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COI report: Ethiopia - Amhara

November 2026
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This report serves the specific purpose of collating legally relevant information on conditions in countries of origin pertinent to the assessment of claims for asylum. It is not intended to be a general report on human rights conditions. The report is prepared within a specified time frame on the basis of publicly available documents as well as information provided by experts. All sources are cited and fully referenced.

Please note that due to a lack of knowledge of the Amharic language and Dutch, these translations have been made using translation tools: several tools, including AI-assisted, were used to ensure a result as accurate as possible. There is nonetheless an increased risk that these translations/summaries may contain inaccuracies.

Several AI tools (ChatGPT Plus, Perplexity, Copilot, Gemini Notebook, Claude and Claude Pro) were used in the preparation of this report to assist with identifying relevant sources, language editing, translations, screening and summarising sources and the extraction and aggregation of figures from datasets. Every output was verified before being used. ACCORD retains full responsibility for the content of this report.

This report is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Every effort has been made to compile information from reliable sources; users are recommended to directly refer to original materials used in this product and assess the credibility, relevance and timeliness of source material with reference to the specific research concerns arising from individual applications.

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List of Abbreviations

AFNF	Amhara Fano National Force
AFNM	Amhara Fano National Movement
AFPO	Amhara Fano Popular Organisation
BPLF	Benishangul Peoples' Liberation Movement
BTI	Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index
CMR	Cluster Munition Remnants
CRSV	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
EMA	Ethiopian Media Authority
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MIRA	Multi-Sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment
NaMA	National Movement of Amhara
NEBE	National Election Board of Ethiopia
NFI	Non-Food Items
NIHS	National Integrated Household Survey
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OSC	One-Stop-Center
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
RDRMC	Regional Disaster Risk Management Commission
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (region)
TDF	Tigray Defense Forces
TPF	Tigray Peace Forces
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WGFSS	Women and Girls Friendly Safe Spaces

Introductory note

The situation in Ethiopia is currently evolving very rapidly. However, the reporting period of this report ends in August 2026. In order to take the latest developments into account, ACCORD is preparing a query response on the impact of the current conflict situation in the Amhara Region to be published in December 2026.

1 Background information

1.1 Map



(A crop of the Amhara Region from a UNOCHA Ethiopia reference map, UNOCHA, 12 December 2023)

1.2 Demography of the region

Amhara Region is located in the northwestern part of Ethiopia. It borders Tigray region in the North, Afar region in the East, Oromia region in the South, and Benishangul-Gumuz in the Southwest. To the west, Amhara Region borders Sudan (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 1).
Together with Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) region, Amhara was described as one of Ethiopia's most populous regions (Misganaw et al., 13 March 2022a, p. 1323). According to the Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS[1]), the last Population and Housing Census in Ethiopia took place in 2007 (ESS, undated(a)). On an area size of around 162,000 (Amhara Development Association, undated) to 171,000 square kilometres (Amhara Regional Official Portal, undated; ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 1), the population of Amhara Region had reached 17,221,976 people according to the 2007 census, including 8,580,396 women and 8,641,580 men (ESS, 2007, p. 7). When adding up the census population numbers per age group, around 70 percent of the region's population fell into the age group of 0 to 29 years old as of 2007 (ESS, 2007, p. 11). According to the 2026 ESS population projection, the estimated population of the Amhara Region had reached 24,207,000, including 12,074,000 women and 12,133,000 men (ESS, October 2026, p. 3). By comparison, Ethiopia's total population was estimated at 113,806,002, including 56,793,999 women and 57,013,002 men (ESS, October 2026, p. 21). Of the total population of the Amhara Region, 18,531,000 people were estimated to live in rural areas and 5,676,000 in urban areas (ESS, October 2026, p. 3). In an undated entry on its website, the Amhara Regional Official Portal estimated the region's overall population in 2023 at over 40 million people (Amhara Regional Official Portal, undated).

According to a March 2026 Amhara Region Disaster Risk Management Commission (ANRS DRMC) publication, the region has 22 zones, including 14 rural and 8 urban administrative zones, and 254 districts (*woredas*), of which 152 are rural and 102 are urban (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 1). In contrast, the ESS, in its 2026 population projections, lists North Gondar, South Gondar, North Wello, South Wello, North Shewa, East Gojam (also: East Gojjam), West Gojam (also: West Gojjam), Wag Hamra (also: Waghemira, Wag Himra), Awi, and Oromiya (also: Oromo National Administration) as well as the Bahir Dar Special Zone and Argoba Special Woreda as Amhara Region's twelve zones (ESS, October 2026, pp. 3-7). In an undated website entry, the Amhara Development Association lists all these zones except for Argoba Special Woreda as Amhara Region's zones (Amhara Development Association, undated). This is also the case for a spreadsheet on Ethiopia's Subnational Administrative Boundaries published in April 2026 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). UNOCHA, however, further identifies Central Gondar, West Gondar and North Gojam as three additional zones within the Amhara Region, bringing their total number to 14 (UNOCHA, 17 April 2026, sheet 3). Zones with the largest population shares according to the 2026 ESS population projections were North Gondar (4,267,257), South Wello (3,530,046), and East Gojam (2,953,866) (ESS, October 2026, pp. 3-5). Furthermore, while the ESS lists 139 *woredas*

[1] As of 2007, the entity's official name was Central Statistical Agency (CSA); it was renamed Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS) in 2014 (ESS, undated(a)). For matters of consistency and clarity, the current denomination (ESS) is used throughout the report.

(ESS, October 2026, pp. 3-7), UNOCHA identifies 225 units on that next administrative level as of April 2026 (UNOCHA, 17 April 2026, sheet 4).

The 2007 census found that around 91 percent of the population of the Amhara Region belonged to the Amhara ethnic group. Other ethnic groups in the region included the Agew-Awi, Oromo, Agew Hamyra, Argoba, Tigre, Somali, Anyiwak, Berta, Alaba, Affar, Guragie, Irob, and Kusumie. According to the census, Amharic, the Ethiopian government's official language (Translators without Borders, February 2021) was the most common primary language in Amhara Region (ESS, 2007, pp. 77, 95). Based on the 2007 census, Clear Global, a non-profit organisation which provides access to information in various languages, noted that 86.2 percent of the Amhara Region population spoke Amharic. Of the 69 other languages spoken in the region, Nuclear Oromo was spoken by 9.2 percent, Awngi by 2.8 percent, and Agaw by 1.2 percent (Clear Global, undated). The abovementioned 2007 census found that 62 percent (countrywide 60.2 percent) of the Amhara Region population across all age groups were illiterate, including 67.9 percent of the women (countrywide 66.7 percent) and 56.2 percent of the men (countrywide 53.8 percent) (ESS, 2007, pp. 232, 233).
According to the above mentioned 2007 census, the literacy rate of the total population of Amhara aged 5 years or over was at 38 percent. The rate was higher among men (43.8 percent) than women (32.1 percent) (ESS, 2007, p. 233). The 2011 Ethiopian Welfare Monitoring Survey, while covering a slightly different population group with all persons aged 10 years or more, indicates a total literacy rate of 41.4 percent (including 48.8 percent of men and 33.6 percent of women) as of 2011 (ESS, 27 April 2012, p. 3).
In a March 2025 report, Dereje Feyissa, adjunct associate professor of Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University, and a consultant researcher with the Peace Research Facility, notes that most of the Amhara people are of Orthodox faith, while there is a "sizable Muslim population" among them (Feyissa, March 2025, p. 8). According to the 2007 census, at the time around 83 percent of the region's population were Orthodox, around 17 percent were Muslim, around 0.18 percent were Protestant, around 0.08 percent followed traditional beliefs, 0.03 percent were Catholic, and around 0.02 percent belonged to other belief groups (ESS, 2007, p. 111).
According to a scientific article published in September 2024 by Biruk Beletew Abate, Assistant Professor at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at Woldia University, Ethiopia, and PhD student at the School of Public Health at Curtin University, Australia, and other authors Amhara Region's total fertility rate between 2000 and 2019 was around 4.5 children per woman (Abate et al., 23 September 2024, p. 5). According to the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 on Ethiopia conducted by the scientist Awoke Temesgen Misganaw and other authors, the average life expectancy for all genders in 2019 in Amhara Region was around 69.3 years, compared to a countrywide life expectancy of 68.84 for all genders. The average life expectancy for women was 72.33 years compared to 70.8 on country-level, and for men 66.7 years compared to 67.13 on country-level (Misganaw et al., 13 March 2022b, p. 27). In 2021, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), a United Nations (UN) agency mandated to advance the global health agenda, the life expectancy at birth at country-level was 67.8 years for all genders, 69.7 for women, and 66 for men (WHO, undated).

According to the Operational Data Portal of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Amhara Region hosted 16,681 of countrywide 1,022,755 refugees from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan and other countries as of 31 October 2026 (UNHCR, undated). As of June 2026, 19,642 refugees resided across Alemwach (North Gondar) and Aftit (West Gondar) refugee sites (UNHCR, 7 July 2026b). As of June 2026, 478,931 people were internally displaced, residing across 18 locations, in Amhara Region, according to UNHCR (UNHCR, 7 July 2026a). In March 2025, the Ethiopia Emergency Shelter & NFI Cluster reported conflict-induced displacement from neighbouring regions such as Oromia, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Tigray, into Amhara Region, noting that 55 percent of all formal Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) sites and collective centers in Amhara Region were located in North and South Wello Zones, which hosted the largest share of the region's IDP population at the time (Ethiopia Emergency Shelter & NFI Cluster, March 2025, p. 1). For further information on conflict-induced displacement, see section 2.8.

1.3 Key political developments since January 2025 impacting the region

For information on the security situation, territorial control and main armed actors, see section 2. For information on the human rights situation, see section 3.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung, a German non-profit think tank, describes Ethiopia's political situation in its 2026 report, which forms part of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) and covers 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2025 as "generally much more […] stable than in previous years", noting that some insecurity remained in the Amhara and Oromia regions (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2026, p. 18). The Bertelsmann Stiftung report further notes that the "country's political arena is based on ethnic identity" with some regions, such as Amhara Region, dominated by one ethnic group. Each group is granted a "right to self-determination" according to the constitution. Consequently, the report notes, some ethnonationalists, including increasingly in Amhara Region, "identify first with their ethnicity rather than their nationality" (Ethiopian) (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2026, p. 7). Regarding Ethiopia's political landscape, the report further elaborates:

> "Although the political environment is more open compared with previous periods, parties have only shallow roots in communities and are poorly organized. Opposition parties lack the resources and stability to articulate and aggregate societal interests effectively, and they struggle to manage internal disputes. Voter volatility is low, as the ruling party – the Prosperity Party – possesses resources to motivate support that vastly outweigh those of any other party. Some parties, such as the OLA [Oromo Liberation Army] and Amhara ethnonationalist parties, have taken up arms to resolve their differences with the government." (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2026, p. 13)

According to a May 2026 blog entry published by the Center for African Security Studies (CASS), a research institute focussing on African security and political affairs, the continuation of security and military tensions in Ethiopia's Amhara Region amid an increase in sporadic clashes between central government forces and Fano[2] fighters reflected the "central authority's failure

[2] The Fano are "a loose network of Amhara nationalist fighters, organised locally by zone – Gojjam, Gondar, Wollo and North Shewa – alongside defectors from the Amhara regional forces", which developed "out of informal self-

to contain the fallout from the war that followed the Pretoria Agreement, which ended the conflict in Tigray" (CASS, 19 May 2026) in November 2022 (Assefa, 28 February 2026). CASS notes that the agreement provoked discontent among Amhara nationalists, who regarded it as a step towards concessions made by the federal government at the expense of Amhara's nationalist's interests, particularly regarding the future of territories disputed between Tigray and Amhara Region and the "reshaping of the balance of power within the army and the state" (CASS, 19 May 2026). Sources report that the federal government had announced to carry out a referendum to decide upon the fate of the contested Western Tigray areas, which as of 2026 had not taken place yet (HRW, 22 April 2026; SWP, 22 July 2026, p. 5; CFR, updated 9 November 2026). The crisis in the Amhara Region, which according to CASS is "among the most politically, militarily, and demographically significant in the country", is described as "one of the most dangerous challenges […], as it directly relates to the balance of power within the Ethiopian state, the relationship between the center and the major nationalities, and its potential impact on the stability of the entire Horn of Africa" (CASS, 19 May 2026).
In an August 2025 paper published by the German Social Science Research Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Samuel Zewdie Hagos and Daniel Tuki elaborate that the Amhara conflict (also: Fano insurgency), which started in 2023, among others was primarily triggered by "concern about ethnic marginalization among the Amhara and the federal government's attempt to integrate Amhara regional special forces into the national military command". With reference to various sources, Hagos and Tuki note that Amhara nationalists accused the central government "of eroding regional autonomy and failing to defend Amhara interests in territorial disputes—particularly those involving Tigray and Oromia" (Hagos & Tuki, August 2025, pp. 6-7). CASS continues to elaborate:

> "The crisis deepened following the Ethiopian government's 2023 decision to disband the 'regional special forces' and integrate them into federal security institutions — a decision that met with widespread rejection in Amhara, where it was seen as an attempt to weaken the region and strip it of the instruments of power it had acquired during the Tigray war.
>
> Since then, the activity of Fano groups […] has escalated […] The persistence of the tension stems from several intertwined factors. Chief among them is the sense among broad segments of Amhara nationalists that the federal government is attempting to reengineer

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defence groups that mobilised during waves of communal violence" (The Africa Report, 16 January 2026; see also ASA, 18 January 2026) "into a loosely coordinated insurgent force challenging federal authority" (ASA, 18 January 2026). Kamal notes in February 2025 that the Fano sees "itself as a defender of Amhara rights and interests" and has "significantly" grown its influence since the Tigray War (Kamal, 22 February 2025, p. 6). They are described as having been a "crucial ally of Abiy Ahmed's government" in the Tigray War, supporting the federal army in the fight against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and also involved in armed clashes with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the conflict with Sudan over the Al-Fashaqa region, disputed between the two countries, before turning against the federal government. Since April 2023, tensions rose between the federal government and the Fano, with the Ethiopian army launching a military operation in Amhara Region in October 2024 against the Fano (Kamal, 22 February 2025, pp. 4-5).

> the internal balance of power following the Tigray war in ways that diminish the region's influence within the military establishment and the state.
>
> The absence of a clear settlement for the disputed territories file with Tigray has also kept tensions alive." (CASS, 19 May 2026)

Sources reported the formation of the Amhara Fano National Force (AFNF) in May 2025 (APA, 11 May 2025; DNE, 10 May 2025; International Crisis Group, undated). The umbrella structure uniting the four Fano factions Amhara Fano in Gojam, Wello and Shewa, as well as Amhara Fano Unity in Gondar (APA, 11 May 2025; DNE, 10 May 2025) reportedly "aimed at consolidating militias' political vision, military strategy and command coordination" (International Crisis Group, undated). The umbrella organization reportedly will operate "based on collective leadership" (APA, 11 May 2025). In a statement, the group reportedly declared to be committed to "'reclaim rights concerning borders, identity, and self-administration in all parts of our country, including Welkait, Tselemti, and Raya'" (DNE, 10 May 2025), which are areas disputed between Amhara and Tigray regional states (Melese, May 2025, p. 22; Borkena, 17 April 2025; Borkena, 28 April 2024). The International Crisis Group, a transnational, independent, non-profit organization based in Brussels, Belgium, focussing on conflict, reports that the AFNF announced the creation of committees "aimed at coordinating Fano insurgency and strengthening internal cohesion" in late June 2025. However, the source notes that Fano leadership around Gojam distanced itself from the committee, which according to the International Crisis Group indicates that internal divisions exist within the AFNF (International Crisis Group, undated).

