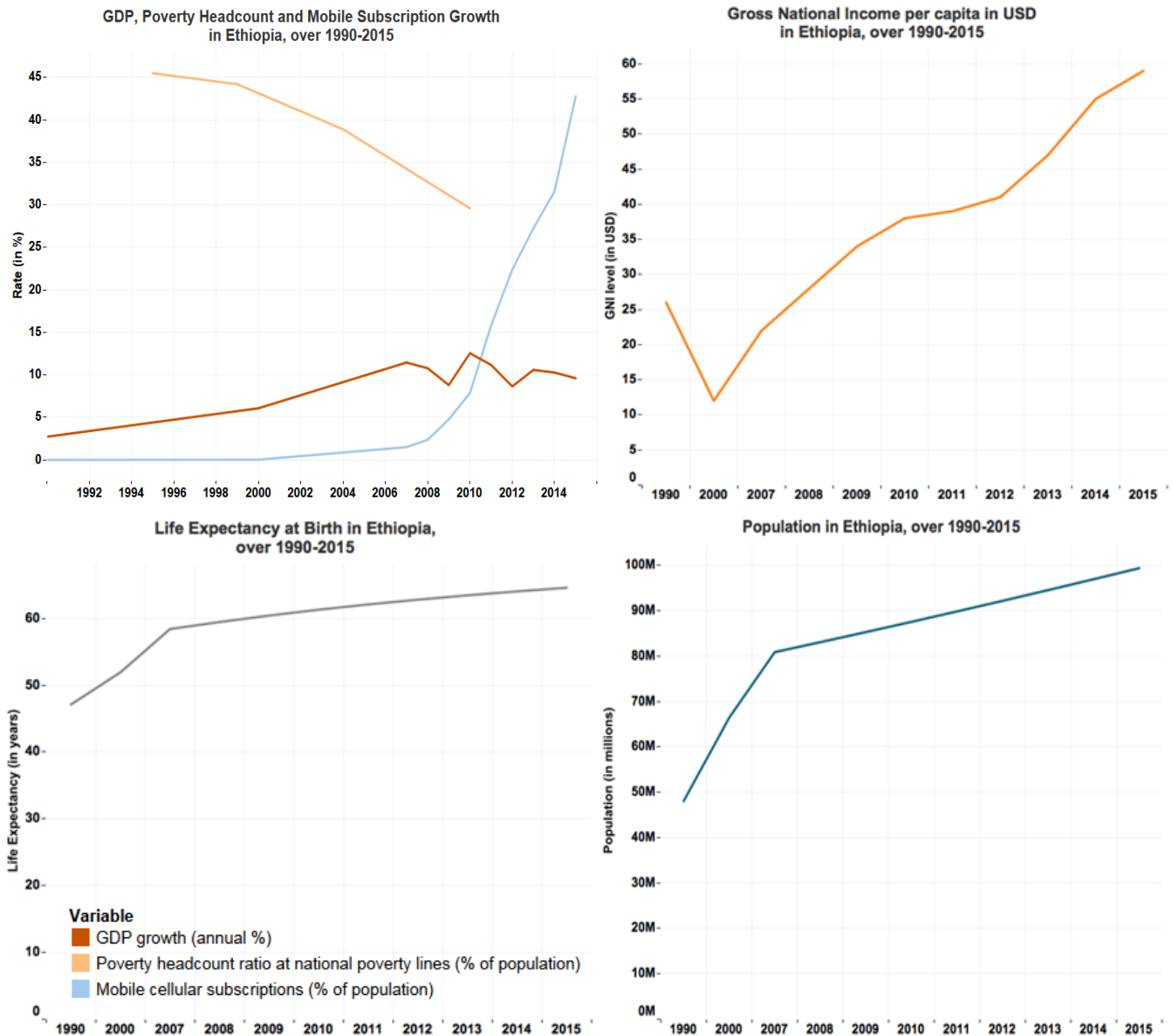


Figure 4: Socio-economic indicators on Ethiopia, 1990-2015. Source: [World Bank, 2017](#).

[Mesfin, 2013](#); [Addis Standard, 20 August 2015](#)).

The controversial plan came against the backdrop of previous tensions between the government and the Oromo population, and fed the perception that the Tigrayan-led regime aimed to plunder the region's resources. The government's temporary transfer of the regional capital from Addis Ababa to Adama in 2004, for instance, was perceived as detrimental to Oromos, as it would strip them of their most valuable economic and political asset. This triggered months of protests by students across Oromia and Addis Ababa ([Amnesty, 13 May 2014](#)).

The government's promotion of private sector agricultural investment since 2005, through the leasing of land to domestic and foreign investors, has also created resentment. As of 2011, up to 1.4 million hectares of land in Oromia (4% of lands) had been allocated to investors (more conservative estimates put the number at around 21,000 hectares, but these estimates only include land deals over 1,000 hectares). Furthermore, an alleged 15,000 Oromo farmers from suburban towns surrounding Addis Ababa, and many more in other areas of Oromia, have been forcefully evicted from their lands without appropriate support or compensation in order to promote these in-

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

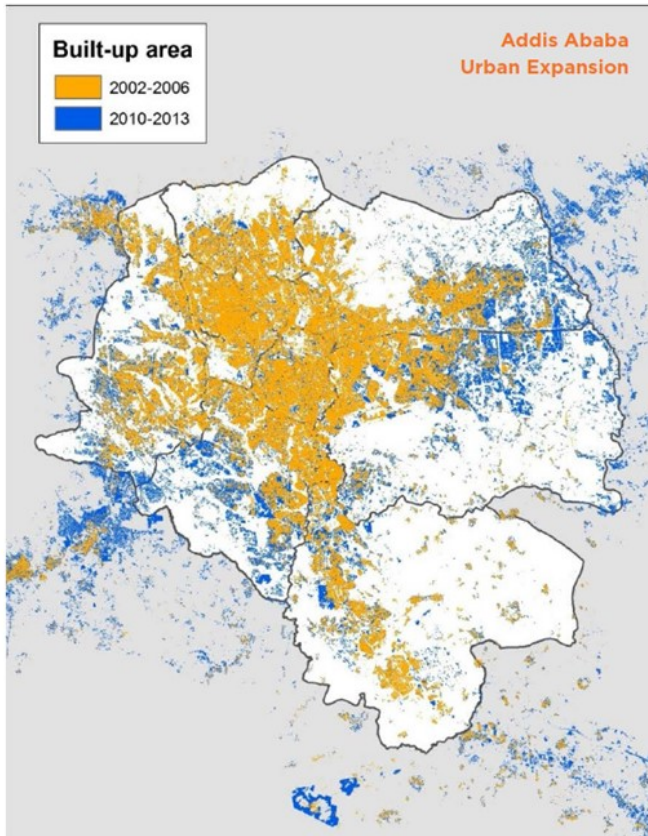


Figure 5: Addis Ababa Expansion. Source: [GFDRR, July 2015](#)

vestments ([Oakland Institute, 2011](#); [Keeley and al., 2014](#); [UNHRC, 29 May 2016](#)). The impact of this policy was even more significant in lowland regions of the country. In Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz and in the SNNPR, 42%, 27% and 6% of lands respectively were allocated to investors, resulting in reduced food security and access to natural resources for the local population. The government also allegedly forcibly relocated 1.5 million people under a “villagisation” program to make way for these investment projects in lowland areas ([Oakland Institute, 2011](#); [Oakland Institute, 2013](#); [Moreda, July 2016](#)).

Protests in reaction to the Addis Ababa Master Plan first broke out in a number of universities and towns across Oromia in April - May 2014, and resumed in November 2015 in Ginci over the sale of the stadium and clearing of the local forest for the proposed expansion

([Africa Confidential, 18 December 2015](#)). Despite the government concession to suspend the Master Plan in January 2016, protests continued and participants express a widespread suspicion of the regime and a deep resentment of the government’s program of development and resource distribution. Grievances also emerged over local business and development projects, notably related to flower production, mining, light manufacturing and tourism ([Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#); [HRW, June 2016](#)). Several riots in 2016 targeted properties related to these industries.

Lack of democratisation

The demonstrators have also expressed grievances over regional administration. Ethiopia transitioned in 1991 from a centralist to an ethno-federal state, following revolts by various guerrilla movements formed in the 1970s to seek better political representation and independence from the Amhara-dominated regime. The Tigrayan Peoples’ Liberation Front (TPLF), whose forces were the main military structure in the country at the time, *de facto* replaced the state army and appointed a 'Representatives Council' led by the EPRDF. This began as an umbrella of ethno-national fronts (the Oromo Peoples’ Democratic Organization (OPDO), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the South Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Front (SEPDF) and the TPLF. A new Constitution was prepared and passed in 1995, establishing nine regional states drawn along ethnic and linguistic lines. Each state was delegated powers and rights of self-determination, including secession. At the national level, the Constitution

“The protests that have rocked Oromia since 2014 have highlighted the fundamental tension between the state’s centralised development strategy and non-Tigrayan ethnic groups’ desire for more public consultation and localised decision-making in the face of marginalisation and dispossession.”

also ensured the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers, vesting executive powers in the hands of the Prime Minister and of the Council of Ministers ([Government, 8 December 1994](#); [Mesfin, May 2015](#)). The adoption of this new, seemingly decentralised form of government raised hopes for appreciable change, after decades of political and economic centralisation, oppression, poverty and hunger under the previous regime. However, political evolutions since the transition suggest a continuation of the policy of hegemonic central control: first, in the way ethno-federalist principles have been practically implemented; second, in the way political opposition to the ruling party has been controlled.



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

Limits of the federal system

While the federal system is meant to reduce conflict by delegating power to ethnic groups locally and guaranteeing their representation at the centre, ethno-federalism also has the potential to sow divisions between communities and extend the influence of the centre to the periphery ([Mesfin, May 2015](#)). In Ethiopia, the limited applicability of federalist principles transpires in the lack of central representation for ethnic groups and the continued centralisation of political and economic powers.

Despite the government's multi-ethnic composition, and the ruling coalition's gathering of four ethnic parties, politics in Ethiopia have long been dominated by the TPLF. The TPLF represents the Tigrayan ethnic group, which comprises 6% of Ethiopia's 100 million population. The TPLF played a major role in removing the military junta ("Derg") under Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991, and in subsequently gathering the various ethno-regional rebel organisations into the EPRDF coalition, which has been leading the country ever since. Several evolutions illustrate how the TPLF has, from the onset, sought to play a leading role in defining the country's political trajectory. The TPLF Chairman, Meles Zenawi, for instance, occupied the key posts of EPRDF leader and president of the Transitional Government in 1991, before moving on to become Prime Minister in 1995 – a role that he held for 17 years until his death in 2012. Zenawi's control of government representatives tightened after the war with Eritrea (1998 - 2000), as internal disagreements led to a streamlining of both the EPRDF and the TPLF. This led to political power becoming concentrated in an increasingly smaller number of politicians close to Zenawi ([ICG, 4 September 2009](#); [African Arguments, 7 October 2016](#)). Instead of being disbanded after 1991, the TPLF's military structure also replaced the former army junta to form the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF). In early 2007 Tigrayans constituted between 60-70% of the officer corps in the Ethiopian armed forces, partly as a result of Zenawi's purges within the government ([Global Security, 2015](#)). Other examples include the exclusion of the main Oromo opposition party, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), from the transitional government in 1992, following disagreements with the TPLF; and the lack of consultation of pan-Ethiopian opposition parties, with differing views on ethnically-defined citizenship, in preparations of the new Constitution ([Van Veen, September 2016](#); [Mesfin, May 2015](#); [ICG, 4 September 2009](#)).

