



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Ethiopia: Amhara and Amhara opposition groups

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Executive summary

The Amhara are the second most populous ethnic group in Ethiopia, comprising about 22% (23 million) of the population. They predominantly live in Amhara region but there are also large communities in Addis Ababa, and in the regions of Harari, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Oromia.

The Amhara played a crucial role in the political changes that led to Abiy Ahmed becoming Prime Minister in 2018 and fought alongside the federal government in the Tigray war (2020 to 2022). However, tensions had been rising between the Amhara and the federal government for a number of years. These intensified when the Amhara were excluded from the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed between the federal government and the Tigrayan forces in November 2022, ending the Tigray war.

The federal government's attempt to dismantle regional special forces in April 2023 sparked conflict in the Amhara region between federal government forces and the 'Fano' (Amhara militias). Sources estimate that there have been at least 7,700 conflict deaths between April 2023 and April 2025 in Amhara region, which represents 0.03% of the estimated 23 million population. Both government forces and Fano have committed human rights abuses/violations against the Amhara.

In August 2023, in response to the deteriorating security situation, the government declared a State of Emergency (SoE) which continued until June 2024. Thousands of Amhara were arrested and detained during the SoE, in Amhara and other regions, and Addis Ababa, some were released. Arrests of those suspected of links continued into the second half 2024 and 2025, with the federal government targeting those suspected of links with the Fano.

Ethnic Amhara are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state on the grounds of ethnicity only. Factors likely to increase risk include:

- actual or perceived support of Fano militias
- familial links to Fano members and/or supporters
- actual or perceived membership of unarmed Amhara opposition groups
- public criticism of the government

A person with well-founded fear of persecution from the state is not likely to be able to obtain protection.

Amhara who are unable to return to their home region because of armed conflict or threats from local actors may be able to relocate to Addis Ababa.

A decision to refuse protection is unlikely to be certified as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Each case must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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Assessment

Section updated: 13 May 2025

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by the state because they are Amhara and/or they support armed or non-armed opposition groups
- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, is likely or not to be certified as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#)
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when such a check has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Both federal security forces and Amhara armed groups, principally Fano militias, have been connected to human rights abuses including attacks on civilians and may have been involved in core international crimes (see [Conflict related abuses](#)).
- 1.2.2 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.3 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.4 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Race and actual or imputed political opinion.
- 2.1.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason
- 2.1.3 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee Convention reasons necessary for the grant of asylum, the question is whether the person will face a real risk of serious harm to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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3. Risk

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 Ethnic Amhara are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state on the grounds of ethnicity only. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 Amhara who oppose or are perceived to oppose the federal government may face persecution depending on their circumstances. Factors likely to increase risk include:
 - actual or perceived support of Fano militias

- familial links to Fano members and/or supporters
- actual or perceived membership of unarmed Amhara opposition groups
- public criticism of the government

3.1.3 The onus is on the person to demonstrate a real risk of serious harm or persecution.

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3.2 The Amhara and conflict in the Amhara region

3.2.1 The Amhara are the second largest ethnic group in Ethiopia after the Oromo. According to the 2007 (the most recent) population census, the Amhara numbered around 20 million, of whom 16 million lived in Amhara region and 1.3 million in Addis Ababa (constituting 47% of the city's population). Amhara were also found in other regions, with significant numbers in Oromia, Dire Dawa, Harari, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella. In 2022, the Amhara population was estimated to be 23 million (around 22% of Ethiopia's population) with an estimated 90% living in Amhara region and perhaps between 2 and 3.5 million people living in Addis Ababa (see [Demography](#)).

3.2.2 The Amhara dominated Ethiopian politics until 1991 and in 2018 they played a significant role in the election of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister. During the Tigray conflict (November 2020 to November 2022), Amhara Special Forces (ASF), Amhara militias and Fano (local Amhara) militias allied with the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) against the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). After the conflict, Amhara forces and Fano occupied the contested areas of Western Tigray (also known as Welkait) and Southern Tigray (also known as Raya), areas which are claimed by both the Amhara and Tigrayans (see [Causes of the conflict](#)).