According to another blog entry by CASS, efforts made by Fano to handle the fragmentation of its leadership during late 2025 and early 2026 furthermore resulted in the creation of the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM) (CASS, 12 February 2026). According to the International Crisis Group, the AFNM was created on 17 January 2026 and united "fragmented armed and political" Fano groups (International Crisis Group, undated). CASS notes that the AFNM "included the group's four main factions from Gojam, Gondar, Wollo, and Shewa" (CASS, 12 February 2026). While the International Crisis Group reports that Fano still lacked "shared political agenda beyond broad grievances" against the federal government (International Crisis Group, undated), CASS notes that, for the first time, the AFNM succeeded in agreeing on a "unified political document outlining the region's demands", one of which was the "abolition of the current ethnic federal system" (CASS, 12 February 2026). In August 2026, Addis Standard reports with reference to the chairman of AFNM that "Fano has established a unified command structure and reached agreements with armed groups representing several Ethiopian communities to coordinate against Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government". The chairman reportedly also "claimed that the Fano leadership had reached understandings with armed groups associated with Tigray, Gumuz, the Berta community, Somali and Oromo groups" (Addis Standard, 18 August 2026).

African affairs expert Ghada Kamal notes in a February 2025 [before the formation of the AFNM, note ACCORD] report, that Fano's armed rebellion had become "one of the biggest challenges" to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government, although it had no centralized command structure (Kamal, 22 February 2025, p. 6). Kamal notes that under Abiy's rule, the

country “has experienced significant political and security instability” in recent years. According to Kamal, his “governance strategies […] have deepened Ethiopia’s internal crises, exacerbated conflicts both domestically and internationally, and further destabilized an already fragile security landscape”, carrying “broader implications for regional stability in the Horn of Africa” (Kamal, 22 February 2025, p. 4) (for information on Ethiopia’s regional relations, see further below). With reference to various sources, Hagos and Tuki note in the above-mentioned August 2025 paper that Abiy has faced “growing challenges” since he became prime minister in 2018. Abiy’s government policies, according to their paper, “aimed at centralizing power and limiting the self-administration of regional governments, especially those led by ethnicity-based political parties”. This in turn resulted in “significant opposition” from and heightened political tensions in several regional states, including Amhara Region (Hagos & Tuki, August 2025, p. 10). Kamal notes that Abiy views the increasing power of the Fano, who pose “a direct challenge” to his agenda aiming at the replacement of the country’s “ethnic-based federalism with a more centralized system” as a threat (Kamal, 22 February 2025, p. 6).

On 1 June 2026, general elections were held in Ethiopia (AP, 21 June 2026; Stanley, 18 June 2026; International Crisis Group, undated). In the run-up of the elections in mid-March 2026, the AFNM, according to the International Crisis Group, “warned that political parties and other institutions that participate in June polls will be treated as federal-aligned targets, highlighting election-related conflict risks” (International Crisis Group, undated). Similarly, Aaron Stanley, Deputy Director and Fellow of the Africa Program of the Center for Strategic & International Studies’ (CSIS), a US-American non-profit policy research organisation, notes in a June 2026 publication that the “Fano warned that any entity assisting the voting process would be ‘considered enemies of the Amhara people […]’” (Stanley, 18 June 2026). Furthermore, protests reportedly erupted in early April 2026 across Amhara Region over the central government’s decision to hold elections despite the Fano conflict (International Crisis Group, undated).
Sources report that the Prosperity Party of the ruling Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed secured a majority in the elections, winning 438 out of 501 seats in the House of Representatives (AP, 21 June 2026; International Crisis Group, undated). The new parliament was reportedly expected to re-elect Abiy in October 2026 for an additional five-year term (AP, 21 June 2026). According to the International Crisis Group, the “elections were marred by violence” and “Amhara experienced one of its most violent periods, as [the] Amhara Fano National Movement sought to disrupt voting and challenge federal control”. Eight constituencies in Amhara Region were reportedly excluded from voting due to conflict (International Crisis Group, undated; Ethiopia Observer, 26 May 2026). Sources reported that, because of insecurity in the Oromia and Amhara regions 143 polling stations (AP, 21 June 2026) out of 52,029 remained closed (International Crisis Group, undated). Stanley notes in the above-cited June 2026 publication regarding the election results that the conflicts in Oromia and Amhara persisted because they were “fueled by the federal system’s contested legitimacy. A supermajority that resolves elite competition through electoral dominance forces the opposition to seek other outlets, often armed ones” (Stanley, 18 June 2026).

Sources report tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea, who reportedly "share a fractious and violent history" (BBC, 15 January 2026), in the reporting period (Stanley, 18 June 2026; ASA, 18 January 2026; BBC, 15 January 2026; Reuters, 15 January 2026; International Crisis Group, undated). Several sources report that Ethiopian authorities intercepted around 60,000 ammunition rounds which were on their way to reach Fano militants in mid-January 2026, with Ethiopia accusing Eritrea (ASA, 18 January 2026; International Crisis Group, undated). Eritrea reportedly denied the allegations and in turn accused Ethiopia of wanting to provoke a war between the two countries (ASA, 18 January 2026; BBC, 15 January 2026; Reuters, 15 January 2026). According to the International Crisis Group, Abiy's Prosperity Party accused Eritrea in August 2025 "of seeking to derail Ethiopia's progress and return to conflict" and told diplomats in a closed-door meeting that his country was at war (International Crisis Group, undated). The Ethiopian government reportedly pushes towards access to the Red Sea through Eritrea, which has caused the relations with Eritrea to further deteriorate late 2025/early 2026 (BBC, 15 January 2026; see also Stanley, 18 June 2026; ASA, 18 January 2026; International Crisis Group, undated). In the above-mentioned February 2026 report, CASS describes Eritrea as Fano's "main logistical supporter", who regards the weakening of Ethiopia as a way to hinder the country's access to the Red Sea (CASS, 12 February 2026).

Sources further report tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan (Atlantic Council, 10 November 2025; see also BBC, 7 September 2025; Kamal, 22 February 2025, p. 8), reportedly revolving around a border dispute over the fertile Al-Fashqa area (The Sudan Times, 5 August 2026; Ethiopia Today, 8 July 2025; Horn Africa News, 5 July 2025; Kamal, 22 February 2025, p. 9), which among other regions borders Ethiopia's Amhara Region (Sulieman, November 2024, p. 2, figure 1).

1.4 Overview of the economy in the region

According to the Bertelsmann Stiftung's above mentioned Transformation Index (BTI) report, the ongoing conflict with insurgent groups in Amhara Region has impacted the region as it poses a "significant" threat to doing business in Ethiopia. The source notes that the conflict led to some populations in the region losing access to government services such as banking, telecommunications and electricity (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2026, pp. 15-22). Stanley notes in the above-mentioned June 2026 article that countrywide "[i]nflation remains relatively high but has fallen sharply from its peak and stabilized around 12 percent" (Stanley, 18 June 2026). Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI), the economic development agency of the Federal Republic of Germany states that Ethiopia is affected by fuel shortages since April 2026. According to the source, rising prices for imported goods, especially fuel, are increasing inflation and dampening consumption. According to GTAI, economic growth in Ethiopia remains high compared to other African countries (GTAI, 16 June 2026) and in 2024, Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amounted to USD 133.5 billion (GTAI, undated). GTAI further notes, with reference to experts not defined further, that the economy in the Amhara Region is at a standstill as of June 2026 (GTAI, 16 June 2026).

The Amhara Agriculture Research Institute (ARARI) describes agriculture as the "backbone of the Amhara region, contributing 54% to the economy and employing 90% of the labor force". However, growth, according to ARARI is hindered by challenges such as poor soil fertility, drought, limited machinery, as well as traditional practices and weak infrastructure (ARARI, undated). According to an article published in August 2026 in The Reporter, gold remained the

region's leading mineral export, accounting for 73.57 percent of Amhara Regional State's mineral export earnings during the 2025/26 Ethiopian fiscal year. The region reportedly further exports raw opal and value-added opal products and has deposits of iron ore, granite and basalt (The Reporter Ethiopia, 1 August 2026). In a January 2026 article, the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) notes with reference to the Amhara Culture, Tourism and Sport Bureau that tourism is another relevant factor in Amhara Region's economy, generating more than 7.8 billion Birr (around USD 49 million[3] as of August 2026) in revenue during the first six months of the 2025/2026 Ethiopian fiscal year (ENA, 25 January 2026).

According to the findings of the National Integrated Household Survey 2024-25 by the ESS, the national average unemployment was at 9.6 percent. In Amhara Region, the total unemployment rate was at 9.2 percent, while the youth unemployment rate for persons aged 15 to 35 years was at 12 percent. Youth unemployment was higher in urban than in rural areas, with 24.3 and 8.6 percent, respectively, and higher for women than for men, with 16.8 and 7.9 percent, respectively (ESS, 5 September 2026, pp. 27, 30). In a 2023 Policy Brief the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) notes that Amhara Region showed higher unemployment rates than the national average (UNFPA, 2024, p. 2).

Based on World Bank and national data from 2018, the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) calculated Amhara's absolute poverty rate at 36.3 percent in the period 2021/22, and thus above the national average of 33 percent (EEA, August 2024, p. 8).

1.5 Access to basic services, humanitarian conditions and level of humanitarian access in the region

In 2025, according to UNOCHA, "Ethiopia continued to face a complex humanitarian situation shaped by the combined effects of conflict, climate shocks, displacement and disease outbreaks", with millions of people remaining in need of critical assistance, "particularly in areas affected by insecurity, recurrent drought and limited access to essential services" (UNOCHA, June 2026, p. 4; see also CESVI, 15 March 2026, p. 8; UNOCHA, undated). According to a February 2026 article published by the Amhara Association of America (AAA), a US-based organization that advocates for the interests of the Amhara people in Ethiopia, the situation in Amhara Region "has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, including […] large-scale displacement, food insecurity, [and] the breakdown of health and education services" (AAA, 14 February 2026). In September 2025, the Swiss Refugee Council (SFH) describes the humanitarian situation in Amhara Region as very concerning (SFH, 8 September 2025, p. 6).

Regarding humanitarian access, as of August 2026, UNOCHA classified 80 woredas as "accessible", 126 woredas as "partially accessible" and 19 woredas as "hard to reach" (UNOCHA, 15 September 2026). Regarding humanitarian assistance delivery and access to basic services in Amhara Region, UNOCHA further elaborates in June 2026 that "[l]ocalized insecurity in some regions, including parts of Amhara […] continued to impact communities by contributing to displacement, disrupting access to basic services, and affecting the operating environment" (UNOCHA, June 2026, p. 9). According to a March 2026 Amhara Region Disaster

[3] All currency calculations in this report are based on the exchange rate from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), undated, https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_de

Risk Management Commission (ANRS DRMC) report, disrupted access to basic services, including education, healthcare, and agricultural extension services in Amhara Region "has further exacerbated the food insecurity situation and undermined the resilience of vulnerable populations" (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 10). UNOCHA observes that the "fluid nature" of localized insecurity, including in Amhara Region, "posed challenges for consistent service delivery, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach locations" (UNOCHA, June 2026, p. 9; see also UNICEF, 2025, p. 2; UNOCHA, March 2025, p. 1).

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the humanitarian situation in Amhara Region "sharply deteriorated amid escalating insecurity and restricted access" during 2025 (UNICEF, 2025, p. 5). In a March 2026 report, CESVI, an independent Italian humanitarian organisation which operates worldwide, elaborates that ongoing conflicts in Amhara Region, "combined with administrative requirements for permits and movement approvals, create an unpredictable operating environment that can delay humanitarian access to affected populations". According to the report, humanitarian needs are expected to rise further in 2026 (CESVI, 15 March 2026, p. 8). In a statement by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia published by UNOCHA in late September 2026, the coordinator notes regarding the humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia that "aid organizations operating in affected areas have experienced significant operational disruptions" between 2025 and 2026. According to the coordinator, this includes "the seizure by armed groups of at least 10 humanitarian vehicles, of which only two have been recovered to date. Aid workers have also faced incidents of kidnapping, extortion, and harassment, while public buildings and critical infrastructure have been occupied, damaged, or vandalized" (UNOCHA, 30 September 2026).

1.5.1 Food Security

According to the famine monitoring organisation Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), the acute food insecurity outcomes as of 30 September 2026 show that most of the northwestern, western and southern parts of Amhara Region were classified as minimal regarding food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 1[4]), while the northeastern area was partly classified as stressed (IPC Phase 2), the areas bordering the Tigray region were classified as crisis (IPC Phase 3). Most of the southeastern part of the Amhara Region was classified as stressed, with parts of North Shewa classified as minimal and Debre Berhan Town classified as crisis (FEWS NET, September 2026, p. 1, Figure 1; FEWS NET, October 2026). The above-mentioned March 2026 ANRS DRMC report notes that around "2.7 million people were identified as emergency food assistance needy population" in Amhara Region in 2025, "with significant numbers of children, pregnant and breast-feeding women requiring supplemental food and medical treatment" (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 9). The source further elaborates that 87 rural woredas in the region are "drought prone and chronically food in-secured" (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 1). The source continues to explain:

> "According to the 2025 meher[5] assessment report conducted by the RDRMC [regional Disaster Risk Management Commission] in December 2025, though the overall production

[4] Of overall five acute food insecurity phases, going from Phase 1 (minimal) to Phase 5 (Famine) (IPC, undated).

[5] Main cropping season in Ethiopia (ESS, undated(b)).

> is good, the effects of insufficient rainfall, combined with hazards such as floods, landslides, and hailstorms, affected 1,446,428 people across nine zones in 59 woredas, who now require emergency food assistance in addition to the 1,884,378 beneficiaries already covered by the PSNP [Productive Safety Net Program]." (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 1).

The reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) results of a multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted in Amhara and Oromia regions[6] by Caritas Germany in collaboration with the Ethiopian Catholic Church, Social and Development Commission (ECC SDCO) and Caritas Switzerland (CACH) in December 2025 (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 2) showed "severe food insecurity across all zones". According to the results, Wag Hamra (62 percent) and North Gondar (58 percent) recorded "the highest levels of severe coping, indicating critical food access constraints", highlighting "urgent food assistance needs in Amhara" (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 4). The results further demonstrate that household food expenditure equalled 223 percent of reported income, with more than 90 percent of the population unable to maintain an acceptable diet. The results further show that with "financial buffers exhausted, 43% of households now resort to irreversible emergency coping strategies, such as the distress sale of their last productive livestock". Furthermore, 15 percent of children under five are affected by severe acute malnutrition (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, pp. 2, 4). In March 2025, UNOCHA reports that malnutrition was worsening in parts of North Wello, in South Wello, North and South Gondar, and in Wag Hamra, with "the number of people in need of urgent food assistance […] growing rapidly". UNOCHA further notes that screening coverage was "very low suggesting the true scale of the crisis may be even worse" (UNOCHA, March 2025, p. 3). UNOCHA further elaborates:

> "Despite signs of a better harvest this year compared to last, food markets are under strain, with rising prices and a reduced availability of essential items. Challenges in the implementation of the Productive Safety Net Program and the US funding suspension have left many without regular food support. Additionally, the combination of limited nutrition funding, insufficient partner presence, insecurity and access constraints (with increased fighting reported in recent weeks) is severely impacting the response." (UNOCHA, March 2025, p. 3)

1.5.2 Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Regarding WASH needs, ANRS DRMC, again with reference to the meher assessment, further elaborates that

[6] The "assessment employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative primary data […]. The data collection was executed between 3 and 14 December 2025 across 33 kebeles within 11 woredas […] in the Amhara (North Gondar and Wag-Himera) and Oromia (West Wollega and Kellem Wollega) regions. […] the evaluation team engaged 2,871 participants, of which 36% were female. The data collection yielded 1,867 total submissions, consisting of 1,697 quantitative household surveys as well as qualitative inputs from 71 shopkeeper interviews, 65 field observations, and 34 community leader discussions. Demographically, the surveyed households primarily consisted of host communities (51%) and internally displaced (29%), persons alongside a smaller population of refugees (9%)" (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 3).