When Hailemariam Desalegn replaced Zenawi as Prime Minister in 2012, there was hope that a more pluralistic ethnic mix up could emerge within the government due to

his regional affiliation to the SNNPR ([Handino, Lind and Mesfin, October 2012](#)). However, the TPLF elite considered this transition a conspiracy to push them aside, and adopted measures to cripple the new Prime Minister's power. The TPLF elite reduced Desalegn's control over ministries; appointed several, often Tigrayan, senior advisers to work at his side; promoted some 37 – often Tigrayan – officers to the rank of generals; and retained control of key defense, intelligence and foreign affairs posts. They also purged dissenters within the government ([African Arguments, 18 September 2016](#)). The dominance of the TPLF within the EPRDF means that other involved parties lost their status as legitimate representatives of the ethnic groups they nominally represent. Oromo dissenters, for instance, widely perceive their OPDO (EDPRF) representatives as "government puppets", handpicked by the TPLF. They accuse the TPLF of having masterminded the very creation of the party to pit them against the OLF, a more potent symbol of nationalism. This is significant, as the OPDO has had a near-total monopoly on political power in Oromia since 1992 ([African Arguments, 7 October 2016](#); [Mesfin, May 2015](#)).

The ruling EPRDF seeks to retain power by maintaining tight legislative control over the regions and the localities. This control eliminates the possibility of regional representatives enacting their constitutional rights of autonomy or secession. In fact, the very formulation of vague and overarching provisions on shared and delegated federal and regional powers in the Constitution has offered the federal government scope for extensive policy leverage over regions ([SIDA, March 2003](#)). The EPRDF retains power through a number of key methods: by controlling the establishment and evaluation of regional parties and their leaders; by deploying state advisors to ensure that the central government's position on important political matters is followed; and by electing local officials controlling the distribution of a wide array of government services for communities through the *kebele* structure ([ICG, 4 September 2009](#); [Bach, 2016](#)). The government also seeks to maintain loyalty to the ruling party by controlling access to resources. Historically, more than 80% of government revenue has been collected centrally, while the government has controlled around 60% of total spending. However, trends in regional spending show significant variations: as of 2011, for instance, the Tigray region was by far the most decentralised, with 56% of expenditure happening at the district level, compared to 48% in Oromia, 38% in Afar and 17% in Harari regions ([World Bank, April 2016](#)).

Regions and districts therefore depend heavily on federal



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

budget transfers, leaving regional representatives with little opportunity for political autonomy. In rural areas, in Amhara, Tigray, Oromia and southern regions, the absence of private landholdings and land tenure security also means that people are strongly dependent on access to government land, and can therefore rarely challenge government rulings. At the most local level, the *kebele* structure makes the welfare of local communities' dependent on their relations with local officials – and therefore on their compliance to the will of the EPDRF – as the local officials control access to resources, including seeds, fertilizers and agricultural inputs, as well as the benefits of

development and foreign aid ([ICG, 4 September 2009](#); [HRW, June 2016](#)). Lastly, while the Constitution guarantees the regions' right to organise police forces at the regional and district level, the central government has the right to send in the federal police and armed forces whenever it deems a crisis to be exceeding a region's capacities. Since the EPDRF controls every level of government, in practice it does not have to wait for a request by the regional government, and can deploy central forces at will ([Arriola, January 2013](#)).

Many Ethiopians – particularly the Oromo and Amhara communities– resent Tigrayan domination in the government. The Oromo community in particular generally support ethnic federalism, but aspire to greater autonomy, and resent government intrusion in regional affairs. They believe that they are controlled and denied a voice in issues that impact them. These perceptions have led to protests several times in the past. For instance, protests over freedom of expression and the economic plight of the region in 2004. The Oromo community has raised these grievances against the regime throughout 2016, despite the suspension of the Addis Ababa Master Plan ([VOA, 11 December 2015](#); [Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#)). For the mainly nationalist Amhara urban educated middle class, EPDRF uses the ethno-federal system to privilege its Tigrayan base and plant divisions among other ethnic groups that vie for resources ([ICG, 4 September 2009](#)). The Amhara community have long opposed the government over the Wolkayt district, for instance. Wolkayt is one of several areas between the Tigray and Amhara regions that Amhara activists say the TPLF took out of their region's control when drawing the ethnic boundaries in the 1990s. They accuse the TPLF of moving Tigrayans into the district during the civil war, resulting in a predominantly Tigrayan-speaking population, in spite of the Amhara's historical ownership of the district. For many, this is testament to the Amhara community's frustration over the loss of their pre-1991 stature as the most powerful ethnic group in a centralised system ([Africa Confidential, 26 August 2016](#); [The Guardian, 22 December 2016](#)). It was a clash over this issue that provoked the wave of demonstrations in Amhara from August 2016 in support of Oromos.

No space for political opposition

The government's rhetorical line is that development without democracy is not sustainable in the long run, and that democratisation in Ethiopia is still lacking

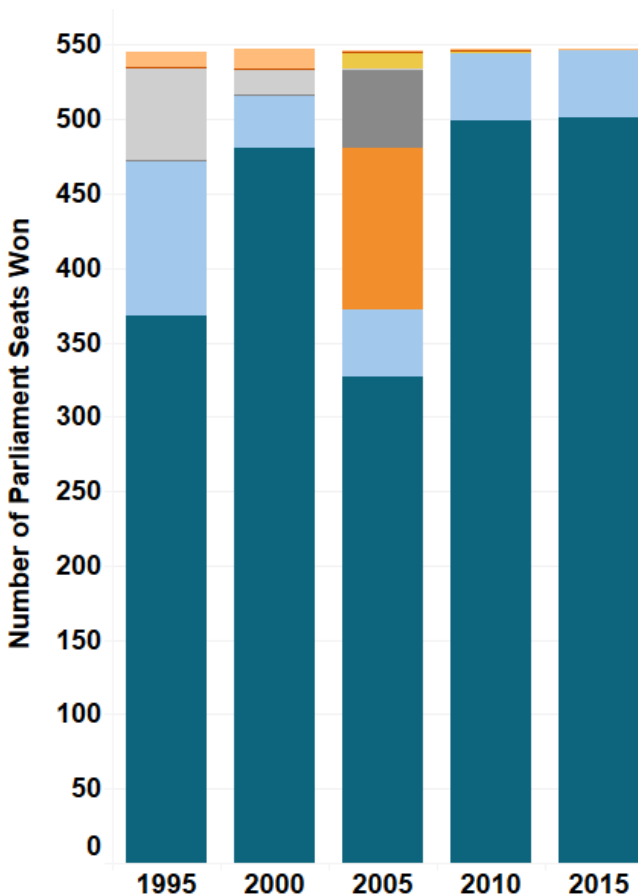
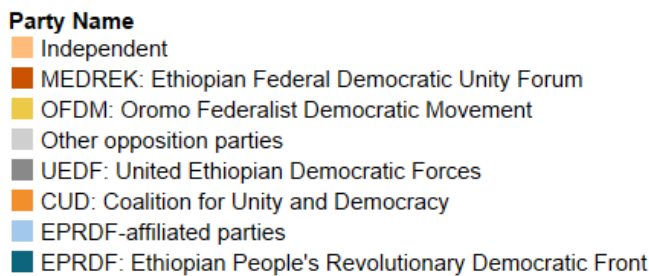


Figure 6: Number of Parliamentary Seats Won Per Party in Federal Legislative Elections in Ethiopia, from 1995 - 2015.

Source: [IPU, 2010](#); [IPU, 2015](#)



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

([Government, 13 December 2010](#); [Government, 2016](#)). However, since its arrival in power in 1991, the EPRDF has controlled the political trajectory of the country and displayed an authoritarian mode of governance, primarily through maintaining a solid grip on the country's military and intelligence services. This authoritarianism is perceived to be driven by fears of national disintegration. As a result, a small, ideologically-driven elite seek to maintain their privileged status at the expense of other groups, leveraging on a rhetoric about sacrifices made during the guerrilla war against the Derg ([Dittgen and Demissie, January 2017](#); [Mesfin, 22 July 2008](#)).

The EPRDF secured an absolute majority in regional and national elections in 1995 and 2000. The elections in 2005 were a turning point, as the EPRDF was confronted for the first time with a real opposition (see Figure 6). The opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) was an umbrella of multinational liberal parties mainly made up of urban Amhara intellectuals. They criticised ethnic-based citizenship, called for a return to a more unitary and centralised nation-state, and advocated for private holdings. The other main opposition party, the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), was a grouping of regional parties which supported ethno-federalism but denounced the EPRDF's dominance within government institutions ([Bach, 2016](#); [ICG, 4 September 2009](#)). Though irregularities in the voting process were claimed by opposition parties and often confirmed by international observers, the EPRDF was declared winner of the polls, while the CUD and UEDF won a handful seats in Parliament. CUD rejected the results, renouncing its seats and calling upon its sympathisers to engage in civil disobedience. Authorities heavily repressed the demonstrations that followed, leaving around 200 people killed and thousands detained. The disproportionate and indiscriminate nature of the government's response to the protests was blamed on the leadership's paranoia that the actions of the CUD and the protesters were a plot by Amharas to return to power by force ([Mesfin, January 2008](#); [ICG, 4 September 2009](#)).

The government blamed the revolt in 2005 on having been too liberal. As a result, the following decade saw no new democratic reforms, an expansion of surveillance, and an expansion of the localisation of government decisions through the *kebele* system ([Dittgen and Demissie, January 2017](#)). There were regular reports of threats to, and detention and prosecution of, opposition party members, activists, bloggers, journalists and academics, often

without charge ([HRW, 22 January 2016](#); [VOA, 11 December 2015](#); [Freedom House, 2016](#)). From 2005 - 2015, widespread use of torture by government officials and security operatives quashed opposition to the ruling party ([MFP, 18 June 2012](#)). Repression was particularly fierce in regions with active insurgency movements, including Oromia.

The government used anti-terrorism laws, passed to assist the Western based 'fight against terror' to criminalise and prosecute any expression of dissent in Oromia ([African Arguments, 6 August 2016](#)). Between 2011 and 2014, at

“The elections in 2005 were a turning point, as the EPRDF was confronted for the first time with a real opposition.”

least 5,000 Oromos were arrested as a result of their actual or alleged peaceful opposition to the government, with authorities going as far as interpreting expressions of Oromo culture and heritage as signs of dissent. Authorities regularly accused

detained Oromos of supporting the OLF insurgency. The government was also particularly watchful for signs of dissent among students in Oromia, and accused the OLF of fuelling student protests in the region. Given this context, the first Oromo protests against the proposed Addis Ababa Master Plan in April - May 2014 were heavily repressed, resulting in an alleged 30 people dead and dozens in detention ([Amnesty, 10 October 2014](#)).