3.2.3 Tension between the federal government and Amhara had been simmering for years but intensified after the federal government and the TPLF signed the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in November 2022, ending the conflict in Tigray. The Amhara were angered by their exclusion from the CoHA discussions and opposed the possible return of Western and Southern Tigray to the Tigrayans. Then in April 2023, the federal government, in seeking to consolidate its control over the country, decided to dismantle all regional special forces, including those in Amhara. This sparked violent demonstrations by the Amhara who feared they would be vulnerable to attack by outside groups. Many of the ASF refused to demobilise and instead joined the Fano. Armed clashes occurred between the ENDF and the Fano, which escalated over the course of 2023 and continued into 2024 and 2025 (see [Causes of the conflict](#)).

3.2.4 Fighting between the ENDF and Fano militias has spread to all areas of Amhara region. The majority of battle incidents were recorded in North Shewa, East Gojam, West Gojam, South Gondar, West Gondor, Awi, Oromo special region, and North Wello zones. Fano are concentrated in and control rural areas but skirmishes often happen with ENDF for control of towns and they carry out opportunistic attacks in the cities, particularly targeted at politicians and officials (see [Areas of control](#)).

3.2.5 Additionally, Fano and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) have clashed along the Amhara and Oromia regional border and in North Shoa in the Oromo special zone (see [Areas affected by the conflict](#)).

- 3.2.6 The number of civilian casualties caused by the conflict in Amhara region is unclear because of limited reliable reporting. However, the Armed Conflict Location & Events Data Project (ACLED) documented 2,346 events of political violence (battles, explosives/remote violence, violence against civilians and protests and riots) resulting in 9,096 fatalities (combatants and civilians) between 1 April 2023 and 30 April 2025 (see [Security incidents](#)). ACLED also recorded 446 events where civilians had been targeted resulting in over 1,811 fatalities (see [Attacks on civilians and fatalities](#)). The US-based Amhara Association of America (AAA), which advocates on behalf of the Amhara, claimed that there were over 3,283 civilian casualties (2,592 deaths and 691 injuries) between 4 August 2023 and 4 August 2024 in Amhara. Most of the civilian casualties resulted from 'indiscriminate' attacks by the ENDF, including extensive use of drones and heavy artillery weapons (see [Attacks on civilian and casualties](#)).
- 3.2.7 Sources have documented other human rights abuses in Amhara. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported 179 incidents of human rights violations and abuses and 3,163 victims in Amhara in 2023, and a further 107 incidents and 2,424 victims between August 2023 and January 2024. Incidents included (extrajudicial killings (see [Extra-judicial killing](#)), conflict-related sexual violence (see [Conflict-related sexual violence](#)), and arbitrary arrest and detention (see [Arrest and detention](#)). The main perpetrators were the ENDF, Amhara Regional Police and state affiliated militias but Fano militias have also killed civilians (see [Human rights situation in Amhara](#)). The targets of the violations included Amhara political opponents and political parties (see [Treatment of opposition groups General – non-specific groups](#)), Fano members and supporters (see [Real and suspected members and supporters](#)), and family members of Fano members and supporters (see [Family members](#)). Fano militias have also reportedly committed human rights abuses such as targeting civilians (see [Attacks on civilians and fatalities](#)).
- 3.2.8 Insecurity due to the conflict, road closures and an extensive system of checkpoints set by government security forces and armed groups has impeded humanitarian access (see [Humanitarian access](#)). In 2024 an estimated 15% (3.5 million) of the population needed food assistance and about 10% (2.3 million) required immediate food assistance (see [Access to food](#)).
- 3.2.9 The conflict has affected access to health. Government security forces and militias have killed health workers and patients, threatened and assaulted doctors, looted and destroyed medical supplies, and misused healthcare facilities affecting access to health. According to the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as of 13 December 2024 more than 40% of health facilities had been looted or damaged (see [Healthcare](#)).
- 3.2.10 The conflict has affected access to education. As of November 2024, the Ethiopia Education Cluster reported that about 35% (4.4 million) of children in Amhara were out of school, 5,109 schools had been damaged, 5,021 schools had been closed and 1,069 schools were being used for other purposes (see [Education](#)).
- 3.2.11 The conflict has also led to large scale displacement, with around 670,000 internally displaced people in the Amhara region as of March 2024 (see [Displacement](#)).