> "[…] the overall WASH situation in most parts of the region was near critical as a result of conflict-induced displacements, a high case load of IDPs/returnees, drought, disease outbreak and increased WASH needs among non-displaced people. There is also a critical shortage of water in drought, disease outbreak hotspot areas and conflict affected areas. Based on the Meher assessment on the water coverage of nine zones, only five (5) zones namely North Showa, North Wollo, Central Gondar, South Wollo and East Gojjam have the water coverage above 50%, the remaining four zones [are] below 50%." (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 82)

The abovementioned multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted by Caritas Germany and others describes access to essential water and sanitation services as "critically insufficient" across Amhara Region (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 4), with 70 percent of households in Amhara and Oromia regions lacking toilet facilities (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 2). The source further notes:

> "Nearly 70% of households fail to secure the minimum humanitarian standard of 15 litres of water per person daily. Basic sanitation infrastructure is profoundly lacking, with 70% of the population having no access to any form of toilet facility, resulting in 63% of households practising open defecation. Routine hygiene practices are also severely constrained by supply shortages, as 84% of families reported a complete lack of access to soap." (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 4)

In its 2025 end-year report, UNICEF declares to have "significantly improved access to WASH services for vulnerable populations in the Amhara region in 2025" by providing safe water to "827,793 people through the rehabilitation of piped systems, hand pumps, and wells, as well as the installation of solar-powered water systems across the Wag Himra, North and Central Gondar, West Gondar, and North Gojjam zones" (UNICEF, 2025, p. 7).

1.5.3 Access to Health Care

Regarding access to healthcare, Doctors without Borders (MSF) notes in a July 2025 report that "ongoing conflict has severely affected the already fragile healthcare system in the region" since 2023, with "[i]nsecurity, movement restrictions and lack of affordable transportation […] making it increasingly difficult for patients with life-threatening conditions like kala-azar and snakebite to access timely and adequate medical care" (MSF, 9 July 2025). The abovementioned multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted by Caritas Germany and others describes a health crisis in Amhara and Oromia regions, "exacerbated by a massive treatment deficit" (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 4). The source notes that 77 percent of assessed "households report never utilising local health facilities, and 68% of families have been lacking any formal medical for illnesses" (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 4). In August 2026, the Organization for Justice and Accountability in the Horn of Africa (OJAH) and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), published a report[7] documenting among others the broader

[7] Triangulating quantitative and qualitative approaches, the report is based on "602 structured surveys of health care workers, 40 key informant interviews, and four focus group discussions" with individuals "who treated patients in or from Ethiopia after November 2020" (OJAH & PHR, August 2026, p. 16).

impact of conflict on Ethiopia's health system. The report finds that security challenges in the country have disrupted the health system, resulting, among other things, in reduced availability, accessibility and quality of healthcare (OJAH & PHR, August 2026, p. 13, Figure 1). Regarding Amhara Region, OJAH and PHR further elaborate:

> "In Amhara, health care workers described how infrastructure loss led to health care facilities improvising modes of service delivery, creating a situation where facilities could not reliably conduct clinical care. In one focus group discussion, health care workers described moving service delivery outdoors using temporary materials because of damage […]." (OJAH & PHR, August 2026, p. 6)

In an April 2025 scientific paper, Mihretie Gedfew and other authors elaborate that the ongoing conflict in Amhara Region has "gravely undermined healthcare delivery and infrastructure, creating a complex and worsening public health crisis". Furthermore, the "destruction of essential healthcare infrastructure, including hospitals, clinics, and supply chains, has had a devastating impact on the region's health services". Furthermore, according to the article, "the displacement and migration of healthcare professionals due to the conflict further intensify workforce shortages, causing significant disruptions to healthcare service delivery" (Gedfew et al., April 2025, p. 122). MSF further elaborates regarding access to its health facilities:

> "Patients at MSF's facility describe widespread insecurity, movement restrictions, and financial barriers that prevent them from reaching health facilities when it matters most. […] Health facilities are under growing strain, facing shortages of essential medicines and disrupted supply chains. Mobile outreach services, which once played a key role in reaching remote patients with kala-azar, have been scaled back or suspended due to security concerns." (MSF, 9 July 2025)

UNOCHA reports cases of malaria, measles (UNOCHA, June 2026, p. 9), cholera and mpox in Amhara Region during the reporting period (UNOCHA, 14 July 2025, pp. 6-7). According to UNOCHA, "access to prevention and treatment services" for malaria and measles varied across locations (UNOCHA, June 2026, p. 9). For information on conflict-related damage to health infrastructure, see section 2.7.

1.5.4 Access to Education

Sources report that the ongoing conflict in Amhara Region affected children's access to education during the reference period (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 10; UNICEF, 29 April 2025, p. 2; AP, 11 April 2025; Ethiopian Policy Institute, 27 January 2025). According to the above-mentioned ANRS DRMC report, as of March 2026, more than 3.1 million children remained out of school because of the conflict, "with the remaining students being uncertain to continue safe education environment" (ANRS DRMC, March 2026, p. 10). The abovementioned multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted by Caritas Germany and others finds that 22 percent of assessed households in Amhara and Oromia regions have taken their children out of school to "cope with extreme deficits" (Caritas Germany et al., January 2026, p. 3). In April 2025, with reference to media reports, UNICEF reports "violent incidents against children and education personnel in/around schools". The source notes that protracted school closures in the region had reached almost two years as of late April 2025 (UNICEF, 29 April 2025, p. 2). With reference to the

regional education office, the Associated Press (AP) reports in an April 2025 article that "over 3,600 schools across Amhara are closed, with many looted or damaged, depriving 4.5 million children of schooling" (AP, 11 April 2025).

2 Security situation

2.1 Information environment and limits of verification

In its Ethiopia overview Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the international NGO devoted to protecting freedom of expression, notes that "[p]ropaganda seeking to control the narrative on the war is pushed by both opposition militias and the authorities, which create disinformation on social media that is then picked up by the media" (RSF, undated).

In case of the Amhara Region, for example, an Ethiopian political observer cited in Addis Standard notes that the "parallel accounts" of the conflict provided by the conflict parties "illustrate a war in which control is fluid, verification is difficult, and truth is often filtered through partisan lenses" (Addis Standard, 4 March 2026).

In May 2026, the UK-based journalism research institute Reuters Institute adds the following on this matter:

> "Muthoki Mumo, Africa Program Coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists, said Ethiopia has become 'one of the most difficult places for independent journalism in Africa,' particularly for reporters covering conflict or politically sensitive issues. Independent reporting, she said, is increasingly treated 'as a criminal act rather than a public service.'" (Reuters Institute, 22 May 2026)

For more information on press freedom and freedom of information, see section 3.1.1.5 of this report.

2.2 Main armed actors, tactics and weapons used

2.2.1 Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF)

The Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) is the army of Ethiopia's federal government (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 30). It is the primary federal force conducting counter-insurgency operations in Amhara (see: Borkena, 2 July 2026; Borkena, 7 April 2026; Addis Standard, 2 July 2025), described in its own statements as "law enforcement" or "counterinsurgency" operations against "extremist elements" (Addis Standard, 20 October 2025). According to the research institute Center for African Security Studies (CASS), which is dedicated to African security and political affairs, the ENDF "enjoys the support of political factions and militias linked with the Oromo, as well as support from some minorities within the Amhara region who fear a return to the historical dominance of the Amhara" (CASS, 12 February 2026).

According to a September 2026 article by AFP, only the ENDF operates military drones in Ethiopia and has repeatedly deployed them against insurgents. In March 2025, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inaugurated the SkyWin Aeronautics Industries factory in Addis Ababa, which according to the state-run Ethiopian News Agency produces drones "for both civilian and military use". The authorities have denied foreign media access to the site (AFP, 8 September 2026). According to CASS, the army's shift to a "heavy reliance on drones" to make up for

depleted ground forces "resulted in civilian casualties and deepened the bitter rift between the central government and the Amhara ethnic group" (CASS, 12 February 2026). For more information on the impact of drone strikes on civilians, see section 3.1.1.1 of this report.

2.2.2 Regional Police, Anti-Riot Police and anti-Fano militias

According to an Addis Standard article, on 27 March 2025, the Amhara Regional State Police Commission held a graduation ceremony for the 33rd training cohort, at which over 10,000 anti-riot militia members and regular police officers, trained over several months at the Bir Sheleko Basic Paramilitary Training Center graduated (Addis Standard, 4 April 2025; see also: Addis Standard, 26 March 2025). These forces were deployed in several zones of Amhara. The Addis Standard article further notes:

> "Since the federal government declared a state of emergency in Amhara in August 2023, the conflict has largely been fought between the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and the non-state militia group, Fano. However, the dynamics of the confrontation appear to be shifting with the growing involvement of regional anti-riot militias and regular police forces. Analysts and scholars say the recent graduation and deployment of thousands of these regional forces across conflict-hit areas signal their readiness to join the battlefield, marking a new phase in the ongoing unrest." (Addis Standard, 4 April 2025)

Regional anti-riot police were mentioned as actors in several incidents (see: ACLED, 13 August 2026; Borkena, 30 July 2026; Borkena, 5 April 2026).
In an article of 29 May 2025, The Economist addresses the loyalties of local anti-Fano militias that the Ethiopian government had "trained and equipped":

> "Since 2023 Ethiopia's government has been in conflict with the Fano, a loose coalition of rebel groups that claim to be fighting for the interests of the Amhara, Ethiopia's second-largest ethnic group. The government has trained and equipped local militias to help its soldiers fight them. Yet the anti-Fano fighters are also Amhara, and there is little trust between them and the regular army. Asres Mare Damte, a Fano commander, claims plenty have defected to join the Fano. The forces with which the government clashed in Birakat on the day of the massacre [for information on this incident in Birakat/Brakat see section 3.1.1.2 of this report] were anti-Fano militias, some of whom, Mr Asres [Asres Mare Damte, a Fano commander] claims, have since joined the rebels. It is plausible that Ethiopian soldiers, suspecting local militias of collaborating with their enemies, sought revenge by killing anyone they could find." (The Economist, 29 May 2025)

2.2.3 Fano

ACLED describes Fano as "a group of armed youth, generally from Amhara region", who present themselves as protectors of the Amhara people and have engaged in violent conflict to defend Amhara territorial integrity and counter "perceived threats to the Amhara people" (ACLED, undated(a)). Government and ENDF statements refer to Fano as "extremist group" (Addis Standard, 18 October 2025) or "extremists" (Borkena, 2 July 2026). The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes Fano as a loose movement of Amhara militant groups (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 33). A December 2025 article by The Africa Report describes Fano not as a single organised armed group, but as a fragmented movement

comprising a dispersed network of local militias, community defence groups, and regionally rooted commanders, which the article says have "varying agendas". Factions include the Amhara Fano Popular Organisation (AFPO), the Gojam Fano under Zemene Kassie, a Wello faction led by Mihretu Wodajo, Shewa-based groups led by Meketaw Mamo, and Gondar-based battalions led by Baye Kengaw and Habte Wolde (The Africa Report, 5 December 2025). In May 2025, the Amhara Fano in Gojam, Wello, Gondar, and in Shewa announced a merger into a new front called the Amhara Fano National Force (AFNF), aimed at launching a coordinated struggle against federal government forces. Organisationally, AFNF is structured around a general assembly, central committee, executive committee, and a Patriots' Council led by Mesafint Tesfu. Rather than naming a single overall leader, it adopted a collective leadership model. Other Fano organisations remained outside this merger, notably the Amhara Fano Popular Organisation (AFPO) (APA, 11 May 2025).
CASS gives the following account regarding Fano:

> "Locally, Fano enjoys broad popular support from Amhara nationalists, who see it as the only bulwark against expansion by the Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. Fano is also supported by some former members of the Amhara region's ruling Prosperity Party, who have defected or secretly sympathize with nationalist demands. Eritrea is the group's main logistical supporter. Asmara sees weakening Addis Ababa as a key strategic interest and a way to hinder any Ethiopian bid to gain access to the Red Sea. Fano also relies heavily on funding from the Amhara diaspora in the U.S. and Europe, who funnel millions of dollars to the group through unofficial channels to allow it to buy weapons and ammunition on the black market in Sudan and across the Sahel." (CASS, 12 February 2026)

In October 2025, Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Eritrea, in a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, of "financing, mobilising and directing" Fano forces in North Wello. The letter reportedly also accused both sides of supporting a Fano attempt to seize Weldiya in September and stated that TPLF leaders and fighters had taken part directly in the operation. TPLF rejected the allegations (Al Jazeera, 7 August 2026; see also: BBC, 9 October 2025).
Mid-January 2026, AFNF and AFPO merged into the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM), chaired by Zemene Kassie with Meketaw Mamo as deputy, adopting a formal charter and committee-based governance (Plaut, 18 January 2026; see also: Addis Standard, 18 August 2026; Borkena, 3 April 2026; CTP, 22 January 2026).

In early May 2026, the TPLF reinstated the regional government that had been in place before the Tigray war, under the leadership of TPLF chairman Debretsion Gebremichael. This effectively marginalized the federally backed Tigray Interim Administration. The development further undermined the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, which ended the Tigray war in 2022, and left the federal government with no authority in Tigray (CTP, 28 May 2026).
ACLED regional expert Jalale Getachew Birru reports that the Fano militias organized under the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM) appear to have formed a tactical alignment with the TPLF. According to Birru, relations between Fano militias and the Ethiopian government had deteriorated following the signing of the Pretoria Agreement and worsened further after the government's April 2023 dismantling of regional special forces across Ethiopia, which triggered

direct armed confrontation between government forces and Fano militias (ACLED, 2 June 2026).

2.2.4 Tekeze Zeb (Tekeze Guards)

In the contested region Western Tigray[8], a local militia called Tekeze Zeb was established by the Amhara-controlled local government to protect the disputed western Tigray (ACLED, 2 June 2026; HRW, 22 April 2026; see also TNH, 23 February 2026). A TNH article mentions that these Amhara paramilitaries "serve as auxiliaries to federal forces" (TNH, 23 February 2026). In July 2026, SWP mentions that there "is a risk that smaller militias, such as the Tekeze Guards in Amhara-controlled Western Tigray […] might undertake military actions driven by local motives" (SWP, 22 July 2026). According to ACLED, in February 2026, the AFNM attacked the Tekeze Zeb in Tsegede, Western Tigray (ACLED, 2 June 2026).
In March 2026, Tesfa News, an English-language, Eritrean pro-government diaspora news portal publishing on X, reports the following regarding the Tekeze Guards:

> "Reports indicate clashes between Amhara Fano fighters and another Amhara militia known as the Tekeze Zeb ('Tekeze Guards'), marking what could be the first direct confrontation between the two groups. The Tekeze Zeb operates along the Tekeze River near the Amhara–Tigray border and has been involved in defending the disputed territories of Welkait, Tsegede, Tselemt, and Humera. These areas came under Amhara administration after nearly three decades following the conclusion of the 2020–2022 Tigray war but are still claimed by Tigray authorities as 'Western Tigray.' While Fano forces have been fighting the federal government during the ongoing conflict in the Amhara region for the collective freedom of the Amhara people, the Tekeze Zeb has largely stayed out of those battles and is widely seen as operating with federal backing. If confirmed, the reported fighting could signal a widening split among Amhara armed groups and further complicate an already volatile situation in northern Ethiopia." (Tesfa News, 7 March 2026)

2.2.5 Tigray Peace Forces (TPF)

A January 2026 article mentions that the Tigray Peace Forces (TPF) was active in the border area between Tigray and Amhara. The article reports clashes involving "the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), Tigray Peace Forces (TPF), Tigray Defense Forces (TDF), and armed groups active in the two regions" (The Reporter Ethiopia, 31 January 2026). A War Update by AAA, notes that, reportedly, "since August 2026 TPF have continued to operate alongside ENDF units on the Chobi-Ber front", in Raya Kobo Woreda (AAA, 10 August 2026, p. 5). The Critical Threats Project (CTP), a project conducting analysis and assessments on issues deemed to be a threat to the security of the USA and its allies, describes the TPF as "a federally backed anti–Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) Tigrayan armed group" (CTP, 8 October 2026).

[8] According to Human Rights Watch, the governance of Western Tigray Zone has administratively fallen under the Amhara Region since late 2020 (the zone has been unofficially renamed "Welkait Tegede Setit Humera Zone"), while both Amhara and Tigrayan regional authorities lay claim to the territory (HRW, 22 April 2026).