Opposition parties were frequently undermined in order to prevent them from mounting a real challenge to the EPRDF. Examples include the Oromo People's Congress (OPC) and the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM), which both gained seats in Parliament in 2005 through the UEDF ([African Arguments, 7 October 2016](#)). But new alliances emerged from the implosion of the main opposition parties after the 2005 elections: in 2007, former CUD members created the Union for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), while in 2008, some UEDF founders created the Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia (*Medrek*). The two parties joined forces in the 2010 elections, but only managed to win one seat in Parliament. The alliance between the UEDF and *Medrek* dissolved, enabling the EPRDF and its allies to win 100% of the seats in Parliament in 2015 (see Figure 6; [Bach, 2016](#); [Freedom House, 2016](#)). Today, despite having no seat in Parliament, *Medrek* represents one of the most stable and moderate opposition organisations. *Medrek* has a fervent support base in Oromia, through the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC).

Yet, the dominance of the ruling party within the security sector, local government and legislative politics means that avenues for political opposition or dissent are practi-

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

cally non-existent ([CIVICUS, 24 October 2016](#); [Amnesty, 13 May 2014](#)). The Ethiopian government appears unable to tolerate dissent or engage in a meaningful dialogue with any form of opposition ([Mesfin, May 2015](#)). Its unremitting use of lethal force against largely peaceful protesters since 2015 played a major role in bolstering grievance among the Oromo and other ethnic groups, and prolonged the protests beyond the suspension of the Master Plan.

Actors in Popular Mobilisation

The protesters

The Oromo Community

The Oromo community represent around 30% of the Ethiopian population (approximately 30 million people), and are the main actors of the protest movement (see Figure 7⁵). They have expressed grievances over land dispossession, lack of democratisation, and the violent government response to their largely peaceful protests.

The apparent absence of an established civil society organisation or local representative in leading the movement has been a key feature of the Oromo protests since April 2014. Some Oromo demonstrators are said to have been mobilised through an underground network of nationalist activists known as the Qeerroo (or Qubee generation). The Qeerroo gained increasing support after the OLF was pushed out of the transitional government in 1992, developing traction as a modality of Oromo nationalism.

Today, the group is mostly made up of Oromo youth – predominantly students from elementary school to university – organising collective action through social media ([The Conversation, 14 August 2016](#)). Many Ethiopians confirm that a number of collective actions during the most recent wave of protests are organised on social media ([The New York Times, 12 August 2016](#)).

Protesters in Oromia have been largely peaceful gatherings of collective marches, boycotts and strikes (see Figure 8⁶). One of the protesters’ major campaigns was the organisation of a Grand Protest against the government

“The dominance of the ruling party within the security sector, local government and legislative politics means that avenues for political opposition or dissent are practically non-existent.”

agenda. On 6 August 2016, peaceful demonstrators gathered across 200 cities in Oromia. Political prisoners at the Maekelawi and Qilinto prisons in Addis Ababa also launched several hunger strikes, demanding the respect of their basic rights by the administration, including an end to degrading and inhuman treatment, as well as access to medication and family visits.

Riots often occurred in reaction to prior state violence against protesters in the same areas (see Figure 8). In December 2015, crowds of protesters in Gindo (South West Shewa) burned down Dutch-owned flower farms; students in Waliso (also in South West Shewa) clashed with state forces and set fire to administration offices. Students also clashed with state forces in Shashamane over the heavy deployment of security personnel at schools and universities. Other forms of rioting in the months that followed include setting up roadblocks to prevent state forces from entering towns and villages; overrunning po-

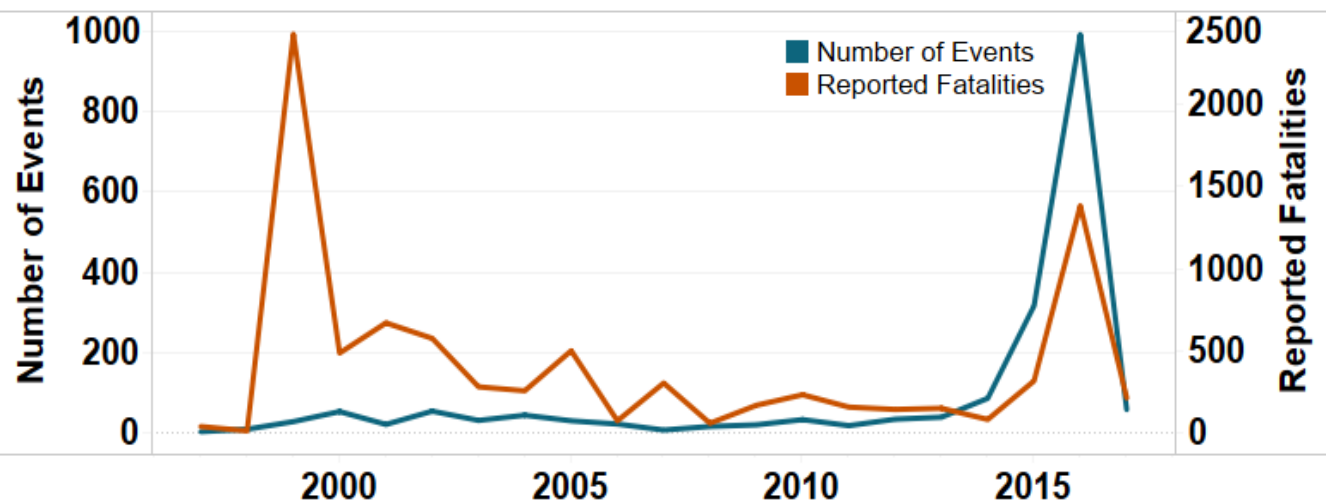


Figure 7: Number of Events and Fatalities in Oromia region, from January 1997 - May 2017.

⁵ Figure 7 shows the evolution of the number of conflicts, riots and protests, and of the related fatalities in Ethiopia’s Oromia region, between January 1997 and May 2017.
⁶ Figure 8 shows the number of events in which the main categories of actors were involved each month between November 2015 and May 2017 in Ethiopia’s Oromia region.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

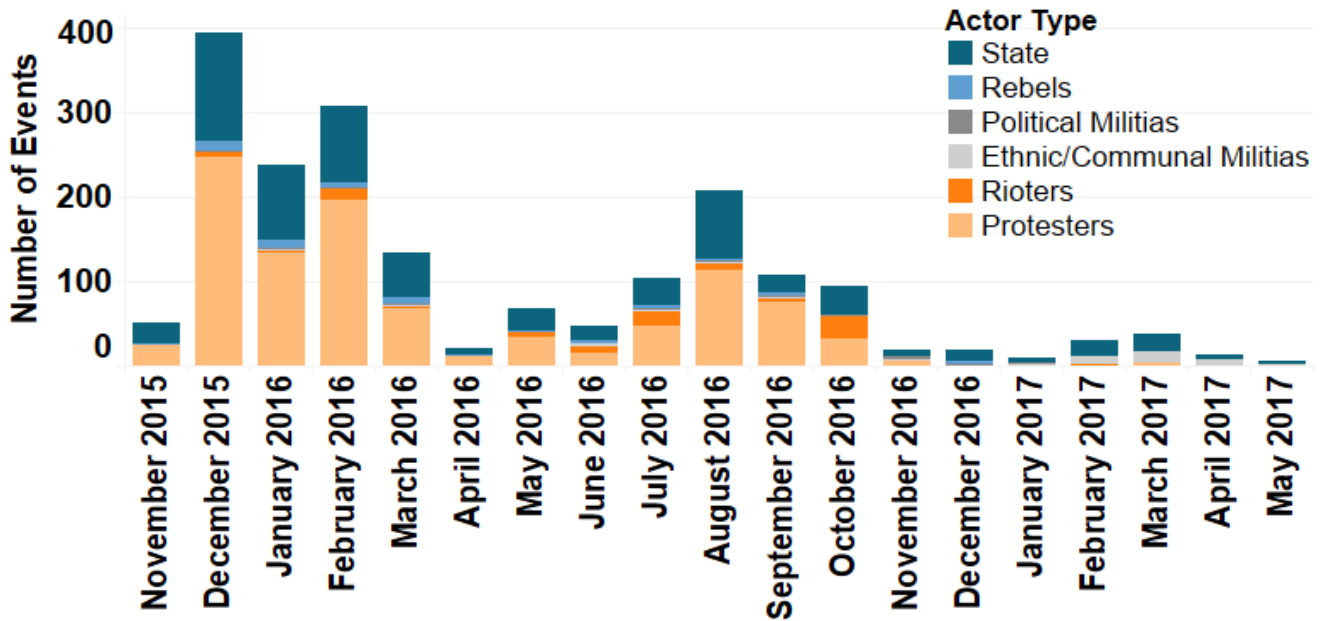


Figure 8: Number of Conflict and Protest Events by Actor Type in Oromia region, from November 2015 - May 2017.

lice stations and prisons to free political prisoners; and destroying local business and development projects. Riots in Oromia particularly escalated following government violence at the Irecha festival in Bishoftu (West Shewa) on 2 October 2016. Oromo activists called the escalation the “week of rage”, as protesters in different parts of Oromia blocked roads and attacked local administration buildings, police stations, and businesses built on lands allegedly confiscated from local Oromo control ([Amnesty, 18 October 2016](#)).

The protests in Oromia accompanied rising militia activity, especially by Oromo ethnic militias and unidentified armed groups (UAGs) (see Figure 9⁷). UAGs clash with state forces, but also target civilians, including government representatives and protesters. In some previous instances, UAGs hurled grenades at students during rallies and in state properties; in others, UAGs killed and abducted civilians, including known government supporters. Oromo ethnic militias, on the other hand, exclusively engaged in battles with state forces. During the wave of protests, reports indicate that Oromo farmers and residents defend their lands and communities from state forces. Since the beginning of 2017, larger numbers of the Oromo community have risen up against a marked increase in attacks and human rights violations by state and paramilitary forces, such as the Liyu police. The Oromo community identifies the increased activity by the Liyu police as a way for the government to usurp Oromo lands and further quash dissent ([Opride, 5 March 2017](#)).

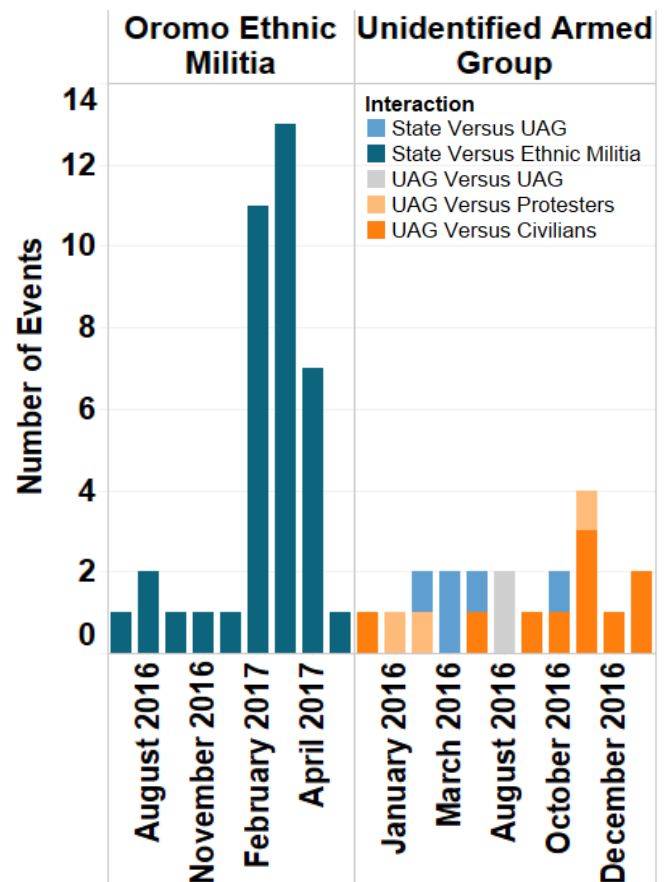


Figure 9: Oromia Ethnic and Political Militia Activity in Oromia by Interaction, from November 2015 - May 2017.

