



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Ethiopia – January to June 2025

30 June 2025

03 February 2025

Human rights abuses in Amhara

According to reports released by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Ethiopian government carried out serious human rights violations against ethnic Amhara people in the reporting period between September and December 2024. The Commission refers in particular to the extrajudicial killing and injuring of civilians, including women and children in the course of fighting in Gondar City, Dabat, Gerchech and Quy, among other places. In addition, civilians who are thought to have links with the Fano militia have reportedly been unlawfully detained or killed. Fano are also said to have killed civilians alleged to have links to the ruling party. Fighting between government forces and the Amharic Fano militia has intensified again since September 2024 (cf. BN of 23.09.24, 07.10.24 and 11.11.24).¹

24 February 2025

Security situation in Amhara

At least 19 civilians, including children, are reported to have been killed by the Ethiopian National Defence Force in recent drone attacks carried out between 15.02.25 and 21.02.25. The attacks, which were directed against the armed Fano militia, took place in the regional state of Amhara, in the Goncha Enese district (East Gojjam, Angesh Kebele) and in Ambassel (Wollo). Fierce clashes have been recurring between government troops and the regional militia since 2021, and fighting has intensified since October 2024 as part of a large-scale military offensive launched by Ethiopian and regional forces against the Fano (cf. BN of 07.10.24).²

31 March 2025

Tension in Tigray

More than two years after the peace negotiations between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian central government in Tigray, tensions are reportedly resurfacing in the region. After the TPLF and its armed wing, the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF), split due to internal tensions, the TPLF splinter faction led by Debretsion Gebremichael, on the one hand, and the government-appointed transitional government under Getachew Reda, on the other, are now acting as two factions. In mid-March 2025, the situation between the two camps intensified. According to reports, TDF forces, who are continuing to align with Debretsion, took control of Alula Aba Nega airport in Mekelle and the town hall in Adi Gudem on 12.03.25. During the takeover of the town hall, local officials were reportedly arrested and civilians who had gathered around the building were injured.

Adigrat is also said to have been taken over by pro-Debretsion groups. At the end of March 2025, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed instructed the people of Tigray to nominate a new candidate for the interim government in Tigray in a bid to prevent further tensions.³

07 April 2025

Clashes in Oromia

According to reports, at least 20 people were killed, others were injured, and three persons were abducted, on 28.03.25 in the Horo Guduru Wollega Zone (Abe Dongoro District, Tullu Moti Kebele). The attack is said to have targeted security forces of the local militia and the Oromia Special Forces. The casualties are said to have included both security forces and civilians. The Fano armed group from the neighbouring Amhara Region is presumed to be behind the attack.⁴

Hundreds detained in Addis Ababa

More than 900 people are reported to have been arrested in Addis Ababa in February and March 2025. The detainees are said to include 224 Eritrean nationals accused of being linked to the Eritrean government. There had already been mass arrests of Eritreans in Addis Ababa and other regions of the country in the autumn of 2024. Observers are said to presume that the continuing tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia are the cause of the detentions. The other Ethiopian detainees are said to be accused of having ties with the Fano militia, with the Oromo Liberation Army, or with the renegade Tigray People's Liberation Front faction (cf. BN of 31.03.25).⁵

14 April 2025

Journalists detained

According to reports, seven journalists of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service were detained between 26.03. and 28.03.25. They were said to have been detained for broadcasting the programme "Addis Meiraf", in which Birtukan Temesgen spoke of her abduction and rape by men in military uniforms in 2020. Temesgen was said to have later recanted her claims, and to have been detained together with the responsible journalists. The police are said to have accused the detainees amongst other things of threatening the constitutional order and coordinating with extremist groups. It was said that they had been initially remanded for 14 days while further investigations were carried out.⁶

28 April 2025

Clashes and drone attacks in Amhara

On 16. and 17.04.25, according to reports 150 persons were killed by drone attacks in Gedebe (Enarj Enawga, East Gojjam). The attacks took place as part of the Ethiopian government's offensive against the Fano militia. Whilst the affected population spoke of civilian casualties, official reports stressed the targeted attack on Fano members, and called other reports "enemy propaganda".