2.2.6 *Qemant armed groups*

Some sources mention the Qemant ethnic militia (ACLED, 16 May 2025) or Qemant armed groups (EHRC, 9 October 2026a, p. 3) as active actors in the Amhara Region. ACLED notes the following regarding Qemant:

> "Various ethnic Qemant movements advocate for greater autonomy for the Qemant living in Amhara. As ethnicity is the basis for territorial governance and political organization under Ethiopia's ethno-federalist system, these political movements argue that areas inhabited by the Qemant ethnic group should hold the status of a special zone within the Amhara region […] Since April 2023, ACLED records 47 abductions, over half of which were conducted by Fano militias. ACLED records only six abductions by Qemant militias. These abductions, conducted amid the ongoing conflict, may be purely for economic gain or may be linked to the two armed groups' fight against the government, as these abductions sometimes target local officials." (ACLED, 16 May 2025)

2.2.7 *Agew groups and Tigray Defense Forces (TDF)*

According to ACLED, the Agew Shengo is a militant group in Amhara's Wag Hamra Zone, formed by former members of the Agew Democratic Movement, a political arm of ethno-nationalist Agew movements (ACLED, 17 March 2023). ACLED notes that on 22 April 2026, the "Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-led Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) and Agew Shengo militias" seized control of Nirak town in Wag Hamra Zone, "abducted more than 40 civil servants and local administration leaders, and looted public and private properties" (ACLED, 11 May 2026). In June 2026, Ethiopia Observer reports that "the Agew Democratic Coalition, which is reportedly backed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), has captured a border town in the Amhara region, in the Wag Hamra zone" (Ethiopia Observer, 4 June 2026). In September 2026, AAA provides a translation of an Amharic DW article (see: DW, 14 September 2026), writing the following:

> "Starting from Miyazia 2018 EC (corresponds to early April/May 2026), ADM (Agew Shengo) militants have taken control of Tsagibji and Abergele districts of Wag-Hemra Zone in Amhara Region displacing residents to Sekota City where they have remained over the past five months, however lack of humanitarian relief from authorities has displaced them to other towns including Addis Ababa. […] At this time Tsagibji and Abergele districts are under the control of ADM militants which have imposed fines on residents which has contributed to the hardships caused by the drought and other problems, they say." (AAA, 16 September 2026)

2.3 Territorial Control

In its August 2026 country of origin information report on Ethiopia, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs reproduces a map by the research-led intelligence firm Aldebaran Threat Consultants (ATC) showing territorial control at zone level as of 8 July 2026. Most zones in Amhara are marked as areas of "Fano Presence". The map shows Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) "Control" in the northern parts of North Gondar and West Gondar, and Bahir Dar and the surrounding area. Amhara's Oromiya Zone and a small pocket in the easternmost areas of South Wello are also marked as being under "ENDF Control". The northern part of Wag Hamra is marked as being under the control of the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) (Netherlands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 115). The map can be found on page 115 of the report:

- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Algemeen ambtsbericht Ethiopië, August 2026 https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143744/Algemeen_ambtsbericht_Ethiopie_(augustus_2026).pdf

In September 2026, Martin Plaut, a journalist specialising in the Horn of Africa, shared several conflict maps on his blog (Plaut, 29 September 2026). They include a map created by the social network X user Ethiomapping. The map has selectable layers, including "events up to the alliance"[9] and "events up to March" 2026. According to the layer entries, these show incidents recorded between February and September 2026, including activities of the conflict parties in Amhara Region (Ethiomapping, undated). The map can be accessed at:

- Ethiomapping: The Ethiopian Conflict Map, Google Maps, undated https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1oj0q2UidTVIs2XagoumCDRZ-1X-NI_o&usp=sharing

In May 2026, Al Jazeera publishes an animated map showing armed violence in Ethiopia from 2022 to May 2026, including violence in the Amhara Region. The map is based on data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and is available at:

- Al Jazeera: A visual guide to Ethiopia's ethnic groups and conflict areas, 29 May 2026 (15 May 2026), (published on Flourish) https://flo.uri.sh/visualisation/29123025/embed

In February 2026, the Center for African Security Studies (CASS) reports the following:

> "The conflict in Amhara, Ethiopia's second-most-populous region, entered an uneasy stalemate in early 2026. Nearly three years into an armed rebellion sparked by the federal government's April 2023 decision to dissolve regional forces and centralize the security services, the federal army has failed to achieve an outright military victory. Conversely, the Fano rebel movement has also proven unable to capitalize on its dominance of the countryside in order to offer a stable political alternative. The Fano rebel group currently controls large swathes of the countryside in Gojjam, Gondar, and Wollo, while the federal army maintains its hold over major urban centers (Bahir Dar, Gondar, and Debre Berhan) and strategic roads, despite being the target of repeated hit-and-run attacks." (CASS, 12 February 2026)

[9] On 20 September 2026, seven Ethiopian armed groups established an alliance with the stated aim of removing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government (Al Jazeera, 21 September 2026). The Tsemdo coalition (Borkena, 20 September 2026), formally announced as the Ethiopian Peoples' Forces Alliance for Survival, reportedly includes the Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM), the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (Ugugumo), the Benishangul Peoples' Liberation Movement (BPLF), and the Gumuz Peoples' Democratic Movement (GPDM) (Al Jazeera, 23 September 2026).

At the end of March 2025, the ENDF reportedly claimed that it had completed "a heavy offensive against Fano forces" in the zones of South Gondar, West Gondar, North Gojam, East Gojam, West Gojam and North Wello (The Reporter Ethiopia, 3 May 2025b).

According to an April 2025 article by the Associated Press (AP), a Fano fighter in Amhara's Gojam area claimed that Fano controls 80 percent of Amhara (see also TNH, 12 November 2024). AP describes these claims as "bullish" and "unverified". In a statement, Amhara's deputy head of security said the government had "freed" 2,225 of the region's 4,174 subdistricts. AP states that it was unclear how many of the remaining subdistricts were under Fano control (AP, 11 April 2025).
In October 2025, residents and Fano fighters told DW (see: DW, 17 October 2025) that Fano controlled the North Wello towns/localities of Checheho, Zebit, Geregera, Aflakit, Sanka and Dibala, and an ENDF commander stated Fano controlled "six districts" in North Wello Zone alone, and that government forces tried to advance toward Muja and Kulmesk via Tekulesh, near Raya Kobo, but sustained heavy casualties (Addis Standard, 18 October 2025).

In February 2026, residents of Kobo town in North Wello reportedly described ENDF troops entering the town and Amhara Regional Forces sighted in town a day earlier. Civilians were reported withdrawing cash and stockpiling food amid the uncertainty. Addis Standard summarised the National Movement of Amhara (NaMA) as urging "both the federal and Amhara regional governments to pay special attention to what it described as security vacuums and governance failures" (Addis Standard, 19 February 2026).
In February 2026, AFNM forces reportedly captured more than 20 districts and cities, including Ebinat, Alem Ber, Simada and Debre Tabor (DNE, 12 February 2026).
As of May 2026, Fano was reported to be contesting towns along the B22 and B31 roads leading to Bahir Dar and to have established "limited local governance structures" in rural areas it holds (CTP, 28 May 2026). The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) announced that voting would not take place in eight of Amhara Region's 138 electoral districts, citing "unfavorable conditions" amid fighting between armed groups and the army (DW, 28 May 2026). According to the August 2026 country of origin information report by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fano essentially remained a guerrilla movement operating in rural Amhara, while the provincial cities of Bahir Dar, Dessie, Gondar and Weldiya and the main highways stayed under the control of the ENDF and regional authorities. One confidential source described the authorities' control as "island control" (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 34).

The Amhara Association of America (AAA), a US-based advocacy organisation of the Amhara diaspora,[10] reports that it had recorded 106 battle events in August 2026. According to AAA, the events took place in 62 woreda and city administrations in 16 zonal administrations across the Amhara, Oromia, and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. AAA states that they resulted in 1,477

[10] Critical Threats Project describes AAA's publication "Amhara War Updates" as "pro-Fano news outlet" (CTP, 28 May 2026). AAA refers to government forces as "Oromo Prosperity Party regime joint forces (regime forces)" and to Fano as "Amhara Fano self-defense force" (AAA, 10 August 2026, p. 1).

casualties among government forces and 71 among Fano fighters. It describes August 2026 as a month of intense fighting with heavy military casualties and changes of control in several strategic areas, involving operations by both Fano and government forces (AAA, 29 September 2026).

In some instances, AAA's bulletins "War updates from Amhara Region, Ethiopia", published in August and September 2026, describe the seizure of positions by Fano units. For example, on 24 August 2026 Fano forces "overran and seized control of key regime defensive dugouts" on the outskirts of Mahderemaryam town (Farta Woreda, South Gondar) (AAA, 31 August 2026, p. 9). The bulletins also describe Fano exercising governance functions rather than solely engaging in combat. In mid-August, Fano units reportedly established a "temporary civilian administrative structure" and appointed civil leaders in Delanta Woreda (South Wello) while also holding public consultations in Dawunt Woreda (North Wello) (AAA, 17 August 2026, p. 3). The following week, AAA reports that training led by Fano had been completed for leaders of a "Temporary People's Administration" in Meket Woreda (North Wello), and that a public forum had been held in Ambasel Woreda (South Wello) (AAA, 25 August 2026, p. 2).

AAA repeatedly reports government forces being "compelled to withdraw" after clashes, including close to government strongholds. Examples are Qutir 1 Kebele (Qwara Woreda, West Gondar) (AAA, 25 August 2026, p. 13) and Dehna-Mariam Kebele (Bahir Dar-Zuriya Woreda) on 4 September (AAA, 8 September 2026, p. 10). On 3 September 2026, government forces reportedly withdrew from Atsedemaryam town, which had long served as a key military base in Alefa Woreda, Central Gondar (AAA, 8 September 2026, p. 11). The bulletins give no information on whether these positions were later re-occupied.

2.4 Security developments and trends since January 2025

2.4.1 Background

The current conflict follows the 2020–2022 Tigray war, during which Fano fighters had fought alongside federal forces. Toward the end of the Tigray war, government forces (ENDF) started to disarm and detain Fano fighters, and in 2023 Fano responded by launching an armed insurgency (ADF, 18 February 2025). The dismantling of the regional special forces reportedly escalated the situation in Amhara (The Africa Report, 12 August 2026), as this was seen "as a deliberate attempt to leave the region defenseless against future Tigrayan retaliation" by Amhara communities (Just Security, 14 October 2026). After the ENDF initiated a large-scale military operation to defeat the Fano in October 2024, the conflict continued to further escalate (ADF, 18 February 2025).

2.4.2 January 2025 to August 2026

From mid-December 2024 to the end of January 2025, fighting between government forces and Fano militias temporarily slowed down, possibly due to major religious holidays, reported surrenders of Fano fighters, and foreign diplomatic engagement with some Fano militias. The recorded confrontations were primarily concentrated in the North Shewa, East Gojam, and West Gojam zones (ACLED, 5 February 2025). Throughout January 2025, Fano militants clashed with government forces, before decreasing in intensity as the government stepped up airstrikes in February 2025 (International Crisis Group, undated). Mid-March 2025, four main Fano divisions in Gondar, Shewa, Gojam, and Wello announced a coordinated offensive named

Operation Andinet ("Unity") (ACLED, 2 April 2025), triggering violent clashes across the region and prompting the military to deploy mechanised units to Amhara for the first time (International Crisis Group, undated). Heavy fighting reportedly took place in areas surrounding Weldiya city in North Wello Zone (Borkena, 12 March 2025). Clashes between Fano militias and the ENDF declined in early April following the initial surge of Operation Andinet. This decline "may be related to internal strife among Fano militias" (ACLED, 16 April 2025). Mid-April 2025, the ENDF executed a drone strike in Gedeb town, East Gojam Zone, killing over 100 people. Eyewitnesses stated that the strike struck civilians, while local government officials claimed the strike targeted Fano militants (ACLED, 30 April 2025). For more information on this incident see section 3.1.1.1 of this report.

Early May 2025, Qemant ethnic militia members abducted 15 civilian passengers from a public bus in West Gondar Zone. Abductions in the Amhara Region increased following the outbreak of conflict between Fano militias and government forces in April 2023, with 47 abduction incidents recorded since, more than half of which were attributed to Fano militias (ACLED, 16 May 2025).

End of May 2025, a truck drivers' association reported that more than 30 truck drivers had been abducted in the region over the preceding two weeks, attributing the increase to deteriorating security conditions and a lack of accountability for armed groups (Addis Standard, 30 May 2025). Clashes between Fano and government forces also continued in April and May 2025, as well as in June 2025, with an uptick in fighting reported in Gojam late in the month. Clashes persisted in July 2025, when Fano factions launched a multi-front retaliatory campaign in response to government counter-insurgency operations, with fighting spreading into Oromia Region. In August 2025, Fano groups launched "Operation Martyrs" across at least 18 districts of Gojam Zone, and in September 2025 Fano escalated operations in North and South Wello zones, temporarily seizing Mekane Selam town. The government conducted retaliatory drone strikes in Wello. Fano began "Operation Arbegna Adem Ali" that continued in October 2025. Hostilities were reported in West and East Gojam, North and South Gondar, North Shewa, and South, West and North Wello zones. The offensive came to an end around 10 October 2025, but fighting continued, and Fano reportedly kept control over several districts in North Wello. In December 2025, AFPO senior figure Masresha Seeite signed a peace deal with regional authorities, but AFPO later said he had already been expelled at the time of signing and rejected the agreement (International Crisis Group, undated).

In January 2026, Fano militias united under a new Amhara Fano National Movement (AFNM), and the following month, insurgent violence intensified (International Crisis Group, undated) as ENDF units reportedly redeployed further north (CTP, 12 February 2026; International Crisis Group, undated). Fano fighters temporarily moved into the city of Debre Tabor in South Gondar Zone, set fire to police stations and administrative buildings, and the incursion was followed by government drone strikes in response. In March 2026, AFNM launched a major operation in South Gondar Zone, stating that it had killed "scores of federal forces". This was seen as a sign of closer coordination among Fano factions and greater operational capacity since their unification. In April 2026, protests erupted across Amhara over the government's decision to proceed with elections despite ongoing conflict with Fano militias, which continued to inflict a heavy toll on civilians. After AFNM announced movement restrictions across Amhara in May 2026 in connection with the elections, the region experienced one of its most violent periods around the 1 June elections (International Crisis Group, undated).

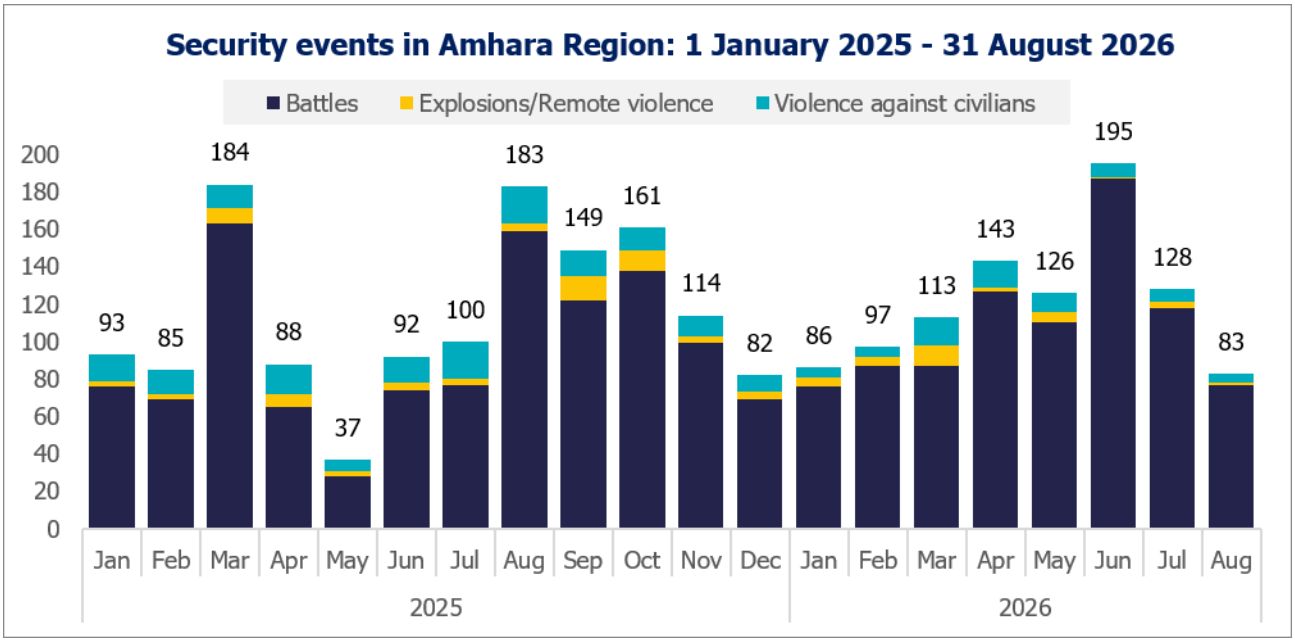
A May 2026 report by CTP describes the developments ahead of the planned elections as follows:

> "Amhara ethno-nationalist Fano militias have sustained offensives across northern Ethiopia's Amhara region since March 2026, hampering the Ethiopian federal government's efforts to organize upcoming federal elections on June 1. Fano has increased its average monthly rate of attacks by over 50 percent in the March to May period compared to December 2025 to February 2026. Fano has been active across central and southern Amhara, threatening population centers on key roads. […] The Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) has reinforced its presence in Amhara since late March and launched a counteroffensive, but Fano has maintained an elevated rate of activity. The pro-Fano news outlet Amhara War Updates reported that the ENDF launched a counteroffensive on March 30 with 20,000 troops to reassert control over the South Gondar zone, which surrounds Bahir Dar, although the number of troops involved is unverified. The ENDF nearly tripled attacks against Fano in Amhara from March to April and has further increased operations targeting Fano from April to May. The ENDF has claimed multiple times that it had neutralized Fano in specific areas, but May is on track to be Fano's most active single month in 2026." (CTP, 28 May 2026)

The region experienced one of its most violent periods around the 1 June elections. In July 2026, fighting between Fano and government forces remained ongoing, in particular in the Gojam area, and in August 2026, the federal government intensified its campaign against Fano in Amhara, reportedly in anticipation of a broader confrontation with the TPLF and to degrade the insurgency's capacity ahead of a possible multi-front conflict (International Crisis Group, undated).