- 3.2.12 Attempts to negotiate an end to the conflict have to date been unsuccessful (see [Peace negotiations](#)).

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3.3 Treatment of Amhara including those linked to Fano

- 3.3.1 In August 2023, the government declared a State of Emergency (SoE) in response to the deteriorating security situation in Amhara region and to counter the threat from the Fano. This applied to the whole country and was initially for 6 months but was extended by a further 4 months, expiring in June 2024. The SoE allowed the federal security forces to arrest and detain people without judicial oversight. While the SoE has expired, restrictions in the Amhara region remain largely as they were at the time (see [State of emergency August 2023 to June 2024](#)).
- 3.3.2 Following the declaration of the SoE, federal government security forces arrested and detained people of Amhara ethnicity across the country ostensibly on suspicion of links with armed opposition groups, principally the various Fano militias. Sources report that arrests primarily took place in Amhara region and Addis Ababa, but there were also reports of arrests in other regions including in Benishangul-Gumuz and Oromia. While sources refer specifically to arrests immediately following the introduction of the SoE in 2023 they also indicate arrests continued into 2024 with both Amnesty International and the Ethiopian government Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reporting multiple rounds of mass arrests in September 2024. Landinfo commented in June 2024 that after the initial round of arrests in August 2023, the number of arrests declined in Addis Ababa (see [Addis Ababa](#)).
- 3.3.3 Estimates of the number of Amharas arrested and detained vary. In 2023, the US State Department observed that thousands of Amhara were allegedly arrested based on their ethnicity. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated more than 1,000 Amharas were arrested in August 2023 but did not state the specific locations where this happened. The Voice of America, citing police sources, reported 3,000 arrests in Addis Ababa in August 2023. The EHRC noted without providing specific numbers that 'many' detentions occurred between June 2023 and June 2024 (see [Arrest and detention](#)). Landinfo observed in June 2024 that none of the sources it consulted provided a verified account of how many Amhara had been detained in Addis Ababa following the introduction of the SoE but considered it likely several thousand were affected. The Amhara advocacy group AAA claimed in September 2024 that over 10,000 Amhara - mostly young people – had been detained in Shegar city outside Addis Ababa (see [Amharas in Addis Ababa](#)). The EHRC reported that 6,000 people were believed to have been detained in the Amhara region in late 2024. In Benishangul-Gumuz and Oromia regions, Amhara faced harassment, arrest and restriction in their activities for allegedly supporting Fano but sources did not provide information on the number of arrests. Sources, however, do not refer to further rounds of mass arrests in 2025, including in Addis Ababa (see [Amharas in other regions of Ethiopia](#)).
- 3.3.4 The length of detention of individuals arrested is unclear; while reports indicate people have been released. Those arrested were held in various formal and informal detention centres and camps, including schools and police stations before being transferred to ENDF detention sites across the

country (see [Arrest and detention](#)).

- 3.3.5 Sources also refer to specific groups of people who were arrested in the mass roundups, including government employees, political figures, journalists and civil society members. Landinfo observed in June 2024 that the authorities in Addis Ababa focus on those that pose a risk to the government or civilians (see [Arrest and detention](#), and [Amharas in Addis Ababa](#)).
- 3.3.6 While the federal government has taken various forms of repressive action – including arrest and detention, and extra-judicial killings - against the Amhara ethnic group in response to ongoing conflict, these have primarily occurred in Amhara region. The majority of Amhara across the country - including in Addis Ababa - have not been subject to adverse treatment, including detention and harassment, and are unlikely to be of interest solely on grounds of their ethnicity (see [Human rights abuses and violations](#)).
- 3.3.7 However, those with ties or perceived links to the Fano, may be monitored, subject to harassment, arrested and detained, which is likely to amount to persecution (see [Human rights abuses and violations](#)).