At least five more civilians were killed in Agona (Este, South Gondar) in clashes between Fano fighters and government forces on 15.04.25. Homes are also said to have been destroyed. According to eyewitnesses, government troops attacked civilians in the locality after the clash with the Fano, suspecting some of them of supporting the Fano. No more Fano members are said to have been present at the time, according to those affected. The government has not commented on the incident.⁷

05 May 2025

Amendment to the Media Proclamation

In April 2025, parliament passed the amendment of Mass Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021. This constitutes a massive restructuring of the administration of the Ethiopian media supervisory authority. The bill shifts major

responsibilities previously handled by the board of the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA), including the right to choose the Director-General, to the prime minister. It also holds media outlets directly responsible for the content of live broadcasts. The amendment has come under criticism from media professionals and organisations. The International Press Institute also warns of the risk of restrictions on press freedoms. Especially media professionals covering crises and wars are subject to government pressure. More than 50 media workers are said to have gone into exile since 2020, and at least 200 to have been arrested since 2019. 12 journalists are said to be currently behind bars.⁸

Detentions in Oromia

According to reports, arbitrary detentions are said to have taken place in Adama (Misraq Shewa Zone, West Shewa) of mainly young male civilians. Regional security forces are said to be demanding large sums of money for the release of the detainees. Back in November 2024, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reported of arbitrary detentions and recruitment in conjunction with demands for money by security forces in Adama (cf. BN of 16.12.24).⁹

26 May 2025

Healthcare professionals detained

Since 13.05.25, large numbers of employees from the healthcare sector have been demonstrating peacefully across the country in order to call attention to their precarious conditions, including low wages and difficult working conditions. According to reports, more than one hundred individuals have been detained since the demonstrations started, including more than 20 in Addis Ababa. According to information from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, there were furthermore detentions in Agaro, Arbaminch, Bahir Dar, Fiche, Goba, Hawassa and Jimma, amongst other places. Those arrested are said to have been accused amongst other things of mobilising for the strike on social media, intimidating other employees, and inciting unrest. The government regards the demonstrations as politically motivated. Large numbers of healthcare facilities are said to be continuing to take part in the demonstrations, thus creating shortages in medical care in some instances.¹⁰

16 June 2025

Action against media workers

According to reports, journalist and editor-in-chief of Ethiopia Insider, Tesfalem Waldyes, was detained in Addis Ababa on 08.06.25, accused of “spreading false information”. Despite a court having issued a release order on payment of bail, the police had continued to detain Tesfalem, and had not released him until 13.06.25. According to reports, on 22.05.25 Ahmed Abdi Omar, founder of the Jigjiga Television Network, was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of “propagation of disinformation and public incitement”. The reason for the detention had been partly anti-government posts on a Facebook page attributed to Ahmed. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the articles had not however been directly disseminated by Ahmed. The government repeatedly acts harshly towards media workers (cf. BN of 14.04.25), and Reporters without Borders recently ranked Ethiopia 145th out of 180 in terms of press freedom. Six media workers have been in detention since the beginning of the year, according to the organisation.¹¹

30 June 2025

Border reopening after five years

According to reports, on 22.06.25 there was a border reopening at the Ethiopia-Eritrea border. The unofficial border reopening took place in northern Tigray region, near the border town of Zalambessa, and in Eritrea’s Debub region. The border crossing had been closed since the outbreak of the Tigray conflict in 2020. The border reopening had been initiated by local activists and community leaders, and carried out without the official backing of the authorities. Ethiopian and Tigray authorities had nonetheless been informed, and had given their blessing to the reopening, according to the reports. There had already been border crossings and reunion of families, and cross-

border trade near Zalambessa had also re-started. The border was last officially reopened on a large scale in 2018, when Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed came to power. It remains unclear whether the local agreement constitutes a guarantee that the border will remain open in the long term.¹²

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Briefing Notes
BN-Redaktion@bamf.bund.de

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