2.5 Security incidents

Between 1 January 2025 and 31 August 2026, ACLED[11] recorded 2,339 security events[12] (resulting in 7,398 fatalities)[13] in Amhara Region. Of these events, 2,008 were coded as battles, 101 as explosions/remote violence and 230 as violence against civilians. In 2025, incidents peaked in March and August 2025 with 184 and 183 recorded events respectively. Another peak was recorded in June 2026 with 195 events (including 92 events recorded on 1 June 2026, the day of the elections) (ACLED, as of 23 September 2026).



(ACLED, as of 23 September 2026)

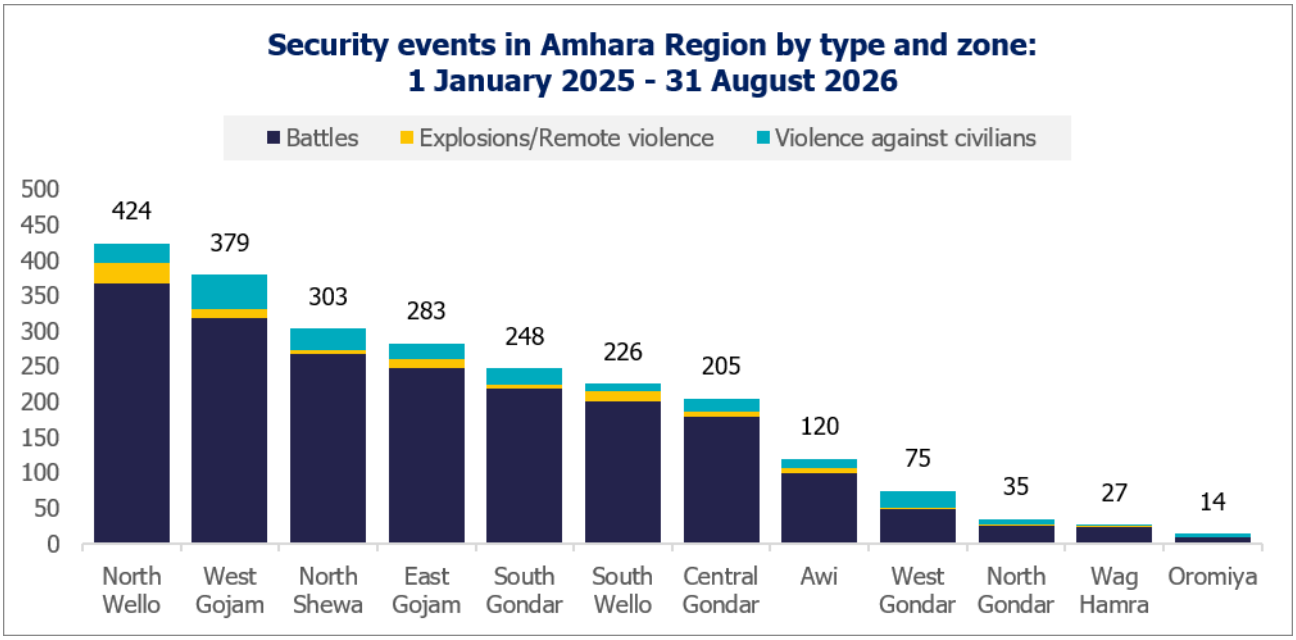
During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all zones[14] of Amhara. The highest number was documented in North Wello Zone (424 incidents), followed by West Gojam Zone (379 incidents) (ACLED, as of 23 September 2026).

[11] For detailed information on ACLED's methodology, please see its Codebook (ACLED, undated(b)).

[12] ACLED codes security-related incidents as follows: battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, riots, protests and strategic developments. Violence against civilians covers events in which an organised armed group deliberately uses violence against unarmed non-combatants (ACLED, undated(b)). Please note, that for the purpose of this section, only the event types of battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians were included.

[13] Please note that ACLED does not differentiate between civilian and non-civilian casualties (ACLED, undated(b)).

[14] A map depicting the state's zones can be found here: MapAction: Ethiopia: Zone (admin 2) map for region (27 Jun 2023), 27 June 2023, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/cea95c84-0f52-4592-a77b-cf34cf2cae0e/Binder1.pdf, p. 1. The map does not show North Gojjam Zone or the Bahir Dar Special Zone, which UCDP and AAA treat as separate zones. ACLED does not treat them as separate zones and includes both in West Gojam Zone. Please also see section **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** Demography of the region for further information. Events in western Tigray area are generally attributed to the Tigray Region.



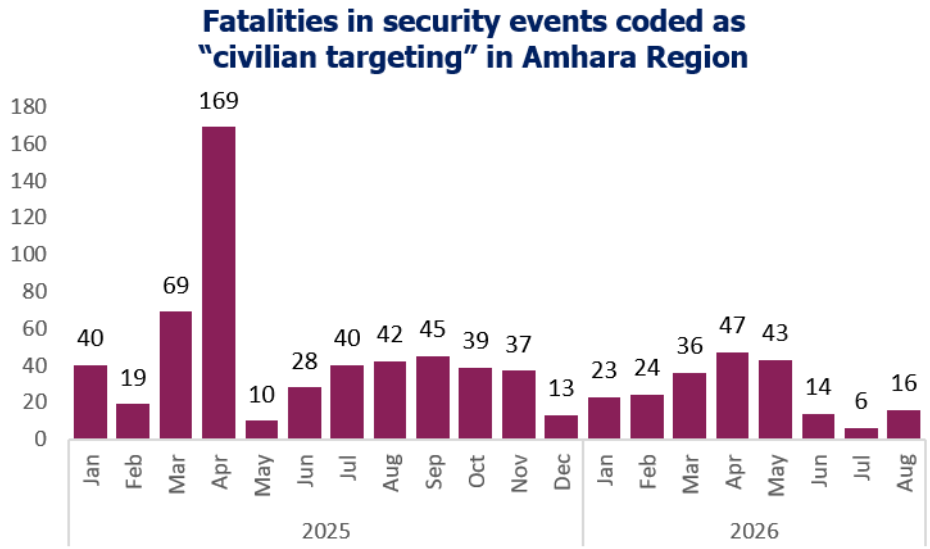
(ACLED, as of 23 September 2026)

In its August 2026 report on Ethiopia, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs cites data from ATC, which collects security and conflict data (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 50). ATC recorded 2,906 violent incidents in Amhara Region in 2025, of which 269 involved violence against civilians. For the period from 1 January to 30 June 2026, ATC recorded 1,091 violent incidents in the region, of which 75 involved violence against civilians. Regarding the collection of data on security events, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs notices that "[a]s with ACLED, the ATC data may be subject to underreporting" (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 53).

2.6 Civilian casualties

Between January 2025 and 31 August 2026 ACLED recorded 277 security events coded as "civilian targeting"[15] resulting in 760 fatalities. Of these, 129 incidents (90 incidents of violence against civilians and 39 incidents of explosions/remote violence) involved military forces of Ethiopia, 60 (55/5) involved Fano youth militia, and 55 (53/2) unidentified armed groups (ACLED, as of 23 September 2026).

[15] Incidents where civilians are reported to be the main or only target (ACLED, undated(b)).



(ACLED, as of 23 September 2026)

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP),[16] a data collection program on organized violence, based at Uppsala University in Sweden, recorded 605 events in Amhara Region between 1 January and 29 December 2025, of which 65 resulted in 234 civilian deaths.[17] Most civilian deaths were recorded in West Gojam (77), East Gojam (34) and Central Gondar (27).[18] According to the UCDP data for 2025, 103 civilian deaths were recorded in 32 of 553 events coded as state-based conflict between the Government of Ethiopia and Fano. In addition, UCDP coded 94 civilian deaths in 16 of 21 events of violence by the Government of Ethiopia against civilians. It coded a further 37 civilian deaths in 17 of 18 events of violence by Fano against civilians (UCDP, 9 June 2026).

Between January and August 2026, UCDP[19] recorded 322 events, of which 25 recorded 76 civilian deaths, with most recorded civilian deaths in South Wello (22), Awi (15), and Oromiya Zone (14). In 9 of 292 events coded as state-based conflict between the Government of Ethiopia

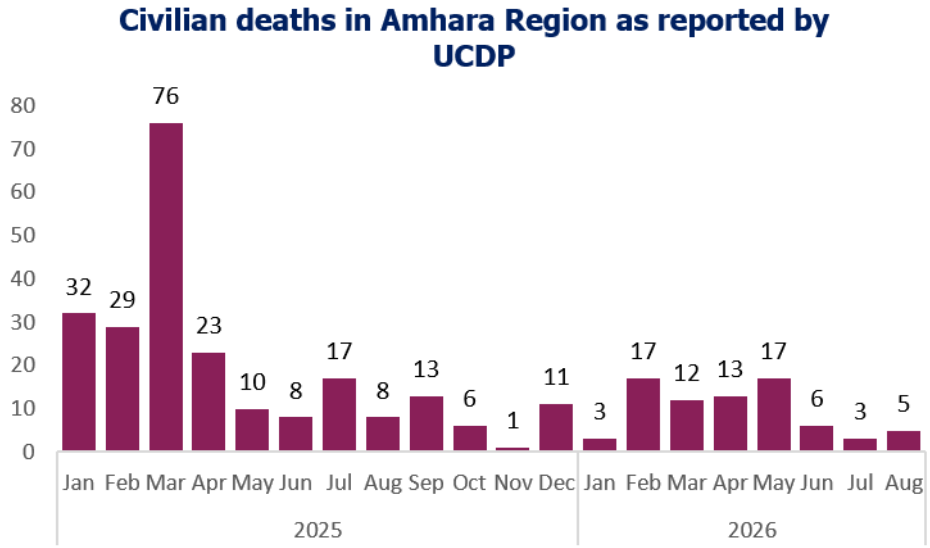
[16] UCDP defines an event more narrowly than ACLED and therefore excludes some violent incident that ACLED does record. This is one reason why ACLED can record significantly more events than UCDP. Please see UCDP's Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Codebook for information on the methodology used in data collection and presentation: UCDP: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/ged/ged211.pdf

[17] These figures do not include deaths of unknown status, coded as "deaths_unknown".

[18] Unlike ACLED, UCDP treats North Gojjam and Bahir Dar as separate zones. Events in western Tigray area are generally attributed to the Tigray Region.

[19] UCDP Candidate Events Dataset contains the same variables as UCDP GED but is released monthly rather than annually, and not all of its events will be included in the final GED. To allow early release, Candidate relaxes some of UCDP's inclusion criteria and flags events with higher uncertainty through a code status variable. Please see UCDP's Candidate Events Dataset Codebook for information on the methodology used in data collection and presentation: UCDP: UCDP Candidate Events Dataset Codebook, Version 1.5, 2026, https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/candidateged/ucdp-candidate-codebook1.5.pdf

and Fano, 28 civilians died. UCDP coded 17 civilian deaths in 9 of 10 events of one-sided violence by the Government of Ethiopia against civilians, and a further 28 civilian deaths in 5 events of one-sided violence by Fano against civilians (UCDP, September 2026).



(UCDP, 9 June 2026; UCDP, September 2026)

According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ATC recorded 14,945 conflict-related deaths in Amhara Region in 2025, including 501 civilian deaths. For the period from 1 January to 30 June 2026, ATC recorded 6,322 conflict-related deaths (including 104 civilian deaths) in the region. ATC further recorded a total of 6,914 conflict-related injuries (including 131 affecting civilians) in the region in 2025, and 3,060 conflict-related injuries (65 civilians) between January and June 2026 (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 54).

2.7 Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

In May 2026, the Belgian Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS-CEDOCA) reports that the conflict in Amhara has severely affected basic services and civilian infrastructure, weakened state institutions, and contributed to rising crime. Health care, education, freedom of movement, and humanitarian access have all been significantly affected (CGRS-CEDOCA, 28 May 2026).

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC), using Insecurity Insight data, recorded 69 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Ethiopia in 2025, up from 62 in 2024 (SHCC & Insecurity Insight, April 2026, p. 2). According to a study[20] by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and the Organization for Justice and Accountability in the Horn of Africa (OJAH), respondents reported that health care in Amhara has increasingly come under attack, including through reported drone strikes in 2025 and 2026. Health facilities have also been

[20] OJAH & PHR used a mixed-methods approach combining surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions (OJAH & PHR, August 2026, p. 16).

affected by looting, seizure, and shortages of equipment and supplies (OJAH & PHR, August 2026, p. 13).
On 27 September 2025, a drone strike hit the main patient ward of Sanka health post in Gubalafto Woreda, killing four civilians, including a pregnant woman, and injuring more than ten others (Addis Standard, 1 October 2025). On 11 February 2026, fighting erupted in Debre Tabor City as Fano forces attempted to seize the city. Four civilians were reportedly killed, while Fano militias allegedly destroyed 20 government facilities, including health offices, medical warehouses, and two ambulances, disrupting access to essential health services (OJAH & PHR, August 2026, p. 4). Reportedly, police stations, state buildings and vehicles were also burnt in the incident (Ethiopia Observer, 14 February 2026).
As of March 2025, more than 3,600 schools in Amhara remained closed due to insecurity, while millions of students had been kept out of classrooms over the previous two years. The regional education bureau estimated that 800 million USD was needed to repair damaged schools and restore education services (Africanews, 26 August 2025). As of August 2025, more than 400 schools in East Gojam Zone had been completely destroyed (Addis Standard, 25 August 2025).

In August 2025, authorities in Qwara District, West Gondar, accused Fano fighters of attacking Gulegu town, burning 74 government offices and three vehicles and damaging private property (DNE, 24 August 2025).

Drone strikes on residential houses were for example reported in February 2025 in Zenbo Kebele, Efrata Gidem District, North Shewa Zone (Addis Standard, 14 February 2025) and in Ambasel District, South Wello Zone (Addis Standard, 15 February 2025). The strikes reportedly also resulted in the killing of civilians (Addis Standard, 15 February 2025; Addis Standard, 14 February 2025).
In August 2026, residents of West Gojam Zone reportedly experienced severe disruption to their daily economic and household activities because of persistent power outages. However, the Borkena article does not explicitly state that the damage was conflict-related (Borkena, 5 August 2026).

According to Mine Action Review, there is credible evidence that cluster munition remnants (CMR) remain in Ethiopia from the 2020–22 conflict in Tigray and from the 1998–2000 war with Eritrea. The extent and location of contamination are unknown, as no comprehensive survey has been carried out, but the northern regions of Tigray, Afar and Amhara may be affected (Mine Action Review, 1 August 2026, p. 176).