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3.4 Treatment of Amhara political parties

- 3.4.1 There are 3 political parties which have links to the Amhara but have different relationships with the federal government. The government's treatment of these parties varies, depending on the degree and nature of their opposition (see [Treatment of opposition groups](#)).
- 3.4.2 The Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA) is a pan-Ethiopian party which has largely supported the federal government and is close to the ruling Prosperity Party. Sources, including EZEMA representatives, downplay the party's vulnerability to interference from the federal government. In October 2023, the party issued a statement stating that the arrest of its chairman, Dr Chane Kebede, was unrelated to his leadership role within the party. However, there have been some problems in relation to federal authorities, including arrests in Addis Ababa under the SoE.
- 3.4.3 In general, membership or support for EZEMA is by itself unlikely to lead to persecution by the state. However, EZEMA members and or supporters who are perceived as critical of the authorities are likely to experience adverse reaction from the government which may amount to persecution (see [Ethiopia Citizens for Social Change \(EZEMA\)](#)).
- 3.4.4 The National Movement of the Amhara (NaMA) is an ethno-nationalist party. During the SoE, senior officials were arrested and detained in Addis Ababa. Five NaMA members have reportedly been arrested since April 2023 including Christian Tadele, a member of the House of Representatives, who was detained in a military camp for 7 months before being charged with terrorism offences.
- 3.4.5 In general, membership or perceived links to NaMA does not automatically lead to repression from the government. However, members of NaMA whom the government perceive as a critical or having links with Fano are likely to receive adverse reaction from the government which may constitute persecution (see [National Movement of the Amhara \(NaMa\)](#)).
- 3.4.6 Balderas party is reported to be Amhara-dominated, close to Amhara

nationalists and in favour of the Fano. The party's founder (and until August 2022 its leader) Eskinder Nega now commands an Amhara-based Fano militia. Sixteen members were reportedly arrested and detained between February 2023 and August 2024.

- 3.4.7 There is a history of state repression of the party even before tensions in Amhara escalated. Members and supporters of the party are likely to experience attention from the state which amounts to persecution (see [Balderas](#)).
- 3.4.8 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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4. Protection

- 4.1.1 Where a person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection from the authorities.
- 4.1.2 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 Ethnic Amhara from Amhara and other regions who are not able to return to their home areas because of ongoing conflict or threats from local actors may be able to relocate to Addis Ababa - which is a large, diverse city with a significant and established Amhara population - to escape persecution or serious harm (see [Demography](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.3 Federal and Oromia regional police reportedly restricted movement of Amharas into Addis Ababa purportedly to prevent the spread of Fano groups. Movement within Amhara region is affected by multiple checkpoints, the fighting, frequent road closures and criminality. Travel by air within Amhara and between Amhara and Addis Ababa is possible but expensive (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.4 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **13 May 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

NOTE: The maps in this section are not intended to reflect the UK Government's views of any boundaries.

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7. Amhara region

- 7.1.1 Amhara region is located in northern Ethiopia. It is bordered by Tigray region to the north, Afar to the east, Benshangul Gumuz to southwest, Oromia to the south, and Sudan to the west¹.
- 7.1.2 According to an April 2022 UNICEF Amhara regional brief: 'There are 12 administrative zones, 3 metropolitan cities and 158 woredas and 46 towns'². However, the Ethiopian Peace Observatory (EPO), a special project of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) which provides information and analysis about political violence and unrest across Ethiopia³ stated in its Amhara regional profile report August 2024 (EPO Amhara regional profile August 2024) that the region has 'nine zones —Wag Hamra, North Wello, North Gondar, South Gondar, South Wello, North Shewa, East Gojam, West Gojam, and Awi — and two special zones, Bahir Dar and Oromia Special zones, in the region. The capital city of the region is Bahir Dar.'⁴
- 7.1.3 A January 2024 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reference of map of Ethiopia⁵ reproduced below indicated that Amhara had 13 zones: West Gondar zone, Central Gondar zone, North Gondar zone, South Gondar zone, Wag Hamra zone, Awi/Agew zone, North Gojam zone, West Gojam zone, East Gojam zone, North Wello zone, South Wello zone, North Shewa (Amhara) zone and Oromia zone.