⁷ Figure 9 shows the level of conflict activity by the two main political and ethnic militias in Ethiopia’s Oromia region (namely the Oromo ethnic militia and UAGs) and the interactions in these events, each month between November 2015 and May 2017.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

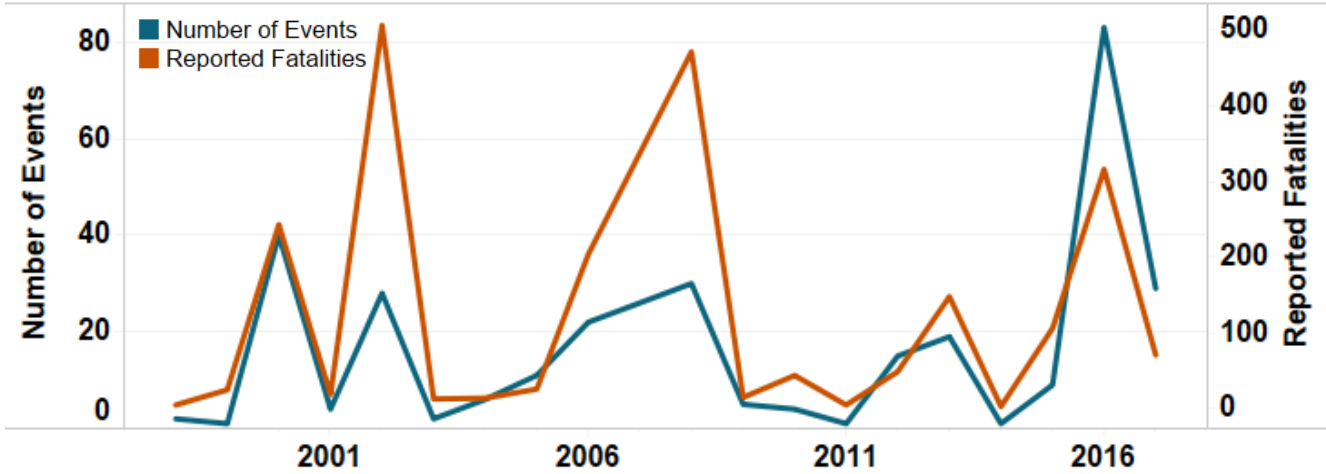


Figure 10: Number of Events and Reported Fatalities in Amhara region, from January 1997 - May 2017.

Amhara people

Amhara people represent around 20% of the Ethiopian population (approximately 20 million); all but one Emperor in Ethiopia's history were from the Amhara community. Amharic has long acted as Ethiopia's official language, and remains one of the most common languages spoken in Ethiopia as of today. In July 2016, the fatal clash between security forces and Amhara residents following the arrest of three Wolkayt leaders in Gonder ignited regionalist grievances. This resulted in a surge in unrest from August 2016 (see Figure 10⁸).

Demonstrators resent TPLF's domination within the government, and denounced the government's violent repression of the Oromo protests (see Figure 11⁹). Amhara protesters displayed an unprecedented level of solidarity with the Oromos, organising joint marches (for instance during the Grand Oromo protests in August 2016), sit-ins, boycotts, and stay-at-home protests, as well as using other non-violent tactics, such as head shaving and crossing arms above the head. Long-standing historical tensions, as well as differing political agendas, had previously prevented similar forms of union between the two groups ([African Arguments, 27 September 2016](#)).

The protests in Amhara also took a more violent turn than in Oromia, with regular episodes of riots and increasing activity by militias (see Figure 12¹⁰). From July 2016, Amhara residents and activists frequently clashed with state forces, leading to the formation of a new militia (Amhara Tegadlo) in September 2016. Amhara farmers also fought state forces on several occasions over July - November 2016. In parallel, UAGs have become increasingly active in Amhara, engaging in various clashes with state forces,

Actor Type

■ State
■ Rebels
■ Political Militias
■ Ethnic/Communal Militias
■ Rioters
■ Protesters

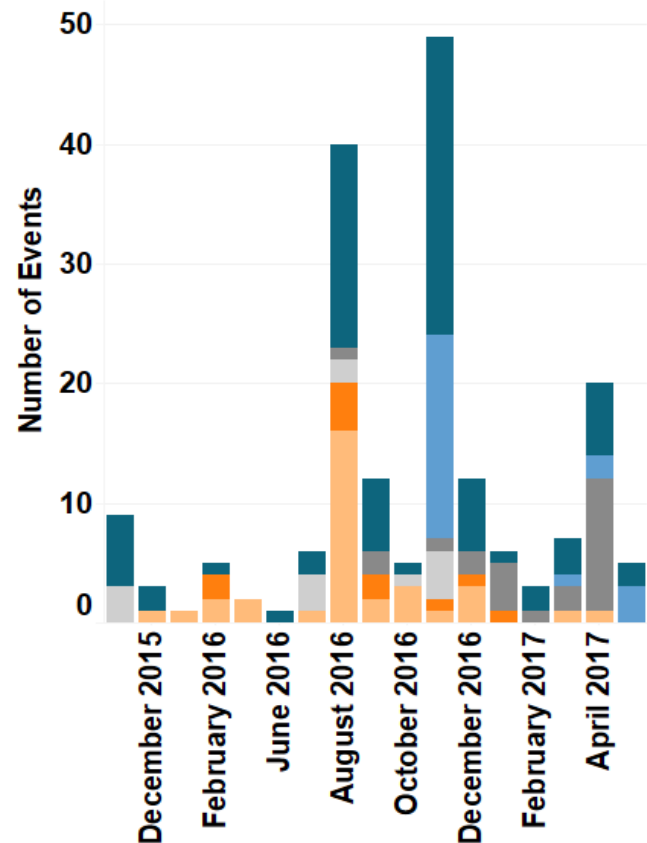


Figure 11: Number of Conflict and Protest Events by Actor Type in Amhara region, from November 2015 - May 2017.

⁸ Figure 10 shows the evolution of the number of conflicts, riots and protests, and of the related fatalities in Ethiopia's Amhara region, between January 1997 and May 2017.
⁹ Figure 11 shows the number of events in which the main categories of actors were involved each month between November 2015 and May 2017 in Ethiopia's Amhara region.
¹⁰ Figure 12 shows the level of conflict activity by the three main political and ethnic militias in Ethiopia's Amhara region (namely the Amhara ethnic militia, other ethnic militias and UAGs) and the interactions in these events, each month between November 2015 and May 2017.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

attacking a main prison in Gonder, and executing no less than 13 bomb and grenades attacks, mainly targeting state officials, between January - April 2017.

The apparent solidarity displayed between the Oromo and Amhara groups represents a significant threat to the government, as together these two groups represent more than half of the country's population. Yet, it remains unclear to what extent the two groups will overcome their historical contentions and form a credible alternative coalition to the ruling party. Discussions between both groups' elites over the last two decades have failed to support the building of trust between the two communities, partly because of different political agendas ([African Arguments, 27 September 2016](#)). Tensions notably rose in April 2014 following an unveiling of a monument in Oromia's Arsi zone to commemorate Menelik II's Oromo victims. This prompted members of the Amhara to defend the Emperor's memory ([Bach, 2016](#)). More recently, in December 2015, Oromo and Amhara militias clashed in Oromia's Amaya district, resulting in five fatalities and destroyed property.

Other ethnic groups

The government's violent response to the Oromo protests has prompted populations in other regions to demonstrate their solidarity with the Oromo demonstrators (see Figure 13¹¹). Students in regions outside Oromia held various protests and sit-ins in solidarity. Key flashpoints were the universities of Dila and Hawasa (SNNPR region) and the various schools in Dire Dawa, where many Oromo students resided. The inhabitants of Jijiga, in the Somali region, as well as members of the Muslim community in Addis Ababa, also demonstrated in support of the Oromo protests. Lastly, hundreds of people in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa responded to the Oromos' Grand Protest call on 6 August 2016, organising large demonstrations in their respective areas.

The Oromo protests also encouraged other groups to be more vocal about their own grievances. Members of the Konso community protested in the SNNPR in March 2016 to demand autonomous administration and the right to self-determination. The demonstration resulted in a violent government response that triggered further protests

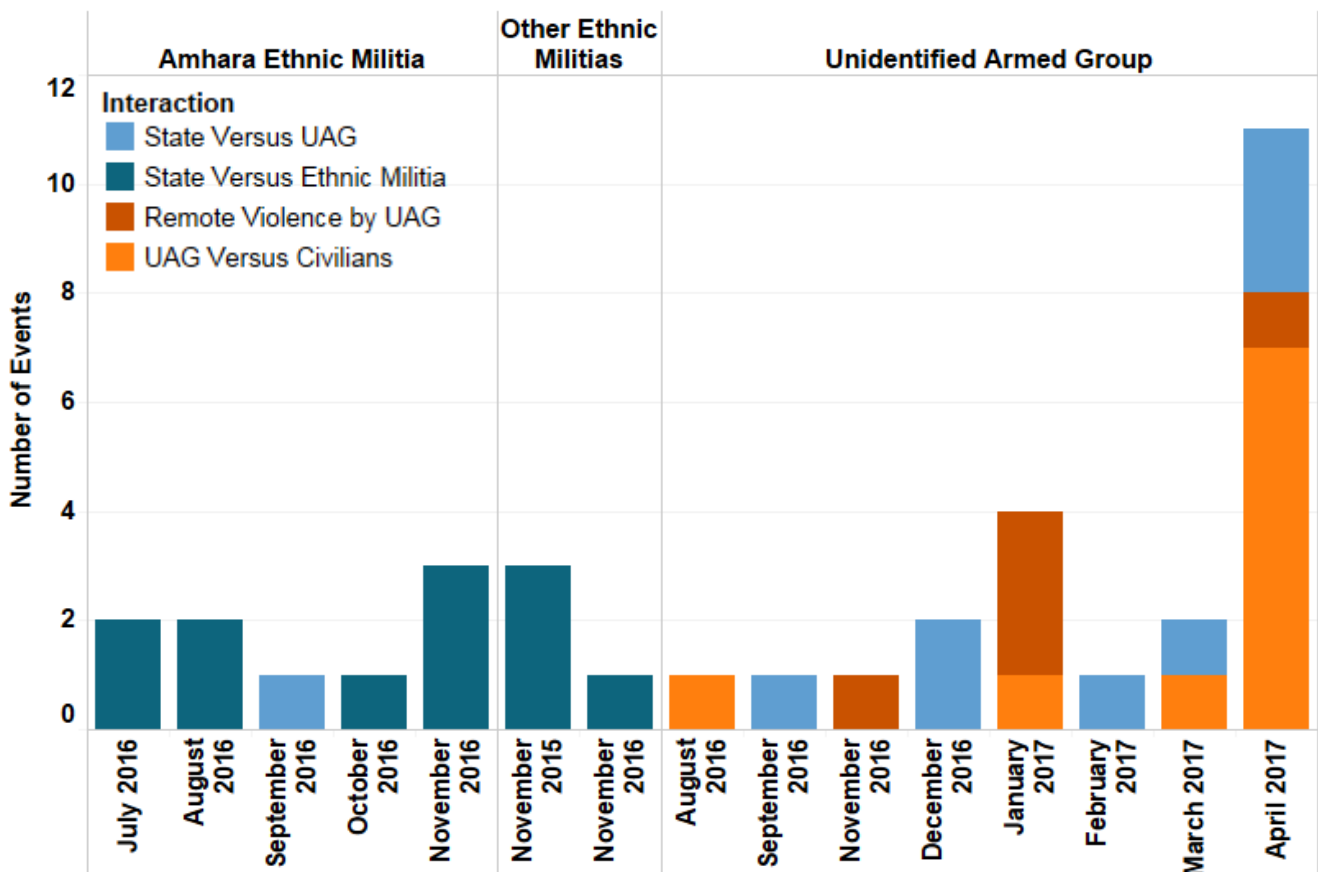


Figure 12: Main Ethnic and Political Militia Activity in Amhara by Interaction, from November 2015 - May 2017.