2.8 Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to UNHCR, 166,353 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 1,026,215 IDP returnees were recorded in Amhara as of 31 August 2026 (UNHCR, 30 September 2026). However, UNHCR bases these figures on data collected by IOM between July and August 2024 (IOM, 20 January 2025, pp. 8, 32).
In its Protection Analysis Update as of August 2026, Global Protection Cluster (GPC) reports that Amhara remains one of the regions with the largest conflict-displaced populations and provides the following overview:

> "In North Gondar, conflict in Debark woreda displaced an estimated 4,089 households (23,855 individuals) in 2025, while insecurity in areas such as Jarri has continued to expose civilians […]. In North Shewa, new arrivals have been reported in Debre Birhan, including 434 households (1,662 individuals) newly registered at Woyneshet IDP site in early 2026. In North Wollo, renewed displacement from the Alamata area into Kobo resulted in an estimated 80,387 people being displaced. A MIRA [Multi-Sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment] assessment conducted in Amhara in May 2026 recorded 1,456 households (6,182 individuals) newly displaced from Abergele to Sekota in Wag Hamra Zone due to renewed conflict […]" (GPC, 6 October 2026, pp. 3-4)

According to the Protection Cluster's Monthly Protection Overviews, in North Gondar, "over 13,000 individuals" were displaced across five woredas in July 2025 (GPC, 13 August 2025, p. 1). In August 2025, 23,855 individuals were displaced in Debark Woreda (GPC, 9 September 2025, p. 1). Since March 2025, about 2,010 individuals from Oromia had arrived at the Woynesht IDP site in North Shewa (GPC, 13 August 2025, p. 1). In January 2026, new arrivals were reported at the North Shewa and Debre Birhan IDP sites (GPC, 10 August 2026a, p. 1). By May 2026, an estimated 13,206 people had been displaced from Abergele Woreda to Sekota town (GPC, 10 August 2026b, p. 1). In July 2026, a further 60 households were reported displaced from Abergele to Sekota. Spontaneous returns from Sekota to Abergele were also reported, but the number of returnees remained unknown (GPC, 10 August 2026c, p. 1).

3 Human rights situation

3.1 General overview

Since the armed conflict between Fano and government forces started in April 2023 (CIPS, 16 January 2025), both sides have reportedly been responsible for numerous human rights abuses (BBC, 19 November 2025; HRW, 4 February 2026), including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions (BBC, 19 November 2025) and sexual violence employed as means of warfare (GPC, 5 September 2025, p. 6). Amnesty International notes that the government imposed a state of emergency in Amhara in August 2023, under which thousands of people were arbitrarily detained without charges. The state of emergency officially ended in June 2024, but repression continued (Amnesty International, 6 January 2025), as did the Fano insurgency, which persisted throughout the reporting period (HRW, 4 February 2026; CFR, updated 9 November 2026). BBC reports in November 2025 that, according to rights groups, "there is evidence the army is disproportionately responsible for the abuses" (BBC, 19 November 2025). The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, a "state-appointed yet legally autonomous body" (The Reporter Ethiopia, 3 May 2025a) in its annual Ethiopia human rights situation report covering the period June 2025 to June 2026 states:

> "In the Amhara region, prolonged armed conflict between government forces and armed groups (commonly referred to as 'Fano' and 'Qemant armed groups') persisted throughout the reporting period across some parts of the region and caused deaths and physical injuries. Civilians were killed or injured in crossfire or by retaliatory attacks." (EHRC, 9 October 2026a, p. 3)

Sources highlight the fact that reliable numbers regarding civilian casualties are hard to retrieve (Borkena, 15 September 2026; UK Home Office, June 2025, p. 8).
Besides human rights abuses caused by the conflict between Fano and government forces, armed groups and organised criminal groups take advantage of the unstable security situation and commit abductions for ransom (EHRC, 9 October 2026a, p. 4).
The US-American non-profit organisation The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security relies on information provided by the, also US-based (Pro Publica, undated), advocacy organisation Amhara Association of America (AAA), when it states that the Amhara people in Ethiopia are suffering from identity-based violence and systematic persecution as a group (The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security, 15 May 2026).

Movement restrictions

The population's right to freedom of movement was curtailed throughout the reporting period in various parts of Amhara due to movement restrictions imposed by government security forces as well as armed groups (EHRC, 9 October 2026a, p. 4; see also EHRC, 22 August 2025, p. 7; BBC, 19 November 2025). In October 2025, the EHRC reports that these restrictions are caused by imposed curfews, checkpoints set up along roads by government security forces, road closures as well as attacks on roads, blockades, abductions and looting. These circumstances also resulted in violations of the rights to life and physical security (EHRC, 11 October 2025). UNOCHA reports that deteriorating security conditions have resulted in the suspension of flights and restrictions on access along key roads (UNOCHA, 28 September 2026). In its annual report for the period June 2025 to June 2026 the EHRC notes for example, that the road connecting Mekane Selam town, South Wello Zone, with Merito Lemariam town, East Gojam, had been closed for more than a year by government forces (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 35). Fano announced travel and movement restrictions across Amhara between 29 May and 2 June 2026, ahead of elections (International Crisis Group, undated), and threatened to take measures against anyone violating the directive. Authorities in the region subsequently "dismissed" the warning and reportedly did not expect the ban to cause significant disruptions of public activities (Addis Standard, 29 May 2026).
GPC reports in its Monthly Protection Overview for August 2025, published on 9 September 2025, that persistent road blockages in Amhara are affecting socio-economic developments:

> "[…] [T]here is growing shortage of essential commodities, resulting in noticeable price increases. Transportation infrastructure [is] also severely impacted, with reports of kidnappings targeting truck and crosscountry bus drivers, further disrupting trade, supply chains, and overall mobility of goods and people." (GPC, 9 September 2025, p. 2)

In a May 2025 article, The Reporter Ethiopia noted that according to a transporter's association, 32 truck drivers were abducted along routes in the Amhara Region over a two-week period in May 2025. Furthermore, transportation was being disrupted from illegal checkpoints across the region, although the article does not identify those responsible (The Reporter Ethiopia, 29 May 2025).
Regarding movement between regions, The Reporter Ethiopia, citing information from EHRC, reports that government security forces detained individuals travelling from the Amhara Region to Benishangul-Gumuz for work. Ethnic Amhara travellers were halted at checkpoints, and

reportedly either ordered to return or taken to police stations (The Reporter Ethiopia, 25 October 2025). The African Press Agency (APA) in May 2026 reports on recurring attacks "on passenger buses, travelling from Amhara region to Addis Ababa or the other way in the Oromia region of Ethiopia". These incidents involve killings of travellers and kidnappings (APA, 29 May 2026). In a major incident in March 2025, more than 50 passengers were kidnapped travelling from Addis Ababa to Debre Markos, while crossing the Oromo Region (APA, 21 March 2025).

3.1.1 Human rights violations by state actors

3.1.1.1 Drone strikes causing civilian casualties

According to AFP, the ENDF is the only force in the country equipped with drones, and it has repeatedly deployed them to fight insurgencies (AFP, 8 September 2026; France 24, 8 September 2026). Several sources report that drone strikes caused civilian casualties (HRW, 4 February 2026; Addis Standard, 25 June 2026; Plaut, 11 August 2026) and also target residential areas (Addis Standard, 15 February 2025). ACLED recorded 36 drone strike incidents between January 2025, and the end of August 2026, resulting in more than 150 civilian casualties, based on the reporting of several different media sources (ACLED, as of 23 September 2026).

Major reported incidents of drone strikes involving civilian casualties during the reporting period include the following:

On 20 February 2025, the BBC reported a drone attack in the small rural town of Engash Kebele, East Gojam Zone, which reportedly killed 16 people, including children (BBC, 21 February 2025). Another incident allegedly occurred in Gedeb, Enarj Enawga District, East Gojam Zone, on 17 April 2025, when eyewitnesses said that more than 100 civilians were killed. Residents reported that a large group of people was engaging in development work and constructing a fence for a school, when the drone strike hit them. According to the local administration, Gedeb was under the control of Fano militants, who were the intended target of the strike (BBC, 23 April 2025; see also Borkena, 18 April 2025). Physicians for Human Rights, a US-based NGO documenting human rights violations, reported that a drone attack in November 2025 hit a health facility in North Wello Zone, causing "multiple civilian casualties" (PHR, 19 February 2026). Reports on drone attacks causing civilian casualties continued in 2026 (Borkena, 3 March 2026; All Africa, 9 September 2026). Furthermore, residential areas as well as public infrastructure were damaged during drone strikes and airstrikes (Geneva Council for Rights & Liberties, 6 August 2025; see also Borkena, 15 September 2026).

According to an August 2025 Ethiopia Observer article, the human rights situation report for the Ethiopian calendar year 2017 (2024-2025 in the Gregorian calendar) by the EHRC does not mention drone or air attacks. When questioned about the alleged drone attacks by reporters, the Chief Commissioner of the EHRC said that during the Ethiopian calendar year 2017 (2024-2025) "only two drone strikes were reported to the commission, but both were deemed not credible" (Ethiopia Observer, 6 August 2025). According to The Reporter Ethiopia, the ENDF public relations officer denied reports of ENDF drone attacks targeting civilians in Amhara (The Reporter Ethiopia, 3 May 2025a). The EHRC annual report on the human rights situation in Ethiopia, covering the period June 2025 to June 2026, also does not mention any incidents involving drone attacks (see EHRC, 9 October 2026a; EHRC, 9 October 2026b).

3.1.1.2 Extrajudicial killings

Referring to several sources, CEDOCA, the research unit of the Belgian Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), observes that, during their fight against Fano militants, state-affiliated groups also target alleged Fano sympathisers and supporters. Murders, executions, arrests and detentions in conflict zones affect people, including women and children, solely based on suspected support for Fano, such as allegedly providing information to Fano (CGRS-CEDOCA, 28 May 2026, p. 22; see also Amnesty International, 6 January 2025; AP, 11 April 2025). The EHRC also confirms that government forces killed civilians, accusing them of supporting Fano (EHRC, 4 August 2025, p. 31) or having ties to Qemant militants (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 23). The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, having consulted news and confidential sources, identified a pattern whereby, following a clash with Fano, the army accuses the local civilian population of collaborating with the group. People, particularly farmers and young people, are then dragged from their homes and either arbitrarily detained or extrajudicially killed (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 38).

Addis Standard reported in April 2025 that residents of Brakat town and surrounding areas in North Gojam Zone had told the newspaper that, following fighting between the federal military and "anti-riot forces in coordination with Fano militants", more than 40 civilians (Addis Standard, 3 April 2025), one witness counted even 56 bodies (The Economist, 31 May 2025), were allegedly killed by government forces in the streets and during "house-to-house" searches, with government security forces reportedly killing people at random. According to the residents, the victims included women, children and mentally ill individuals (Addis Standard, 3 April 2025; see also The Economist, 31 May 2025). In July 2025, Addis Standard reports that available accounts indicated the following:

> "[…] [M]ilitary operations in Amhara have employed tactics that amount to collective punishment of the civilian population. Widespread mass arrests, extrajudicial killings, and media blackouts have contributed to the transformation of the region into a heavily militarized zone." (Addis Standard, 7 July 2025)

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs points out that no information on the number of extrajudicial killings was available (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 61).

3.1.1.3 Arbitrary detentions

Amnesty International reported that, during the state of emergency that was in place from August 2023 to June 2024, thousands were arbitrarily detained without charges in Amhara (Amnesty International, 6 January 2025). As of 28 January 2025, Amnesty International observes:

> "Not only are thousands of people behind bars without any legal basis, but the Ethiopian authorities have also continued to arbitrarily arrest people in the Amhara region. […] On 28 September 2024, Ethiopia's army and Amhara regional security forces arbitrarily rounded up thousands of people across Amhara region and brought them to four mass detention centres. Members of the judiciary, including judges, as well as prosecutors and academics were among the people targeted. The arrests took place amid fighting between Ethiopia's military and Amhara armed groups, which continues.

> Four judiciary workers were released in October 2024. In January 2025, authorities released hundreds of people, including three judges, women, elderly people and people suffering chronic health issues. Thousands remain arbitrarily detained.“ (Amnesty International, 28 January 2025)

In the English summary of its annual human rights report covering the period June 2024 to June 2025, the EHRC states the following regarding arbitrary detentions:

> “The report shows that, deprivation of liberty and arbitrary detentions for reasons said to be ‘command post‘ or ‘current situation’ continued to be a serious concern as a result of the armed conflict in the Amhara and Oromia regions […]. EHRC confirmed that, although the state of emergency declared in the 2023/2024 fiscal year was lifted on June 5, 2024, in the Amhara Region, practices resembling a state of emergency were reportedly implemented across all areas, resulting in widespread, arbitrary, and prolonged detention. For instance, since September 28, 2024, many people subjected to arbitrary detention and mass arrests have been held in informal detention facilities located in Dangila, Chiliga (Seraba Military Camp), Kombolicha, and Shewa Robit. The detainees in these centers were released after undergoing what the government called 'rehabilitation training.' In addition to those informal detention facilities, people have been detained in various prisons, police stations as well as military camps, referred as 'command post detainees' without being taken to court.” (EHRC, 22 August 2025, p. 3)

In the summary of its subsequent Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report covering the period June 2025 to June 2026 the EHRC notes:

> “Incidents of unlawful detentions have persisted in parts of the Amhara region affected by armed conflict […]. The ground of these detentions are ‘current affairs’ or allegations of supporting armed groups. For example, there were widespread practice of detentions in the Amhara region on grounds of ‘current affairs’ or accusations of being ‘Fano cells.’ […]” (EHRC, 9 October 2026a, p. 4)

Nationwide, the EHRC observed positive developments between June 2025 and June 2026 in reducing unlawful detention and ensuring that suspects were brought before a court within 48 hours. However, it also reports that “the widespread practices of unlawful detentions, including arrest on as the grounds of ‘current affairs’ without a warrant, and prolonged pre-trial detentions were prevalent” (EHRC, 9 October 2026a, pp. 4-5).

3.1.1.4 Enforced disappearance

In its report covering June 2025 to June 2026 the EHRC mentions that it has been monitoring 20 cases of individuals who were apprehended by government forces under the pretext that they were wanted for questioning or suspected of criminal activity and whose whereabouts remain unknown. Several of the incidents occurred in Amhara, although the exact number of cases concerning Amhara is not specified in the report (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 34).

3.1.1.5 Freedom of Speech

In August 2026, RSF reports that media freedom in Ethiopia remains severely constrained, especially for journalists reporting on the conflicts in Amhara and Tigray (RSF, 13 August 2026).

Since the state of emergency, which was in place in Amhara from August 2023 to June 2024 (Amnesty International, 6 January 2025), reporters writing about the region have been subjected to "arrests […], intimidation and censorship", resulting in an "information blackout" (RSF, July 2026, p. 21). Mukanzi Musanga, a Nairobi-based journalist, similarly reports in an article published in February 2025 by the International Journalists' Network that journalists covering Amhara often face "harassment, wrongful detention, exiling and silencing" (Musanga, 7 February 2025). While the state of emergency was officially declared due to armed conflict, it was also used to control information and limit public scrutiny (RSF, July 2026, p. 21). Citing a confidential source, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes that independent media were unable to operate in Amhara's conflict-affected areas, leaving violence against civilians largely underreported (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 38). In an article about a study by Yihenew Ewnetu published by Borkena and labelled as an opinion piece, the author claims that the governments' military approach includes imposing comprehensive telecommunication shutdowns in conflict-affected areas, a measure that has been used in Amhara since 2023. Due to these blackouts, the insurgent forces' command-and-control functions are impeded, while civilians are left in an information vacuum (Borkena, 15 September 2026). HRW states that the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA), which is authorised by law "to issue, renew, suspend and revoke operating licenses" (Borkena, 13 August 2026), has withdrawn licenses of journalists and outlets in Ethiopia, such as Wazema Radio (HRW, 25 February 2026), a media platform that promotes democratic values (GFMD, undated). On 24 February 2026, the EMA revoked the online media registration certificate of the outlet Addis Standard, stating that it had repeatedly disseminated "reports that compromise media ethics, violate Ethiopian laws" and had failed to act on earlier warnings. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the revocation "is part of a deliberate campaign to dismantle critical reporting in Ethiopia" (CPJ, 24 February 2026). Journalists affiliated with international media organisations encounter significant obstacles in securing accreditation. In February 2026, the EMA revoked the accreditation of local correspondents reporting for Deutsche Welle (DW) and declined to renew the accreditation of three Reuters journalists (RSF, 13 August 2026). Two journalists of DW, who covered Amhara and Tigray, were permanently suspended by the EMA (HRW, 15 December 2025).
The General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) states the following:

> "The suspension of the DW reporters by the EMA is a deliberate act of intimidation aimed at depriving Ethiopians of truthful reporting on the conflict in the Amhara region. The Ethiopian government must allow media workers to carry out their work free from any form of intimidation and harassment. Such actions have become a recurring strategy to silence journalists since the beginning of the conflict, with many reporters facing imprisonment as a result." (IFJ, 31 October 2025)

Referring to other media reports, the CPJ states that "more than 300 politicians, journalists, and others facing terrorism charges related to the conflict in Amhara Region had been asked to sign apology letters". In the same article CPJ reports on the cases of five journalists, named Gobeze Sisay, Meskerem Abera, Genet Asmamaw, Dawit Begashaw and Abay Zewdu, who were arrested in 2023 and were still detained as of 13 August 2026. They were charged with terrorism over their reporting on the conflict in Amhara and are awaiting trial. A conviction could result in the death penalty. The journalists have been pressured to admit that they took

part in a deadly insurgency and to write a letter of apology as a condition for their release (CPJ, 13 August 2026).