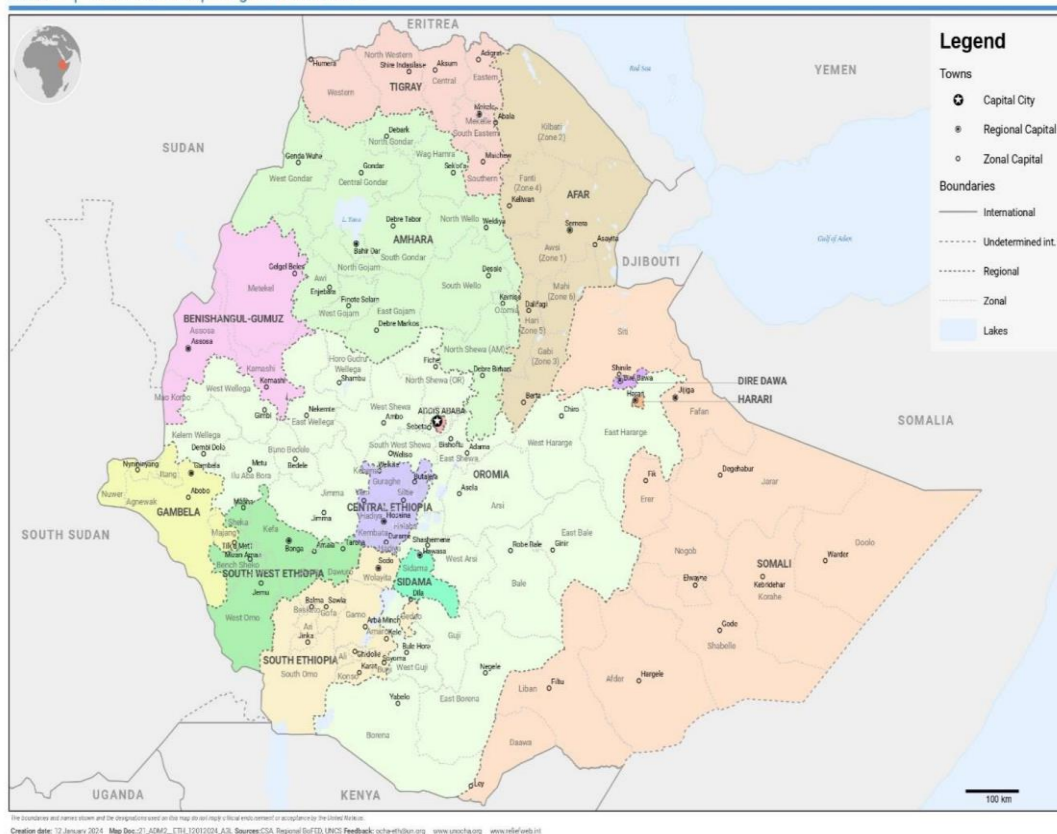
¹ EPO, [Amhara Regional Profile](#), updated 8 August 2024

² UNICEF, [Amhara Regional brief](#), April 2024

³ EPO, [About](#), 25 March 2021

⁴ EPO, [Amhara Regional Profile](#), updated 8 August 2024

⁵ OCHA, [Ethiopia Reference Map: Regions and Zones](#) (page 24), January 2024



- 7.1.4 For detailed administrative map of Amhara also see [OCHA Ethiopia: Administrative map - Amhara Region \(as of October 2020\)](#)

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8. Amhara ethnic group

8.1 History and language

- 8.1.1 The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica noted that the 'Amhara are one of the two largest ethnolinguistic groups in Ethiopia (the other group being the Oromo)'; they speak [Amharic](#) (EofE January 2025). The EofE also noted:

'The Amhara long dominated the history of their country; Amharic was the official language of Ethiopia until the 1990s, and it remains important ... they inhabit much of the central and western parts of present-day Ethiopia. All except one of the country's emperors from 1270 to 1974 were Amhara; this dominance created competitive quarrels between the Amhara and their northern neighbours, the Tigray, and other Ethiopian ethnic groups, such as the Oromo. Tensions rose between the Amhara and the Oromo during the period of socialist rule (1974–91), as the Oromo claimed an increasingly prominent role in the nation's social and political affairs. After 1991 a measure of Amhara [sentiment](#) was directed against the Tigray, who had gained influence during the struggle against the Marxists.'⁶

- 8.1.2 The EofE also noted the 'Amhara, along with the [Tigray](#) peoples, are the principal adherents' of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church⁷.

- 8.1.3 Amharic is an official national language, is estimated to be spoken by 29.3%

⁶ EofEB, Encyclopaedia Britannica, [Amhara](#), updated 27 January 2025

⁷ EofEB, Encyclopaedia Britannica, [Amhara](#), updated 27 January 2025

of the population⁸ and is the working language of the federal government⁹.

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8.2 Demography

8.2.1 The last population census in Ethiopia conducted in 2007 listed more than 80 ethnic groups with a total population of just over 73 million¹⁰. The Amhara at 19,867,817 (26.9% of total population) were the second largest group after the Oromo¹¹. The US Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook (CIA Factbook) noted that in 2024 Amharas were just over 24% of the population (estimated to be 118.6 million).¹² Based on the CIA Factbook estimates, the Amhara are likely to be around 29 million in 2024.

8.2.2 The EPO Amhara regional profile August 2024 noted: 'It is estimated that the region's population is around 22.5 million. The majority in this region are ethnic Amharas. Qemant, Agew (Awi), Oromo, and other ethnic groups also reside in the region.'¹³

8.2.3 The Humanitarian Data Exchange, an open platform for sharing data across crises and organisations that is managed by OCHA,¹⁴ estimated the population of Amhara to be 23 million (22% of a total population of 105 million) in 2022¹⁵. The OCHA HDX database has disaggregated the population of Amhara by zone¹⁶. CPIT has produced the table below based on the OCHA HDX data showing the population in each of the zones:

Region	Total	Male	Female
North Gondar	925,739	462,711	463,028
South Gondar	2,761,265	1,395,567	1,365,698
North Wello	1,876,155	940,143	936,012
South Wello	3,423,557	1,697,149	1,726,408
North Shewa (AM)	2,535,452	1,280,413	1,255,040
East Gojam	2,946,832	1,460,020	1,486,812
West Gojam	2,803,308	1,405,666	1,397,642
Wag Hamra	566,892	283,087	283,805
Awi	1,666,413	835,438	830,975
Oromia	559,314	277,955	281,359
Central Gondar	2,428,355	1,220,093	1,208,262
West Gondar	383,708	204,753	178,955
Total	22,876,990	11,462,995	11,413,996

8.2.4 Although the majority of Amharas live in Amhara region¹⁷ they can be found in all regions of Ethiopia. According to the 2007 population census 15.7 million Amharas lived in Amhara region and 4.1 million others lived in other regions.¹⁸ CPIT has produced the table below, based on the 2007 census

⁸ CIA World Factbook, [Ethiopia](#) (languages), updated 5 March 2025

⁹ Amberber, M, [The Oxford Handbook ...](#) (Amharic), 22 May 2023

¹⁰ FDRE, [Summary and statistical report of ...](#) (page 9), December 2008

¹¹ FDRE, [Summary and statistical report of ...](#) (pages 10, 91, 93, 99,101, 103, 105), December 2008

¹² US CIA World Factbook, [Ethiopia](#) (Ethnic groups), updated 20 December 2024

¹³ EPO, [Amhara Regional Profile](#), updated 8 August 2024

¹⁴ HDX, [FAQ](#) (About Humanitarian Data exchange), no date

¹⁵ OCHA HDX, [Ethiopia - Subnational Population Statistics](#), March 2023

¹⁶ OCHA HDX, [Ethiopia - Subnational Population Statistics](#), March 2023

¹⁷ EPO, [Amhara Regional Profile](#), updated 8 August 2024

¹⁸ FDRE, [Summary and statistical report of ...](#) (pages 10, 91, 93, 99,101, 103, 105), December 2008

showing the number and proportion of Amharas in other regions.