¹¹ Figure 13 compares the localisation of conflicts, riots and protests events in regions outside Oromia every three months in 2016. The colours represent the various event types recorded in each location. The size of the circles varies depending on the number of events recorded per event type in each location.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

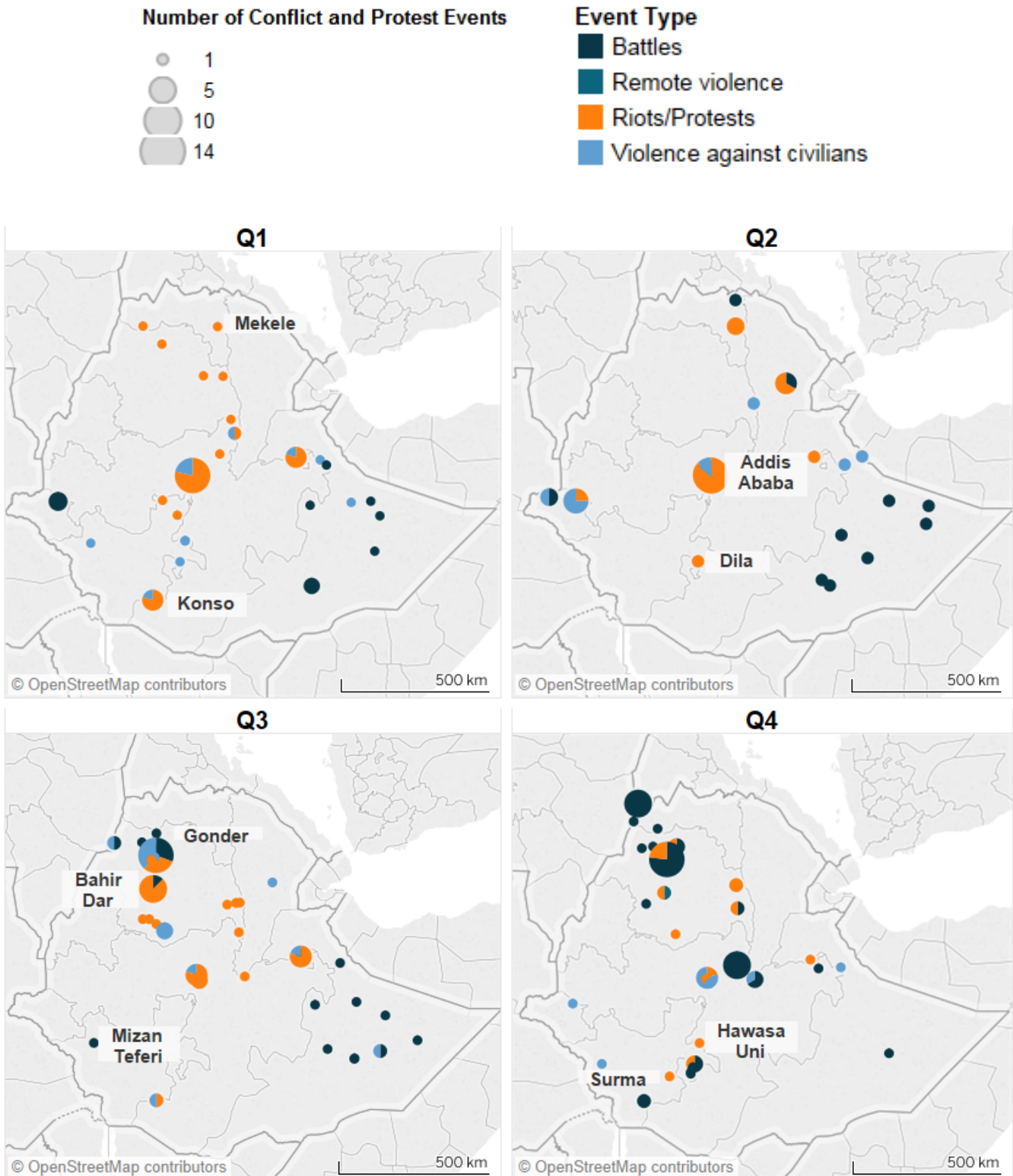


Figure 13: Number of Conflict and Protest Events in Regions outside Oromia by Quarter in Ethiopia, 2016.



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

([Amnesty, 18 October 2016](#)). Residents of several districts in Addis Ababa and in Dire Dawa also marched, in June 2016 and July 2016 respectively, to protest the future eviction from their homes planned by the government. Other expressions of group grievances were more violent: the Quemant farmers (of the Agaw ethnic group) clashed with security forces in November 2015 ([ESAT, 9 November 2015](#)). The Quemant officially numbering around 172,000, and live along an axis stretching to the north of Gonder. They have sought self-rule – as opposed to Amhara assimilation – as permitted under Ethiopia’s Constitution ([Tigrai online, 12 July 2013](#)). Members of the Surma ethnic group also clashed with state forces in the Omo valley in March and in Mizan Teferi in SNNPR in July 2016 over dispossession of their lands without compensation. Surma militants also attacked a group of European tourists in November 2016. Finally, farmers of Addis Ababa clashed with state forces in May 2016 as they were being evicted from their properties by security forces.

The Ethiopian Government

Since the beginning of the protests, the government has accused the OLF and the Patriotic Ginbot 7 for Unity and Democratic Movement (AGUDM) rebel groups of infiltrating the movement. The government considers these groups to be terrorist organisations supported by external forces including Eritrea and Egypt. The label has been used to discredit the protesters and justify the deployment of the Anti-Terror Task Force to the region starting on 15 December 2015 ([Asylum Research Consultancy, 7 September 2016](#)).

The Ethiopian government suspended the Addis Ababa Master Plan as a concession to the protesters in early January 2016, but subsequently increased its crackdown after the protests continued and spread. The government deployed federal military units throughout the stricken regions, and implemented security structures meant to spy on, expose, imprison and kill dissidents ([The Conversation, 14 August 2016](#); [IB Times, 23 March 2016](#)). In response to the role of social media in organising collective actions and in publicising human rights violations, the government enacted a Cybercrimes Law in June 2016, which

limited access to information on digital platforms. The law endorsed measures that had already been implemented since the beginning of the protests (e.g. regular cutting or slowing down of Internet connections, and restrictions on access to social media platforms and mobile messaging applications) ([Amnesty/OONI, 2016](#)). The law gave authorities further surveillance and censorship powers, and rendered social media evidence admissible in criminal charges brought against digital activists. The government also significantly curbed civil society activity, with reports of around 200 NGOs being shut down between November 2015 and July 2016 ([Freedom House, 22 July 2016](#)). Finally,

by declaring a state of emergency on 8 October 2016, the government cemented its commitment to repression rather than dialogue. The measure bans any campaign that could incite violence and disturbances, including protesting in schools, gesturing, exchanging opposition messages on social media, watching diaspora-led television news channels, and closing businesses and shops ([The Guardian, 20 October 2016](#); [Amnesty, 18 October 2016](#)).

A first investigation by the government-appointed Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in June 2016 revealed that 173 people had been killed in Oromia since November 2015, including 28 security force members ([US State Department, 2016](#)). A second EHRC investigation into unrest in some parts of Oromia, Amhara and SNNPR

over June - October 2016, acknowledged that an additional 669 people had been killed, including 63 among security forces. It also stated that, in a few instances, security forces had responded to the protests using inappropriate force ([Government, 18 April 2017](#)). EHRC investigations have been criticised for their lack of a transparent methodology, so international bodies continue to call for an UN-led independent investigation into the protests ([HRW, 18 May 2017](#)).

Available data collected in local and international media – including information published by non-governmental human rights organisations, opposition parties, or diaspora activists on social networks – and analysed by ACLED since November 2015 points to more than 1,200 people killed in the context of the protests. This includes around 660 fatalities from state violence against protesters, 250

“Available data collected from international and local media since November 2015 points to more than 1,200 people reported killed during protests. Approximately 660 fatalities are due to from state violence against peaceful protesters, 250 fatalities from state engagement against rioters, and more than 380 people killed by security forces following the declaration of the state of emergency in October 2016.”

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

fatalities from riots, and more than 380 people killed following the declaration of the state of emergency in October 2016 (see Figure 14¹²). Tens of thousands of people have been arrested and charged with terrorism offenses, including 20,000 in the months that followed the declaration of the state of emergency, but also thousands of others arrested earlier in the year (HRW, 9 March 2017). Among those charged are teachers, activists, bloggers, journalists and prominent opposition members. OFC president Dr. Merera Gudina for instance, a key leader of the Oromo movement, was detained and charged on terrorism offenses and other counts after denouncing human rights violations at a European Parliament conference in Brussels at the end of 2016. Members of the opposition Semayawi youth party were also arrested for criticising the government’s response to the protests.