3.1.1.6 Access to justice and detention conditions

In its 2026 Ethiopia Country Report covering the period 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2025 the Bertelsmann Stiftung notes:

> "The government lacks the capacity or willingness to accurately document acts of violence, including those inflicted on civilians in Amhara and Tigray during the Northern Ethiopia Conflict and in Oromia in the course of the Oromo Liberation Army insurgency. Ethiopia's judicial system is likewise ineffective at achieving justice for wrongs committed either by pro- or anti-government troops." (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2026, p. 30)

In an article on sexual violence during the Amhara conflict, the BBC reports that victims "rarely seek justice, in part because the conflict has led to a breakdown in law and order". It also refers to concerns of Amnesty International that there exists "a persistent pattern of impunity in Ethiopia's army" (BBC, 19 November 2025).

Concerning access to justice in Ethiopia in general, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relying on confidential sources, describes the level of impunity as very high. Complaints against the police, as well as cases involving allegations of corruption against government officials, were generally not dealt with by the police. Government officials, including soldiers, police officers and pro-government militia members accused of serious offences such as torture, rape or assault are rarely prosecuted or convicted (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, pp. 57-58).

In its annual report on the human rights situation for June 2024 to June 2025, the EHRC observes:

> "[…] [V]iolations of rights [have been] committed against judges at all level of courts in the Amhara region, including illegal detention, intimidation, and interference by government executive bodies due to decisions and orders given by judges in connection with their judicial work." (EHRC, 22 August 2025, p. 6)

According to information received by the OHCHR, between 29 September 2024 and 5 January 2025, 35 trial judges and 14 public prosecutors were reportedly arbitrarily arrested in different jurisdictions in the Amhara Region by the ENDF and regional police. Allegedly, "[…] the judges have been arrested and detained after having granted bail to suspected Fano militias due to lack of evidence justifying their detentions" (OHCHR, 11 February 2025). In February 2025, the endorsement of a proclamation granting judges immunity from prosecution was welcomed by the Amhara Region Judges' association. The association's chairman observed a "trend of judges being imprisoned at an alarming rate". Furthermore, judges have reportedly been coerced into revising their decisions or removed from their positions when their rulings were deemed inappropriate. The chairman also emphasized that, of 13 judges previously detained, five were still in custody as of February 2025, while the remaining eight had been released (Addis Standard, 19 February 2025).

EHRC is by law entrusted to monitor the human rights of those detained in prisons, police stations and informal detention facilities. Between June 2024 and June 2025, EHRC's prison

monitoring in Amhara was impaired by conflict, security issues and denial of access to detention centres (EHRC, 22 August 2025, pp. 4-5). Addis Standard reports in a May 2026 article that the EHRC conducted monitoring visits in 32 police stations across Amhara, including in the zones of Bahir Dar, Gondar, North Gojam and North Shewa. Following those visits, the EHRC presented concerns over "widespread human rights violations in police detention centres across the Amhara Region, including unlawful detention, delayed court appearances, physical abuse, and denial of visitation rights" (Addis Standard, 28 May 2026). The article notes that the EHRC identified cases of detention without court orders and cites the Commission as reporting that:

> "[…] some individuals detained under what authorities described as 'current affairs' cases had remained in custody for up to seven months without being presented to court. The monitoring also documented allegations of physical punishment, intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, and physical assault by police officers. Additional concerns included the denial of detainees' visitation rights, lack of support mechanisms for vulnerable groups, the absence of consistent complaint-handling procedures, and practices in which suspects were reportedly kept locked inside detention cells throughout the day." (Addis Standard, 28 May 2026).

The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) publishes an Ethiopia Factsheet in June 2025. Based on data collected during 2023 and 2024, OMCT observes that torture in Ethiopia is "widespread and systemic" (OMCT, June 2025, p. 1). OMCT continues:

> "For 2025, the Global Torture Index classifies the country as facing a very high risk of torture and illtreatment, based on data collected in 2023 and 2024. Key areas of concern include police brutality, conditions within detention centres and abuses facilitated under emergency laws, particularly in conflict-affected regions such as Tigray, Oromia, Afar, and Amhara. Key violations involve psychological pressure, physical violence, and forced confessions during interrogations and detention. Victims, including political opponents, journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers, judges, religious leaders and various ethnic minority groups like Tigrayans and Amhara, regularly face discriminatory treatment. Torture methods include severe beatings, confinement in cramped spaces, enforced stress positions for long periods, prolonged solitary confinement in military camps, sleep and food deprivation, lack of access to medical care, detention in harsh climatic conditions and the alarming practice of incommunicado detention, all aimed at silencing dissent or extracting confessions." (OMCT, June 2025, p. 1)

3.1.2 Human rights violations by non-state actors

3.1.2.1 Fano

Several sources report on human rights violations committed by Fano militia members. Documented violations include killings of officials and security personnel (EHRC, 4 August 2025, pp. 35-36; EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 22), abductions and killings of teachers (Addis Standard, 18 February 2025; The Reporter Ethiopia, 19 April 2025; Borkena, 4 August 2025), deadly attacks on civilians accused of supporting the government (EHRC, 4 August 2025, p. 36; Borkena, 4 August 2025; EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 22), kidnapping for ransom (Addis

Standard, 22 December 2025), looting, arson (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 22) and extortion (The Reporter Ethiopia, 3 May 2025b).
Regarding the abductions, ACLED states in its May 2025 Ethiopia situation update:

> "The number of abductions in the Amhara region started rising when the conflict between Fano militias and the government began in April 2023. Since April 2023, ACLED records 47 abductions, over half of which were conducted by Fano militias. ACLED records only six abductions by Qemant militias. These abductions, conducted amid the ongoing conflict, may be purely for economic gain or may be linked to the two armed groups' fight against the government, as these abductions sometimes target local officials." (ACLED, 16 May 2025)

Major incidents involving Fano militants during the reporting period include the following:
On 14 February 2025, 13 schoolteachers were kidnapped in Amhara's North Gojam Zone, according to Addis Standard. Family members of the abducted described the perpetrators as Fano militants who had told them that the teachers would only be released for a ransom of 50,000 Birr [USD 391 as of February 2025] each. Teachers were identified by Fano militias as part of "the system", probably referring to the federal government. Addis Standard notes that it has repeatedly documented attacks against teachers in Amhara in the context of the conflict between the Fano and the government (Addis Standard, 18 February 2025). In another incident it is reported that on 20 March 2025 four teachers were abducted and subsequently killed in Mer'awi (HRW, 4 February 2026; see also DNE, 5 August 2025; The Reporter Ethiopia, 19 April 2025), which is located in North Gojam Zone (UNOCHA, 12 December 2023).
In an attack on 14 July 2025, Fano killed five civilians and injured four in an attack in Chilga Woreda in Central Gondar Zone. They also abducted six, of which three were released later and the whereabout of the other three, including a mother and a child, remained unknown. Furthermore, they set fire to numerous residential homes and looted cattle and pack animals (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 22). Addis Standard reported on the same incident and stated that more than eight people were killed in the attack, including three children who died in their homes, which were set on fire. One resident linked the attack to another incident the previous week, when the militants stole cattle from the community (Addis Standard, 16 July 2025).
On 7 August 2025, Fano militants killed 21 residents in a village in Metema Woreda, West Gondar Zone, which is inhabited by members of the Qemant community. The attack was reportedly carried out in retaliation for an earlier incident in which Qemant militants had allegedly abducted monks and sheperds and stolen cattle from residents (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 22; see also Mereja, 10 October 2026).
Borkena reports in January 2026, relying on a BBC article, that Fano forces executed three girls between 17 and 19 years of age. Their bodies were found outside of Debre Elias town, East Gojam Zone. Government officials claimed that the girls were raped before they reportedly were shot in the head. A member of AFNF is cited as saying that the girls were spying for the government. Fano operating in the area allegedly said that the executions were meant to send a message to others (Borkena, 3 January 2026; see also EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 23). On 19 May 2026, in Central Gondar Zone's Chilga Woreda, Fano killed nine people and injured 13 others, accusing them of supporting the Prosperity Party and fighting against Fano. The militants also stole local resident's cattle and pack animals (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 24).

3.1.2.2 Qemant militias

Qemant militants are also mentioned in the EHRC's annual report about human rights as having committed killings and abductions in Amhara between June 2025 and June 2026 (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 21). Several of these incidents are reported to have occurred in Metema Woreda, West Gondar Zone (ACLED, 16 May 2025; EHRC, 9 October 2026b, pp. 21-23).

According to ACLED, the abductions may be motivated by financial aims, such as obtaining ransom payments, or political aims, including targeting government officials (ACLED, 16 May 2025).

Major incidents involving Qemant militiamen during the reporting period include the following: Qemant militants operating in Metema Woreda, West Gondar Zone, opened fire on government security forces, killing members of those and 25 civilians on 23 June 2025 (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 21). According to BBC, at least 16 truck drivers were killed in an attack in Metema Woreda, while others were kidnapped (BBC, 27 June 2025; Borkena, 26 June 2025). On 3 October 2025, Qemant gunmen operating in Metema district killed seven people traveling from Gondar and from Meka Kebele to Genda Wuha town (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 23).

3.1.2.3 Unidentified armed groups and individuals

EHRC observes in its current annual report on the human rights situation that armed groups and individuals take advantage of the continuing instability in the Amhara Region, kidnapping people for ransom and killing people unlawfully (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 31).

Referring to the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), The Reporter Ethiopia notes that, on 31 March 2025, 19 humanitarian workers were abducted by an unidentified armed group, while travelling to Gondar Town. Some were released immediately and others after a ransom was paid (The Reporter Ethiopia, 19 April 2025).

The EHRC report lists seven abduction incidents that occurred in the Amhara Region between June 2025 and June 2026, including the abduction of shepherds, farmers, three staff members of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society coordination office, and an eye care professional. In one case the abductee was killed, even though the requested ransoms had been paid (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 33). One of the Red Cross Society staff members also died after being released, because of mistreatment during the abduction (EHRC, 9 October 2026b, p. 32; see also The Reporter Ethiopia, 23 August 2025).

On 8 July 2025, Melakmihret Nekatibeb Genet, a senior member of the Amhara Peace Council, an organisation that promotes dialogue between government forces and Fano, was abducted and subsequently killed on 12 August 2025 by an unidentified armed group (The Reporter Ethiopia, 23 August 2025).

3.2 Women and girls

3.2.1 Gender-based violence (GBV)

According to the EHRC's human rights report covering the period from June 2024 to June 2025, the human rights situation of women and children in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia "continues to be a major concern". The report further describes that, "women and children have been killed in attacks carried out by different actors during armed conflicts and security incidents. They have also been subjected to physical and psychological violence, including rape" (EHRC, 22 August 2025, p. 9).

ACAPS, an NGO providing humanitarian analysis, states that in conflict-affected areas such as Amhara, gender-based violence (GBV) "is widespread and disproportionately affects women and girls" (ACAPS, 15 July 2025, p. 2). GPC reports that "conflict and humanitarian crises have significantly exacerbated gender-based violence (GBV), with violence often used as a tool of warfare, intimidation, and retaliation, often as both a humiliation technique, as well as with intent to destroy ability to reproduce or have children" (GPC, 5 September 2025, p. 11).

Reports about conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) have emerged since the conflict in Amhara began in April 2023 (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 15 July 2026; UN Security Council, 15 July 2025, para. 77).

Recent reporting indicates that such violence has continued in Amhara. The UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on CRSV covers ongoing violence in Amhara in 2025. The report identifies state forces, including members of ENDF and Amhara police, as perpetrators (UN Security Council, 21 April 2026, para. 79). According to an organisation which provides assistance to survivors of CRSV and GBV in Amhara, as cited in a country report by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the perpetrators of sexual violence are mainly pro-government paramilitaries and primarily target women suspected of supporting Fano fighters (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 94). A report by the African-led Organization for Justice and Accountability in the Horn of Africa (OJAH) and the US-based organisation Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) analysed documented CRSV in Ethiopia between November 2020 and August 2024. According to the report, 79 percent of the interviewed health care workers in Amhara stated that survivors identified Tigray Forces as perpetrators, 35 percent named the Ethiopian military, and 24 percent the Amhara Special Forces. Almost half of the interviewed health professionals reported having assisted survivors of sexual violence committed by several offenders (OJAH & PHR, July 2025, p. 5). Amid the renewed tensions in Amhara in 2026, GBV reportedly continues (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 10 September 2026). In February 2026, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) condemned the ongoing human rights violations in Amhara, including sexual violence (Addis Standard, 20 February 2026). According to the Swiss Refugee Council (SFH), women and girls in Amhara face rape, torture, and sexual slavery as weapons of war (SFH, March 2026).

According to a BBC investigation based on data from 43 health centres in Amhara, almost 2,700 cases of rape were reported between 18 July 2023 and May 2025. In 45 percent of the cases the victim was under 18 years (BBC, 19 November 2025).

In July 2026, Deutsche Welle (DW), citing public institutions and experts, reports that sexual, physical and economic violence against women in the Amhara Region has reached an alarming level. The DW article presents numbers announced by the Amhara Bureau of Women, Youth and Social Affairs. According to the regional bureau, 17,000 women were victims of various types of violence in the last year. Citing an anonymous gender specialist, DW reports on increased violence against women in Dessie City and the surrounding areas. The director of the Women's Affairs Sector at the bureau in Amhara states that more than 1,000 women were raped, around 3,000 women were physically assaulted and around 13,000 women had their property taken (DW, 17 July 2026).

Across many communities in Ethiopia, including Amhara, survivors are discouraged from reporting abuse because of social stigma and the normalisation of such violence. Less than 10 percent of Amhara's medical facilities reported 685 GBV cases between January and April of

2026 (GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 6). According to ACAPS, citing several sources, only a few health facilities in Amhara are reporting incidents of GBV which is related to a "significant underreporting" due to the stigmatization (ACAPS, 15 July 2025, p. 9).