Region	Population of Amhara	Amhara as proportion of population in the region
Amhara	15,747,057	91%
Addis Ababa	1,288,306	47%
Harari	41,755	23%
Dire Dawa	66,887	20%
Gambella	25,856	8%
Oromia	1,961,277	7%
Afar	72,507	5%
SNNP	420,557	3%
Beishangual-Gumuz	142,557	21%
Tigray	70,334	2%
Somali	29,486	0.7%

- 8.2.5 The 2007 census recorded Addis Ababa’s population to be just over 2.7 million¹⁹. Current estimates for the city vary from about 4 million²⁰ to 5.4 million²¹ although 3 sources interviewed by the Home Office in June 2024 considered it possible that the population was above 7 million, with one source referring to 20 million²². There is, however, no information in the sources consulted for estimates of the current Amhara population in Addis Ababa (see [Bibliography](#)).

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9. Conflict in Amhara region

9.1 Causes of the conflict

- 9.1.1 A September 2023 article by Adane Tadesse, a lecturer in the department of political science and international relations at Addis Ababa University, for the Wilson Centre, a US non-partisan policy think tank²³ (Tadesse September 2023 article) noted:

‘Less than ten months after the November 2022 signing of the Pretoria Agreement [also referred to as the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, CoHA] that ended the two-year-long Tigray crisis [the conflict between Tigrayan forces, largely the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), and the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) supported by allied groups including Amhara state forces and “Fano” (Amhara “volunteer forces”)], the second-largest region—the Amhara region—in the country is in turmoil as a result of the outbreak of a military confrontation between the Federal Army and the Fano armed groups since August 2023 ...

‘Prior to the conflict, there were areas of mutual support between the Federal government and Fano forces. In 2019, upon the formation of the Prosperity

¹⁹ FDRE, [Summary and statistical report of ...](#) (page 13), December 2008

²⁰ Landinfo, [Ethiopia: Basisinfo](#) (page 3), 15 December 2023

²¹ CIA World Factbook, [Ethiopia](#) (languages), updated 5 March 2025

²² UK Home Office, [CPIN: Tigrayans ...](#) (section 16), December 2024

²³ The Wilson Centre, [About the Wilson Centre](#), no date

Party, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed praised the Fano ... for their role in the political change. Fano forces also fought the Tigray War on the side of the Federal government. However, tensions between Fano and the federal government surged in April 2022 with the arrest of many Fano fighters. Uncertainties that arose from the Pretoria Agreement regarding contested territories such as Welkait [also known as Western Tigray] and Raya [also known as Southern Tigray] further expanded the rift between the two actors. Furthermore, the decision to dissolve regional Special Forces served as a major turning point. This action was met with fierce resistance from protestors who argued that the decision was untimely and would leave the region defenseless from potential attacks from Tigray and Oromia. A subsequent wave of street protests across the Amhara region was followed by the defection of close to 50% of Amhara regional Special Forces to the Fano armed groups.²⁴

- 9.1.2 International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia published the Comprehensive investigative findings and legal determinations report October 2023 (ICHREE October 2023) that published findings of violations and abuses committed in Tigray, Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regions noted:

‘... so-called fano militia have expressed dissatisfaction with “federalist” or “ethnic” ”extremism,” and with Amhara stakeholders’ exclusion from the CoHA process on Tigray in November 2022. Some Amhara politicians are concerned with CoHA provisions which suggest the return of areas of Western and Southern Tigray they claim (respectively Welkaiyt / Tegede / Tselemt and Raya) to the Tigray region.