On the political stage, the government’s limited response to calls for deep structural reforms by protesters show its lack of interest in solving protesters’ grievances or addressing the democratic deficit in the county (Africa Confidential, 20 January 2017). For instance, despite a departure from tradition in the appointment of technocrats

rather than political loyalists to senior positions, changes introduced to the Prime Minister’s Cabinet in the course of 2016 suggested only minimal ideological repositioning. In particular, no change was made to the Tigrayan-dominated leadership of the security forces (Africa Confidential, 2 December 2016). Moreover, despite the Prime Minister’s declaration that the government is trying to reform the electoral system to include the opposition’s demands for better representation, the ability of the opposition to make any gains in the next local and national elections seems limited (Africa News, 11 October 2016). The same goes for the likelihood that any major figures within the regime will be affected by the ramping-up of corruption prosecutions in the next few months (Africa Confidential, 20 January 2017). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the government has failed to engage in a dialogue with the protesters to address their grievances. The Oromo community’s main representative within the ruling coalition - the OPDO - has failed to condemn the excessive use of force towards the protesters. OPDO representatives reformed the party’s leadership in a bid to address the causes of unrest. However, the move led to the appointment of former regional and federal security

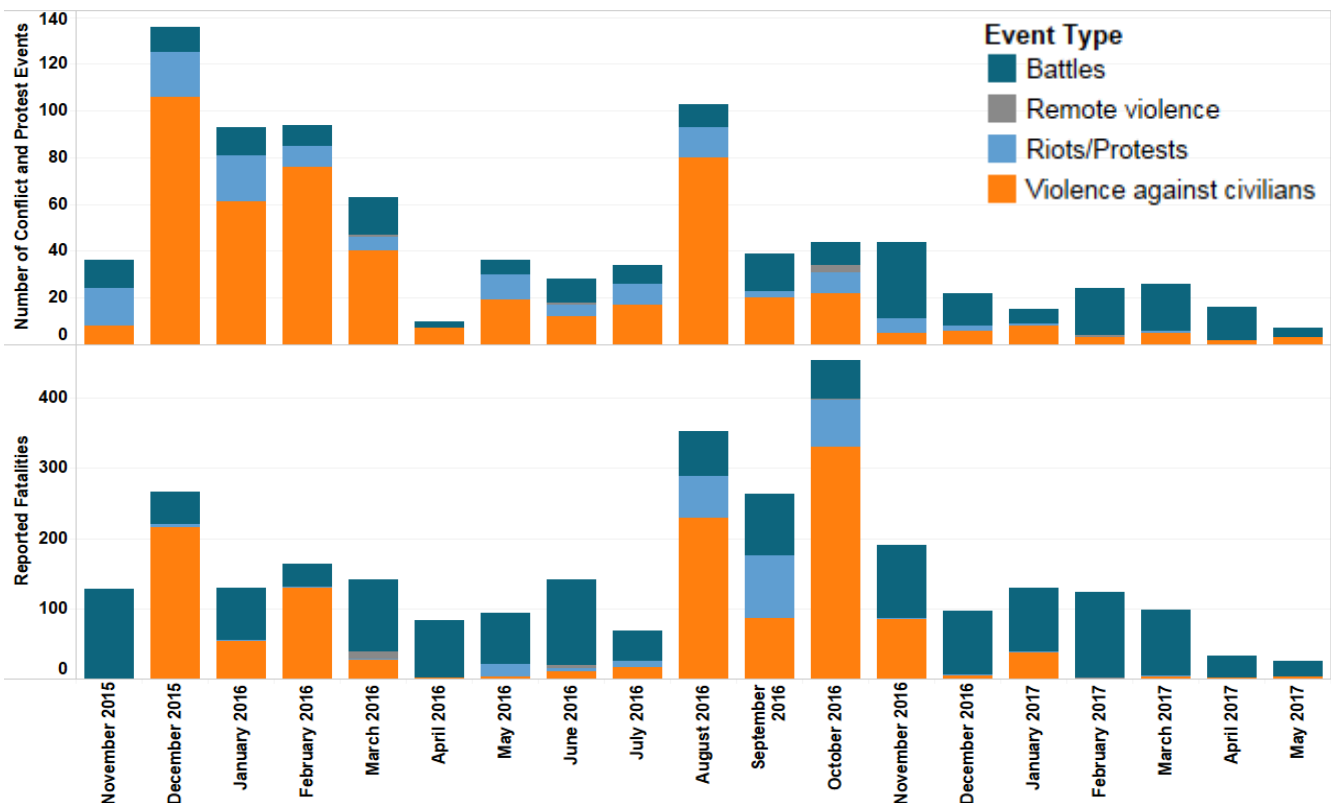


Figure 14: Number of Events Involving State Forces by Type and Reported Fatalities in Ethiopia, from November 2015 - May 2017.

¹² Figure 14 shows the number of conflict, riot and protest events in which state forces were involved in Ethiopia and the related fatalities between November 2015 and May 2017. All the numbers are disaggregated per event types.



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

operatives to the head of the party, and is widely interpreted among the opposition as an attempt by the TPLF to further militarise the OPDO's structure. The OPDO confirms its subservient status within the ruling EPRDF coalition, and thus its inability to represent Oromos' voices ([African Arguments, 7 October 2016](#)).

The Diaspora

The Ethiopian diaspora is estimated at two million, a significant number of whom remain actively engaged in domestic politics and critical of the ruling government ([Dittgen and Demissie, January 2017](#)). Diaspora activists, writers, bloggers and journalists play a key role in providing coverage of the recent protests, particularly on social media websites like Facebook and Twitter, using the handle #OromoProtests. This was particularly important considering the limited press freedom and the increasingly severe government restrictions on communication and information-sharing platforms inside the country ([Amnesty/OONI, 2016](#); [Quartz Africa, 25 October 2016](#)). For example, criticism on social media following violence at the Irecha festival in Bishoftu on 2 October 2016, was possible by activists based outside Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the entire Internet was shut down in most parts of the country after the events ([EISF, 31 October 2016](#)). The diaspora's ability to coordinate and lead the protest movement in Ethiopia, however, is stymied by the lack of internet access in rural areas of the country, and by the government's increasing restrictions ([The Washington Post, 14 October 2016](#)).

Beyond social media, international sporting events have also been used to raise awareness and support for the issues faced by Ethiopian ethnic groups in their country. Crossing wrists above one's head became a gesture of solidarity with protesters in Ethiopia after silver medallist Feyisa Lilesa made the sign while crossing the finish line at the 2016 Rio Olympics. The move gained sufficient traction amongst Ethiopians to be banned under the state of emergency, as well as other similar solidarity gestures ([African Arguments, 6 March 2017](#)). During the state of emergency, international sporting events have become one of the only ways for Ethiopians to continue to register their discontent towards the EPRDF rule. Several Ethiopian athletes, for instance, refused to wave the current starred Ethiopian flag to celebrate their victories at various events in early 2017, thereby protesting EPRDF's inability to embrace ethnic and religious diversity ([African Arguments, 6 March 2017](#)).

The International Community

The recent crisis is the first time that ethnic issues in Ethiopia have attracted such global attention, due in part to the diaspora's ability to relay information that was blocked inside the country. However, public criticism by donor governments and allies has been minimal. The European Parliament and the United States (US) Senate have produced the strongest statements, condemning the Ethiopian government's violent crackdown, and calling for their own governments to take a stronger stance against the EPRDF regime. Various international and regional bodies, as well as a number of human rights organisations, called for an independent, credible investigation into the crisis ([HRW, June 2016](#)). As of May 2017, these statements have not translated into any substantial policy shift on the part of the Ethiopian government, nor in the implementation of conditions for donor funding of political, economic and humanitarian projects in Ethiopia.

Failure to express its disapproval has underlined the international community's prioritisation of Ethiopia's track record on development and economic progress, and of its strategic role in issues such as the fight against terrorism, regional instability and migration ([NYT, 12 August 2016](#); [HRW, June 2016](#)). The public statement made by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, during her visit to Ethiopia early 2017, is seen as a missed opportunity to denounce the government's crackdown. She instead focused on partnerships related to humanitarian assistance, migration, refugees and economic growth ([EEAS, 17 March 2017](#); [HRW, 24 March 2017](#)).

Rebel Groups

The link between rebel groups and protesters remains largely unclear. However, the ACLED dataset shows that rebel activity in 2016 was at its third highest since 1997, which suggests that the protests have encouraged rebel groups to intensify their operations (see Figure 15¹³). Rebellion reached unprecedented levels in Oromia and Tigray, led by the OLF and the AGUDM forces respectively; and in Amhara, rebellion led by the AGUDM forces resurfaced after two years of inactivity (see Figure 16¹⁴).

In Oromia, neither the Oromo protesters nor the OLF confirm any organisational link with each other. OLF's Executive Committee, however, encourages its armed wing to intensify efforts to defend the oppressed Oromos ([OLF, 4 December 2015](#)). The Qeerroo group also recognises the OLF as the origin of Oromo nationalism and articulates that OLF should replace the Tigrayan-dominated regime

¹³ Figure 15 shows the regions where insurgencies in Ethiopia have mainly concentrated, every year between January 1997 and May 2017.

¹⁴ Figure 16 shows the regions where the main rebel groups in Ethiopia have been active, every year between January 1997 and May 2017.

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

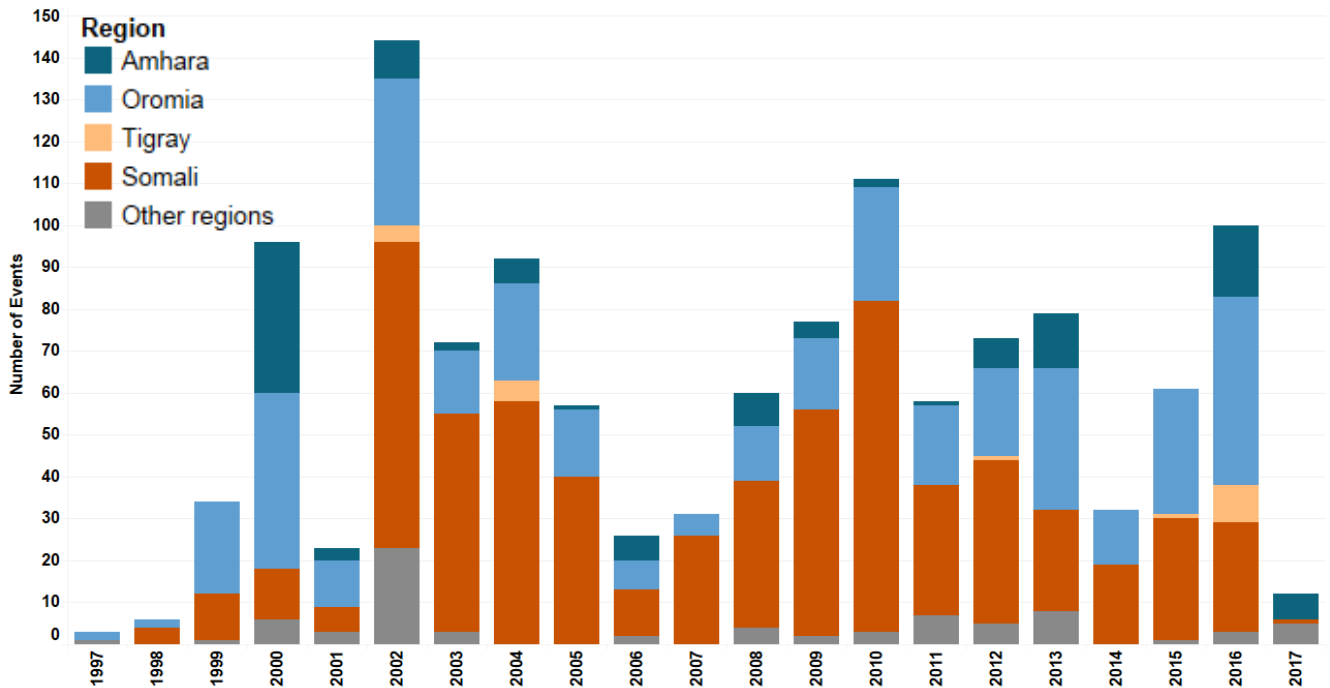


Figure 15: Rebel Activity by Regions and Year in Ethiopia, from 1997 - 2017.

([The Conversation, 14 August 2016](#)). The rise in clashes between Oromo militias and the Liyu police in early 2017 has not, as of May 2017, led to a response by the OLF. This suggests a lack of coordination between opposition movements in Oromia.