According to a joint open letter by 14 civil society organisations, perpetrators of gender-based crimes are not held accountable and survivors face barriers to reporting due to stigma, lack of protection and limited access to justice mechanisms (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect et al., 16 March 2026).
The New Humanitarian drawing on the OJAH & PHR report argues that the silence over CRSV has led to the normalisation of sexual violence in general, including within the same communities and families (The New Humanitarian, 31 July 2025). Data of the Demographic and Health Survey covering 2024-2025 shows that, 35 percent of women in Amhara, who ever had a husband or intimate partner, have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their partner (ESS & ICF, July 2026, p. 365).
The GPC summarizes the situation for women and girls as follows:

> "The breakdown of both formal and community-based protection systems, particularly in conflict-affected regions such as Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, Benishangul- Gumuz, and Afar, has increased the vulnerability of women, girls, and other at-risk groups to IPV [intimate partner violence], abduction, trafficking, child recruitment, child marriage and survival sex." (GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 6)

Similar protection and access barriers affect displaced populations. Women and girls in displacement situations are at particularly high risk of GBV (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect et al., 16 March 2026). In a monitoring report on the two refugee settlements Aftit and Alemwach in the Amhara Region, UNHCR reports that women and girls living in these settlements are at risk of sexual and physical violence, as well as discrimination in accessing services (UNHCR, 2 March 2026, p. 5). Risk factors for GBV in the settlements include early marriage, harassment and discrimination in decision-making processes (UNHCR, 9 March 2026, p. 7).
Conflict-related sexual violence in Ethiopia, reported in particular in Amhara, Afar and Tigray, is described as largely going unpunished and as seriously harming survivors' physical and mental health (GIWPS, updated on 16 September 2026; GPC, 5 September 2025, p. 6). According to the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS), survivors often face social stigma and have trouble getting adequate medical care. Many are left with lasting consequences such as infections, infertility and psychological trauma care (GIWPS, updated on 16 September 2026; see also GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 5). The Global Protection Cluster adds that mental health and psychosocial services remain very limited because facilities have been damaged, security is poor and trained professionals are scarce (GPC, 5 September 2025, p. 6).

According to the Global Protection Cluster, of a total of 28 safe houses in Ethiopia, eight are located in Amhara (GBV AoR & MoWSA, 2026a). Of nationwide 122 One-Stop-Centers (OSC), which provide "medical, legal and psychosocial services to victims of gender-based violence (GBV)" (UNICEF et al., 14 November 2022), 20 are located in Amhara (GBV AoR & MoWSA,

2026b). Additionally, there are 41 "Women and Girls Friendly Safe Spaces" (WGFSS)[21] (MoWSA & UNFPA, 2026). As a consequence of US funding cuts in early 2025, 17 organisations, which provided GBV response in Ethiopia had to cease their activities as of April 2025. Furthermore, 22 women's and girls' safe spaces across 5 regions, including Amhara, were closed (ACAPS, 15 July 2025, p. 16).

Insecurity Insight and Safeguarding Health in Conflict states that the ongoing conflict has a significant negative impact on healthcare facilities in Amhara, particularly affecting maternal and child health. This includes following reported incidents:

> "Ambulances transporting pregnant women were blocked, including a case where a mother lost her baby after being sexually assaulted by ENDF members. Health care providers critical to maternal and newborn services were arrested or abducted for ransom, while a nursing mother was forcibly taken from a health center by ENDF members shortly after giving birth, on accusations of links to Fano members." (SHCC – Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition & Insecurity Insight, April 2026, p. 5)

Citing the regional health bureau the local news platform Borkena reported in May 2025, that 200 pregnant women had died during the previous nine months because of insufficient medical care (Borkena, 2 May 2025).

3.2.2 Female Genital Mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C)

Under Article 565 of the Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, female genital mutilation (FGM) is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of at least 500 Birr [approximately USD 3 as of August 2026] or a prison sentence of at least three months. The infibulation of female genitalia, which the WHO classifies as 'Type 3' (WHO, 31 January 2025), is punished with imprisonment of at least three years (Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 9 May 2005, Article 565-566). FGM is widely recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women (WHO, 31 January 2025).

According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2024-25, 49 percent of women aged 15-49 in Amhara are circumcised. The majority of FGM procedures (96 percent) are carried out on girls under the age of five (ESS & ICF, July 2026, pp. 390-391).

According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), referring to Ethiopian in-country sources, the general acceptance of FGM has declined (DFAT, 19 August 2026, p. 26). A research report by Norwegian Church Aid and Save the Children similarly identified changing attitudes towards FGM. It found that FGM incidence in Amhara declined during the 2021–2026 research period and that the data indicated reduced social and cultural acceptance of the practice, as well as greater awareness of its risks due to engagement programmes (Norwegian Church Aid & Save the Children, 29 June 2026, p. 12).

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[21] "A women and girls friendly space is a place where women and girls can go to feel safer, access information and support […]. The term 'safe,' in this context, refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence), or abuse. Friendly and Safe Spaces are often, but not always, integrated spaces offering a range of services, ranging from information sharing […] to essential and discrete clinical care and support for GBV survivors and sexual and reproductive health services." (Child Protection/ Gender Based Violence Ethiopia, July 2021, p. 1)

3.2.3 Early/ forced marriage

The federal Revised Family Code and the Amhara National Regional Family Code set the legal minimum age for marriage at 18 years and require full consent for both partners. However, Article 7(2) of the former and Article 18(2) of the latter provide an exception, under which special permission to marry from the age of 16 may be granted if the parents or the future spouse submit a request to the Minister of Justice or the Justice Bureau of the Region, respectively (The Revised Family Code, 4 July 2000, Article 6 and 7; The Amhara National Regional Family Code, 25 June 2003, Article 17 and 18). Marrying a minor outside these conditions is punishable by up to seven years of imprisonment (Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 9 May 2005, Article 648).

Early marriage is predominantly a phenomenon in drought and conflict-affected areas, including Amhara. It is particularly common in rural areas, where children get married from as young as 12 to 14 years of age (ACAPS, 15 July 2025, p. 6). According to ACAPS, early marriage is rising in Amhara as a coping strategy during instability and displacement (ACAPS, 15 July 2025, p. 16). In addition to social, cultural and religious norms, which are key drivers of early and forced marriage, rising poverty rates and particularly dire economic conditions in conflict-affected regions are linked to early and forced marriages. In this context, a daughter's marriage is often treated as a way of reducing the number of household members who need to be provided for, while families may also rely on the bridal dowries as a source of income (ACAPS, 15 July 2025, p. 6).

While on a national level the overall trend of the last years indicates a decline of marriages before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 11 October 2026), several sources report that early and forced marriages increased in conflict-affected regions (GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 6; DW, 4 February 2026; GAGE, 29 October 2025). According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs citing an anonymous source, 262 cases of criminal prosecution relating to child marriage and FGM in 2025 were known in Ethiopia (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, p. 97). Deutsche Welle reports that early and forced marriage has been practiced widely in Amhara region and the number of cases has increased in the areas where schools have been closed due to the armed conflict (DW, 4 February 2026). According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2024-25, the median age at marriage among women between the age of 25 and 49 in Amhara is 16.7, one of the lowest in national comparison (ESS & ICF, July 2026, p. 77).

According to the local media platform AMECO, 2,565 girls under the age of 18 years were married in Amhara between September 2024 and September 2025. The planned marriage of 699 girls was stopped through interventions, while 669 of them were forced to the marriage (AMECO, 11 August 2025).

3.2.4 Education for girls

According to UNFPA and UNICEF, the conflict in Amhara led to the closure of many schools, with adolescent girls particularly being affected. One reason is the loss of the protective space that schools provide for girls, which has increased girls' risk of GBV and child marriage (UNFPA & UNICEF, 22 May 2026, p. 3). Their report covering 2024 states that 4.4 million children, including 2.2 million girls, were out of school (UNFPA & UNICEF, 28 July 2025, p. 3). In April 2025, AP citing the regional education office reports that 3,600 schools in Amhara were closed which left 4.5 million children without access to education (AP, 11 April 2025), whereas Ethiopia

Education Cluster reports, that 4,962 schools remained closed, with 4.1 million children not going to school, including 50 percent girls (Ethiopia Education Cluster, 27 March 2025, p. 17).
In 2025, the international research program Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) stated that school closures in Amhara had led some girls to migrate to Addis Ababa, where they engaged in sex work (GAGE, 29 October 2025). In another study on adolescent well-being in South Gondar Zone, Amhara Region,[22] GAGE found that, according to its quantitative data, girls were more likely than boys to be enrolled in school. However, its qualitative findings indicated that girls' actual attendance is often undermined by family demands placed on them during adolescence (GAGE, April 2026, pp. 10, 12-13).
In September 2025, the Ethiopian news portal Addis Standard, citing the EHRC, reports that female students face intimidation, harassment and sexual abuse in schools (Addis Standard, 16 September 2025).

3.3 IDPs and Returnees

According to UNHCR, 166,353 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 1,026,215 IDP returnees were recorded in Amhara as of 31 August 2026 (UNHCR, 30 September 2026). However, UNHCR bases these figures on data collected by IOM between July and August 2024 (IOM, 20 January 2025, pp. 8, 32).
Several sources describe challenging conditions in IDP camps:
An Addis Standard article reports in October 2026 that IDPs "living in camps in Debre Birhan are facing worsening shortages of food, medicine, healthcare and other essential services as humanitarian organizations scale back or withdraw their operations amid funding constraints, while continued displacement from conflict-affected areas places additional pressure on already overstretched resources" (Addis Standard, 6 October 2026). Other sources also report difficulties in providing sufficient humanitarian assistance to IDPs (AAA, 20 April 2026, p. 3; GPC, 7 April 2026, p. 2; UNOCHA, 14 July 2025, p. 1; Ethiopian Policy Institute, 27 January 2025), including food (Ethiopian Policy Institute, 27 January 2025; UNOCHA, 14 July 2025, p. 2), shelter, water, sanitation, healthcare, protection (UNOCHA, 14 July 2025, p. 2) and education during the reporting period (Ethiopia Emergency Shelter & NFI Cluster, March 2025, p. 1). In April 2026, the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) reports "[s]ignificant shortage of funding to support protection activities and other essential services" by protection actors in Amhara in April 2026 regarding access to IDP population, "even though no other major obstacles are currently hindering" the protection response (GPC, 7 April 2026, p. 2).
In its Protection Analysis Update as of August 2026, GPC reports that insecurity in Jarri, Amhara, "has continued to expose civilians, including IDPs, to heightened risks during daily activities such as accessing markets, schools, farming and grazing, as well as firewood collection" (GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 3). Jarri comprises two IDP camps (GPC, 13 August 2025, p. 4). The August 2026 report further states that IDPs in Sekota, Wag Hamra Zone, face "heightened protection risks including sexual violence, attacks on civilians, movement restrictions and lack of documentation, compounded by overcrowded and unsafe living conditions" (GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 4).

[22] The study is based on mixed-methods data collected in rural South Gondar and urban Debre Tabor between late 2024 and mid-2025; 2,610 young people were surveyed (GAGE, April 2026).

In August 2025, over three-quarters of IDP shelters in North Wello, North Shewa and North Gondar needed urgent maintenance as a result of storms and heavy rainfall (GPC, 9 September 2025, p. 2). By May 2026, access to IDP sites in South Wello Zone was described as "particularly challenging" (GPC, 10 August 2026b, p. 3). A report by the Ethiopia Emergency Shelter & NFI Cluster, a public platform supporting people affected by disasters and IDPs affected by conflict, published in March 2025, covers the assessment of five sites for IDPs in North and South Wello zones in March 2025. The sites were home to roughly 15,000 displaced people (Ethiopia Emergency Shelter & NFI Cluster, March 2025, p. 1). The report states:

> "The assessment in North and South Wello confirmed that service interruptions and limited humanitarian reach have left thousands of IDPs in unsafe, overcrowded, and undignified living conditions. Shelter structures are collapsing, NFIs [Non-Food Items] are depleted, food access is erratic, and protection risks are rising—particularly for women, children, and persons with disabilities." (Ethiopia Emergency Shelter & NFI Cluster, March 2025, p. 5)

Amhara was one of the regions with high return movement between January and March 2026. 31 percent of the overall returns in Ethiopia during this period took place in Amhara (IOM, 12 August 2026, p. 5).

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) monitored the situation of returnees and IDPs across the country including Amhara from June 2024 to June 2025. According to the EHRC, returnees living in shelters or integrated into host communities face serious difficulties because of inadequate, delayed and inaccessible humanitarian assistance that is not tailored to their needs, particularly in relation to education, healthcare, and other essential social services. Furthermore, EHRC adds, without further specifying the locations, that in some regions of Ethiopia, durable return solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) have not fully ensured the safety of returnees (EHRC, 22 August 2025, p. 11).

DFAT describes that, in general returnees are confronted with societal stigmatisation, in many cases by their own families and communities who perceive their return as having failed (DFAT, 19 August 2026, p. 37). According to a confidential source interviewed in April 2026 for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' country report, returnees had been detained and interrogated upon their return because they had applied for asylum abroad, had expressed negative views about the Ethiopian government and/or were suspected of supporting armed opposition groups in Ethiopia, without clarifying the frequency of such incidents nor how the respective returnees had come to the attention of the authorities. Another source was reportedly not aware of returnees facing problems with the authorities for having applied for asylum abroad (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2026, pp. 104-105).

In its nationwide Ethiopia Crisis Response Plan 2026, IOM describes living conditions for returnees as equally challenging as those for IDPs:

> "Living conditions for IDPs in displacement sites as well as individuals who have returned or relocated are dire, and needs remain high. Safe access to water and sanitation, basic health services, shelter and critical non-food items (NFIs) are urgent for all. A shrinking humanitarian funding environment has led to a reduction of humanitarian assistance, further increasing the pressure on already stretched national response capacities." (IOM, updated 25 September 2026, p. 6)

The National Integrated Household Survey (NIHS) 2024/25 reveals that 38.1 percent of all returned migrants intend to migrate again due to a lack of employment opportunities, in contrast to 25.1 percent in 2021. The majority of returnees come from Saudi Arabia (58.9 percent) (ESS, September 2026, pp. 15, 17).

According to the Reporter Ethiopia, 26,400 Ethiopians were deported from Saudi Arabia between January and March 2026, of whom 31 percent returned to Amhara (The Reporter Ethiopia, 15 August 2026), which means that numbers more than doubled in comparison to the deportations during the first quarter of 2025 (IOM, 12 August 2026, p. 1).

For Amhara and other conflict-affected areas, GPC describes security issues, damaged infrastructure and deficient services as "key barriers to principle and safe return and relocations of displaced communities". According to GPC, in certain regions of Amhara and Oromia, up to 30-40 percent of IDPs and returnees reported lacking civil documentation and being unable to obtain basic services (GPC, 5 September 2025, pp. 6-10).

GPC summarises the conditions for returning migrants as follows:

> "Safe, voluntary, and dignified returns or relocations of IDPs remain a critical protection concern across Ethiopia. Many IDPs in Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, and Benishangul-Gumuz are unable to return home due to ongoing conflict, landmines, damaged or occupied infrastructure, and unresolved disputes over land and resources. Where returns or relocations do occur, they are often ad hoc and lack adequate support for shelter, livelihoods, and access to essential services, exposing returning populations—particularly women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities—to heightened protection risks, including those related to secondary displacement where the areas of return or relocation are not suitable." (GPC, 5 September 2025, p. 9)

> "Returnees may encounter occupied or destroyed homes, disputed ownership, missing documentation and limited access to formal dispute resolution mechanisms, increasing risks of secondary displacement, protracted housing and land disputes, and tensions between returnees, host communities and other affected populations. Similar challenges continue to affect parts of Amhara, Afar and Oromia, where insecurity and uneven restoration of public institutions continue to limit access to legal and administrative services." (GPC, 6 October 2026, p. 13)

For a UNHCR monitoring report on protection needs and service gaps in the North Wello Zone, some IDP returnees (3 percent of 610 interviews) were interviewed in addition to IDPs in August 2025 (UNHCR, 8 January 2026a, p. 1). The five main protection issues reported by IDP returnees are food and nutrition (41 percent), sanitary kits for women and girls (30 percent), employment and work (27 percent), shelter repair (21 percent) and child protection services (16 percent). Further challenges mentioned by IDP returnees concern housing, such as high rental prices, non-affordable or unavailable shelter materials, overcrowded shelters, lack of services and the lack of a gender-based separation (UNHCR, 8 January 2026a, p. 6).

According to a UNHCR monitoring report on South Wello Zone, similar protection issues were listed. In addition, 49 percent of those interviewed said that most of the houses of returnees in South Wello are fully destroyed and 43 percent indicated that most houses are partially destroyed (UNHCR, 8 January 2026b, pp. 4-6).

In its report on the situation of IDPs, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) describes two displacement camps, one in Benishangul-Gumuz Region and one in Amhara region, hosting people originally from Amhara who have been unable to return to their home communities due to the unstable security situation and destruction of their properties (EHRCO, August 2025, pp. 8, 45). No information on the situation of IDPs originating from Amhara and residing outside of Amhara Region could be found within the time constrains of this report.

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