In Tigray and Amhara, heavy battles followed the declaration of the state of emergency; these represented the most significant engagement of the AGUDM forces. AGUDM was formed in 2015 as a result of a merger between the military wings of the Eritrea-based Ethiopian People’s Patriotic Front (EPPF) and Ginbot 7. It aims to combat the Ethiopian government. At the time, Ginbot 7 had just transitioned from a peaceful political opposition movement based in the US to an armed rebel group with a new base in Eritrea ([VOA, 25 July 2015](#); [Amhara Times, 26 August 2014](#)). The Benishangul People’s Liberation Movement (BPLM) fought against state forces in Benshangul-Gumaz region in early 2017. The BPLM had signed a cooperation agreement with the EPPF in 2008 to conduct joint military operations against the government ([Ethiopian Review, 18 November 2009](#)). It is unclear whether the recent wave of attacks by UAGs in the Amhara region has any link with these rebel fronts.

The scale and spread of the protests has encouraged rebel groups and opposition movements to gather their forces into a single front against the current government, in a

manner reminiscent of the overthrow of previous Ethiopian regimes. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) represents the most sustained rebellion movement against the new Ethiopian regime and is concentrated mainly in the Somali Ogaden region, condemns the government’s violence towards Oromo protesters in December 2015. It called on all oppressed people to fight in unison against the regime ([ONLF, December 2015](#); [UNPO, 7 November 2016](#)). In August 2016, as protests spread from Oromia to Amhara, Ginbot 7 signed a memorandum of understanding with the recently-formed Oromo Democratic Front (ODF), an independent political party run by former OLF leaders and supporters. Through the agreement, the two groups called for a coalition of all democratic and militant groups to remove the current TPLF-dominated regime and transition to a genuine federal and democratic state ([Tesfa News, 12 August 2016](#)).

Conclusion and Outlook

This piece has underlined several trends that might influence the evolution of the political situation in Ethiopia over the next few months. The ongoing unrest indicates a need for deep systemic reform in how federalism is implemented, and in how power and resources are shared in Ethiopia. Grievances that motivated the protests of the past two years have not been addressed, and discussions

COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

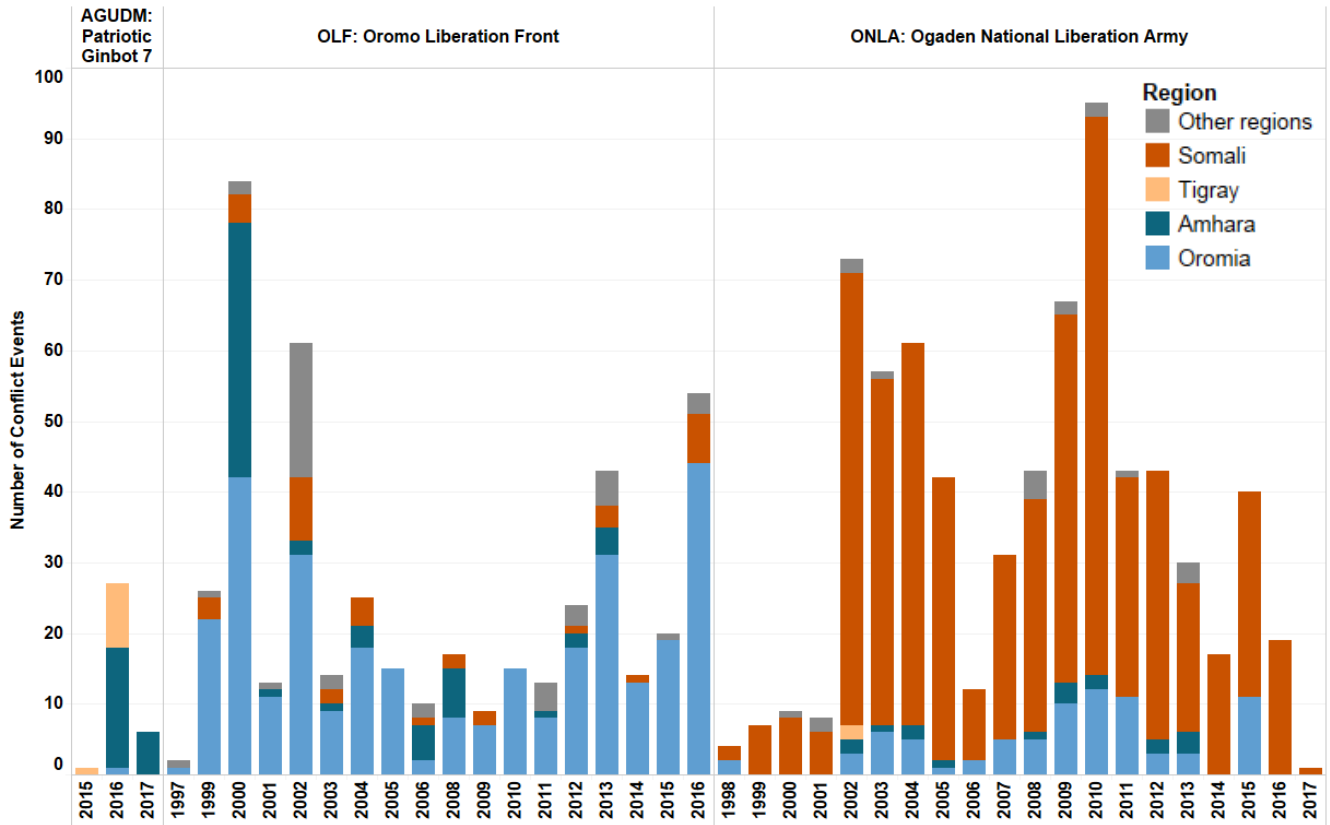


Figure 16: Geography of Main Rebel Group’s Activity in Ethiopia, from January 1997 - May 2017.

have yet to take place between the government and the protesters. This suggests that there is a strong possibility of demonstrations resuming once the state of emergency is lifted at the end of July 2017. Future unrest is also likely as a result of forthcoming development projects (e.g. plans to build a new international airport in Oromia and a six-lane road through Oromia and SNNPR), which carry the potential for further evictions in the near future ([Africa Confidential, 18 March 2016](#)). Advancements in negotiations between the protesters and the government will reduce the likelihood of future disruptions.

If the protests resume, it is unclear whether the Oromo community will retain support from the Amhara community and other ethnic groups, and whether these groups can form a more unified peaceful opposition to the government. Deeper solidarity between groups of young grassroots demonstrators is possible if ethno-nationalist leaders find a way to

stand together and resolve their historical differences ([African Arguments, 3 May 2017](#)).

“Grievances that motivated the protests of the past two years have not been addressed, and discussions have yet to take place between the government and the protesters. This suggests that there is a strong possibility of demonstrations resuming once the state of emergency is lifted at the end of July 2017.”

Yet, the increased tendency among some activists and ethno-political groups to take up arms against state forces in protest regions, combined with the intensification of rebel activity, could lead to a further escalation of the violence in Ethiopia. Rebel groups such as the OLF in Oromia or the AGUDM in Amhara might gain increasing support; and may gradually seek to form a stronger and more unified rebel coalition movement against the EPRDF regime.



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

References and Supporting Texts

ACLED. Conflict Trends Report No. 55, February 2017. Accessed 15 March 2017 at http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ACLED_Conflict-Trends-Report-No.55-February-2017_pdf..pdf

Addis Standard. Why resist the Addis Abeba Master Plan? – A constitutional legal exploration, 20 August 2015. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://addisstandard.com/why-resist-the-addis-abeba-master-plan-a-constitutional-legal-exploration/>

African Arguments. Ethiopia's unprecedented nationwide Oromo protests: who, what, why?, 6 August 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://africanarguments.org/2016/08/06/ethiopia-unprecedented-nationwide-oromo-protests-who-what-why/>

African Arguments. Behind the Ethiopia protests: A view from inside the government, 18 September 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://africanarguments.org/2016/09/16/behind-the-ethiopia-protests-a-view-from-inside-the-government/>

African Arguments. "The blood flowing in Oromia is our blood too": Why Oromo-Amhara solidarity is the greatest threat to the Ethiopian government, 27 September 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://africanarguments.org/2016/09/27/the-blood-flowing-in-oromia-is-our-blood-too-why-oromo-amhara-solidarity-is-the-greatest-threat-to-the-ethiopian-government/>

African Arguments. Ethiopia: How popular uprising became the only option, 7 October 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://africanarguments.org/2016/10/07/ethiopia-how-popular-uprising-became-the-only-option/>

African Arguments. The Ethiopia protesters' struggle moves to the athletics track, 6 March 2017. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://africanarguments.org/2017/03/06/the-ethiopia-protesters-struggle-moves-to-the-athletics-track/>

African Arguments. Ethiopia uprising: Whither solidarity?, 3 May 2017. Accessed 5 May 2017 at <http://africanarguments.org/2017/05/03/ethiopia-uprising-whither-solidarity/>

Africa Confidential. "Greater Addis" anger, 18 December

2015. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11402/%27Greater_Addis%27_anger

Africa Confidential. Oromia erupts, 18 March 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/11594/Oromia_erupts

Africa Confidential. The centre holds on, 26 August 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11754/The_centre_holds_on

Africa Confidential. New faces, old tactics, 2 December 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11844/New_faces%2c_old_tactics

Africa Confidential. Development state digs in, 20 January 2017. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11893/Development_state_digs_in

Africa News. Ethiopian PM promises electoral reform, opposition unconvinced, 11 October 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://www.africanews.com/2016/10/11/ethiopian-pm-promises-electoral-reform-opposition-unconvinced/>

Amhara Times. Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front (EPPF), Amhara Democratic Movement Force (ADMF) and Ginbot 7 Popular Force united, 26 August 2014. Accessed 15 April 2017 at <http://www.amharatimes.com/2014/08/26/ethiopian-peoples-patriotic-front-eppf-amhara-democratic-movement-force-admf-and-ginbot-7-popular-force-united/>

Amnesty. "Because I am Oromo": sweeping repression in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, 10 October 2014. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/4000/afr250062014en.pdf>

Amnesty. Authorities must provide justice for scores of protesters killed, injured and arrested in Oromia, 13 May 2014. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/authorities-must-provide-justice-scores-protesters-killed-injured-and-arrested>

Amnesty. Ethiopia: reform only feasible way out of mounting crisis, 18 October 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://www.amnesty.be/IMG/pdf/>



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

ethiopia_public_statement_20161018.pdf

Amnesty/OONI. Ethiopia offline: evidence of social media blocking and Internet censorship in Ethiopia, 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://www.amnesty.ch/de/laender/afrika/aethiopien/dok/2016/webseiten-und-soziale-medien-waehrend-protesten-systematisch-blockiert/bericht-ethiopia-offline-evidence-of-social-media-blocking-and-internet-censorship-in-ethiopia.pdf>

Africa Research Bulletin. Ethiopia: state of emergency, Vol.53, Issue 10, 31 October 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/doi/10.1111/j.1467-825X.2016.07287.x/epdf>

Arriola, L.R. Protesting and Policing in a Multiethnic Authoritarian State: Evidence from Ethiopia, *Comparative Politics*, Vol.45, No.2, January 2013. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41714180.pdf>

Asylum Research Consultancy. Ethiopia COI query responses, 7 September 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/57cff8c14.pdf>

Bach, J.N. L'Éthiopie après Meles Zenawi : l'autoritarisme ethnique à bout de souffle ?, *LAM*, Vol.2, No.142, 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-africaine-2016-2-page-5.htm>

Chatham House. Ethiopia's Foreign Policy: Regional Integration and International Priorities, 23 October 2015 Accessed 1 March 2017 at https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194543/15.10.26_Ethiopia_FM_Transcript_0.pdf

CIVICUS. Worldwide attack on rights: over three billion people living in countries where civic freedoms are violated, 24 October 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/worldwide-attack-rights-over-three-billion-people-living-countries-where-civic-freedoms>

Van Veen, E. Perpetuating power: Ethiopia's political settlement and the organization of security, Clingendael Institute, September 2016. Accessed 15 April 2017 at https://www.clingendael.nl/pub/2016/power-politics-and-security-in-ethiopia/1_past_and_present_of_political_power_in_ethiopia/

EEAS. HRVP Federica Mogherini meets Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, 17 March 2017. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/>

[headquarters-homepage/22980/hrvp-federica-mogherini-meets-ethiopian-prime-minister-hailemariam-desalegn_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters-22980/hrvp-federica-mogherini-meets-ethiopian-prime-minister-hailemariam-desalegn_en)

EHRP. #OromoProtests: 100 days of public protests, March 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://ehrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/EHRP-OromoProtests-100-Days-of-Public-Protests.pdf>

EISF. The State of Emergency in Ethiopia and Aid Worker Security, 31 October 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/state-emergency-ethiopia-and-aid-worker-security>

Ethiopian Review. EPPF strives to fill the leadership gap, 18 November 2009. Accessed 15 April 2017 at <http://www.ethiopianreview.com/index/11274>

Freedom House. Ethiopia, 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/ethiopia>

Freedom House. Ethiopia: Attack on Civil Society Escalates as Dissent Spreads, 22 July 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://freedomhouse.org/blog/ethiopia-attack-civil-society-escalates-dissent-spreads>

GFDRR. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: enhancing urban resilience, July 2015. Accessed 15 April 2017 at https://www.gfdr.org/sites/default/files/publication/Addis_Ababa_Resilient_cities_program.pdf

Global Security. Ethiopian Army, 2015. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ethiopia/army.htm>

Government. Constitution of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 8 December 1994. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/et00000_.html

Government. Keynote address by H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at the 5th International Conference on Federalism, 13 December 2010. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/high_contrast/news_archive/PM_Meles_Zenawi_federalism.pdf

Government. Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) 2010/11 - 2014/15, 2010. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.vliruos.be/media/1829405/growth_and_transformation_plan.pdf



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

Government. Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) 2015/16 - 2019/20, 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/resilience_ethiopia/document/growth-and-transformation-plan-ii-gtp-ii-201516-201920

Government. Human Rights Commission publicises findings about the recent sporadic disturbances, 18 April 2017. Accessed 1 May at <http://www.ena.gov.et/en/index.php/politics/item/3068-human-rights-commission-publicizes-findings-about-the-recent-sporadic-disturbances>

Handino, M, J. Lind and B. Mesfin. After Meles: implications for Ethiopia's development, IDS, Issue 01, October 2012. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/RapidReponseBriefing1.pdf>

IPU. Ethiopia. Yehizb Tewokayoch Mekir Bete (House of Peoples' Representatives): historical archive of Parliamentary election results, 2010. Accessed 1 April 2017 at http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2107_arc.htm

IPU. Ethiopia. Yehizb Tewokayoch Mekir Bete (House of Peoples' Representatives): last elections, 2015. Accessed 1 April 2017 at http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2107_E.htm

UNHRC. Written statement submitted by the Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, 29 May 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1470301097_g1611660.pdf

HRW. Ethiopia's Invisible Crisis, 22 January 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-s-invisible-crisis>

HRW. "Such a brutal crackdown": killings and arrests in response to Ethiopia's Oromo protests, June 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/ethiopia0616web.pdf

HRW. US: Stand Up for Ethiopians as Government Stifles Protests, Jails Journalists, 9 March 2017. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/09/us-stand-ethiopians-government-stifles-protests-jails-journalists>

HRW. Letter on Ethiopia to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs / Vice-President of the European Commission Mogherini, 24 March 2017. Accessed 1 April 2017 at

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/24/letter-ethiopia-eu-high-representative-foreign-affairs/vice-president-european>

HRW. European Parliament Demands Investigation Into Ethiopia Killings, 18 May 2017. Accessed 20 May 2017 at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/18/european-parliament-demands-investigation-ethiopia-killings>

IB Times. Martial law in Oromia: The state is now under 8 military divisions controlled by Fascist TPLF warlords from Tigray, 23 March 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <https://oromianeconomist.com/2016/03/23/martial-law-in-romia-the-state-is-now-under-8-military-divisions-controlled-by-fascist-tplf-warlords-from-tigray/>

ICG. Ethiopia: Ethnic federalism and its discontents, 4 September 2009. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/153-ethiopia-ethnic-federalism-and-its-discontents.pdf>

Broussar, N.H., and T.G. Tekleselassie. Youth Unemployment: Ethiopia Country Study, IGC working paper, August 2012. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <https://www.prime-ethiopia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Youth-Unemployment-Ethiopia-Country-Study.pdf>

Keeley, J., W. Michago Seide, A. Eid and A. Lokaley Kide-wa. Large-scale land deals in Ethiopia: Scale, trends, features and outcomes to date, IIED, 2014. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/12575IIED.pdf>

ESAT. Heavy fighting continued, 16 farmers and 48 soldiers killed in heavy fighting in Gondar, 9 November 2015. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://mereja.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=106547>

Mesfin, B. Electoral dispute resolution in Africa: the case of Ethiopia, African Renaissance, Vol.5, No.3-4, January 2008. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://journals.co.za/content/aa_afren/5/3_4/EJC10307

Mesfin, B. The Danger of African Liberation Movements, ISS, 22 July 2008. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-danger-of-african-liberation-movements>

Mesfin, B. Top challenges facing new Addis Ababa mayor, The Reporter, 2013. Accessed 1 March 2017 at https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=750530628345318&id=219456024786117



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

Mesfin, B. Le fédéralisme ethnique en Ethiopie : Entre déclin et endurance, OEPSCA, Note 5, May 2015. Accessed 1 March 2017 at http://www.lam.sciencespobordeaux.fr/sites/lam/files/note5_observatoire.pdf

MFP. Cruelty and Denial: Medical Evidence for State-Sponsored Torture in Ethiopia, 18 June 2012. Accessed 15 March 2017 at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ethiopia_Report_6_18_2012.pdf

Moreda, T. Large-scale land acquisitions, state authority and indigenous local communities: insights from Ethiopia, Third World Quarter, Vol.38, No.3, July 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01436597.2016.1191941?needAccess=true>

Oakland Institute. Understanding land investment deals in Africa – Country report: Ethiopia, 2011. Accessed 1 April 2017 at https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI_Ethiopia_Land_Investment_report.pdf

Oakland Institute. Development aid to Ethiopia: overlooking violence, marginalization and political repression, 2013. Accessed 1 April 2017 at https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI_Brief_Development_Aid_Ethiopia.pdf

OLF. Statement of Oromo Liberation Front Executive Committee, 4 December 2015. Accessed 1 May 2017 at <http://oromoliberationfront.org/en/statement-of-oromo-liberation-front-executive-committee/>

ONLF. Ogaden National Liberation Front press release on Oromo protest, December 2015. Accessed 1 May 2017 at <http://www.durame.com/2015/12/ogaden-national-liberation-front-press.html>

Opride. Liyu police raids in Oromia testing Ethiopia's semblance of calm, 5 March 2017. Accessed 1 May 2017 at <https://www.opride.com/2017/03/05/liyu-police-raids-romia-testing-ethiopia-semblance-calm/>

Quartz Africa. The diaspora media movement shaping the coverage of Ethiopia's protests, 25 October 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://qz.com/817605/the-diaspora-media-movement-shaping-the-coverage-of-ethiopia-oromo-and-amhara-protests/>

Dittgen R., and A. Abate Demissie. Own ways of doing: national pride, power and China's political calculus in

Ethiopia, SAIIA, January 2017. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://www.saiia.org.za/occasional-papers/1151-own-ways-of-doing-national-pride-power-and-china-s-political-calculus-in-ethiopia/file>

SIDA. Structures and relations of power: Ethiopia, Country strategy 2003-2007, March 2003. Accessed 1 April 2017 at http://www.sida.se/contentassets/c77ce976b22f4b409c0b9d67c8d3530c/structures-and-relations-of-power-in-ethiopia_469.pdf

Tesfa News. Patriotic Ginbot 7 (PG7), Oromo Democratic Front (ODF) formed an alliance, 12 August 2016. Accessed 1 May 2017 at <https://www.tesfanews.net/ethiopia-oppositions-pg7-odf-formed-military-alliance/>

The Conversation. Why the Oromo protests mark a change in Ethiopia's political landscape, 14 August 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <https://theconversation.com/why-the-oromo-protests-mark-a-change-in-ethiopia-political-landscape-63779>

The Guardian. State of emergency likely to ramp up repression in fractured Ethiopia, 20 October 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/20/state-of-emergency-likely-ramp-up-repression-fractured-ethiopia>

The Guardian. Ethnic tensions in Gondar reflect the toxic nature of Ethiopian politics, 22 December 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/dec/22/gondar-ethiopia-ethnic-tensions-toxic-politics>

The New York Times. "A Generation Is Protesting" in Ethiopia, Long a U.S. Ally, 12 August 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/13/world/africa/ethiopia-protests.html?_r=0

The Washington Post. In Ethiopia's war against social media, the truth is the main casualty, 14 October 2016. Accessed 15 April 2017 at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/10/14/in-ethiopia-war-against-social-media-the-truth-is-the-main-casualty/?utm_term=.08e1995c68b8

Tigrai online. Unfinished Amharization process in Ethiopia and Kemant's Quest for Dignity and Self-Rule, 12 July 2013. Accessed 15 April 2017 at <http://www.tigraionline.com/articles/kemant-amharization.html>



COUNTRY REPORT: Popular Mobilisation in Ethiopia: An Investigation of Activity from November 2015 to May 2017

Transparency International. Ethiopia, 2016. Accessed 15 March 2017 at <http://www.transparency.org/country/ETH>

UNPO. Ogaden: ONLF Calls for Unity in Face of Worsening Human Rights Situation, 7 November 2016. Accessed 1 May 2017 at <http://unpo.org/article/19618>

US State Department. Ethiopia 2016 Human Rights Report, 2016. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265466.pdf>

VOA. Ethiopian Opposition Group Threatens Armed Resistance, 25 July 2015. Accessed 1 May 2017 at <http://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-opposition-group-threatens-armed-resistance/2878413.html>

VOA. Several Killed in Ethiopia Oromia Protests, 11 December 2015. Accessed 1 April 2017 at <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/several-killed-ethiopia-romia-protests>

World Bank. Country dashboard: Ethiopia, 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/ETH>

World Bank. Ethiopia public expenditure review, April 2016. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/176471468178145744/pdf/ACS14541-WP-OUO-9-Ethiopia-PER-final-May-12.pdf>

World Bank. World Development Indicators: Ethiopia, 2017. Accessed 1 March 2017 at <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=ETH>