‘Dissatisfaction in Amhara was exacerbated in early April 2023, when the federal government announced it would disband regional Special Forces in favour of a centralised army. Attempts at demobilisation triggered a series of protests among Amhara communities. Soon after, a campaign of assassinations of regional security and political personnel began with the killing of the head of the ruling party in the region at the end of April 2023. Since that point the security situation in Amhara Regional State deteriorated.²⁵

- 9.1.3 The US Congress Research Service January 2024 paper based on a range of sources (US CRS January 2024 paper), noted:

‘... Despite differing political visions, Amhara elites [had] joined Oromo politicians in supporting Abiy’s rise to power [from 2018], but Amhara disaffection with the prime minister and Oromo-Amhara tensions have increasingly flared.

‘Under Abiy, some Ethiopians see Oromo as dominating the ruling [Prosperity Party] party and military, and Abiy backing the interests of his ethnic group [he is of mixed Amhara / Oromo heritage but is associated with the Oromo despite this²⁶] over others. Some Amhara assert that they have been victims of “genocide,” citing ethnically targeted attacks in Oromia and other states, and they accuse Abiy’s government of ignoring or even supporting the violence. Abiy’s April 2023 decision to disband state forces and integrate them into federal forces sparked violent protests in Amhara. Amhara reportedly feared they would be left vulnerable to attacks and that

²⁴ Tadese, A, [A Reflection on the Conflict in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia](#), 28 September 2023

²⁵ ICHREE, [Comprehensive investigative findings and legal ...](#) (paragraphs 83 to 84), 13 October 2023

²⁶ BBC News, [Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed: The Nobel Prize winner who went to war](#), 11 October 2021

Abiy would allow Tigrayans to reclaim western Tigray [known as Welkait by the Amhara].

‘... Federal efforts to demobilize the Amhara force in 2023 spurred Fano mobilization against the government. Sporadic clashes between the military and Fano ensued, and the Fano have briefly overtaken several major cities in Amhara. Some local officials have been assassinated, and state authority in some areas has reportedly collapsed’²⁷

9.1.4 The EPO 8 August 2024 report observed:

‘... There are two root causes for this conflict. The first is linked to political deadlocks on the status of the disputed territories in Southern and Western Tigray zones, which are officially under Tigray region but contain ethnic Amhara residents who wish to be governed by Amhara region. The second issue is the overall state of security for the Amhara people, as many Amhara ethnic civilians have been the target of violent attacks throughout the country. The government’s decision to dissolve the country’s regional special forces was viewed by Fano, and many in Amhara region, as increasing the risk that the Amhara people will continue to be defenseless against the aggression of forces from other regions (for more on this conflict, see the EPO’s [Amhara Conflict: Fano Insurgency](#)).’²⁸

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9.2 Areas affected by the conflict

9.2.1 In July 2024, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), an independent federal state body established under the federal constitution and reporting to House of People’s Representatives as a national human rights institution with the mandate for promotion and protection of human rights²⁹ published its annual report on the human rights situation in Ethiopia covering June 2023 to June 2024 (EHRC July 2024 report). The report noted that the armed conflict had spread to all areas of the region including northern, western and eastern Gojam, Bahir Dar and its environs, southern Gondar, northern Showa and the Oromo special zone³⁰.

9.2.2 The Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO) June 2024 monthly update noted that ACLED recorded 83 armed clashes between the ENDF and Fano militias across nine zones during the month with the majority occurring in West Gojam, North Shewa, and North Wello zones³¹.

9.2.3 The 8 October 2024 EPO weekly update reported clashes in Awi, Central Gondar, East Gojam, West Gojam, and North Shewa zones. Additionally, an unidentified group carried out bomb attacks in various locations in the capital, Bahir Dar city³².

9.2.4 The 17 December 2024 EPO weekly update reported clashes in Awi, North Shewa, East Gojam, North Wello, West Gondar, South Gondar, and West Gojam zones³³.

9.2.5 The 5 February 2025 ACLED Ethiopian situation update covering 14

²⁷ USCRS, [Ethiopia: In Brief](#) (pages 7 to 8), 23 January 2024

²⁸ EPO [Amhara | Regional Profile](#), 8 August 2024

²⁹ EHRC, [About EHRC](#), no date

³⁰ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...\)](#) (pages 31, 14), July 2024

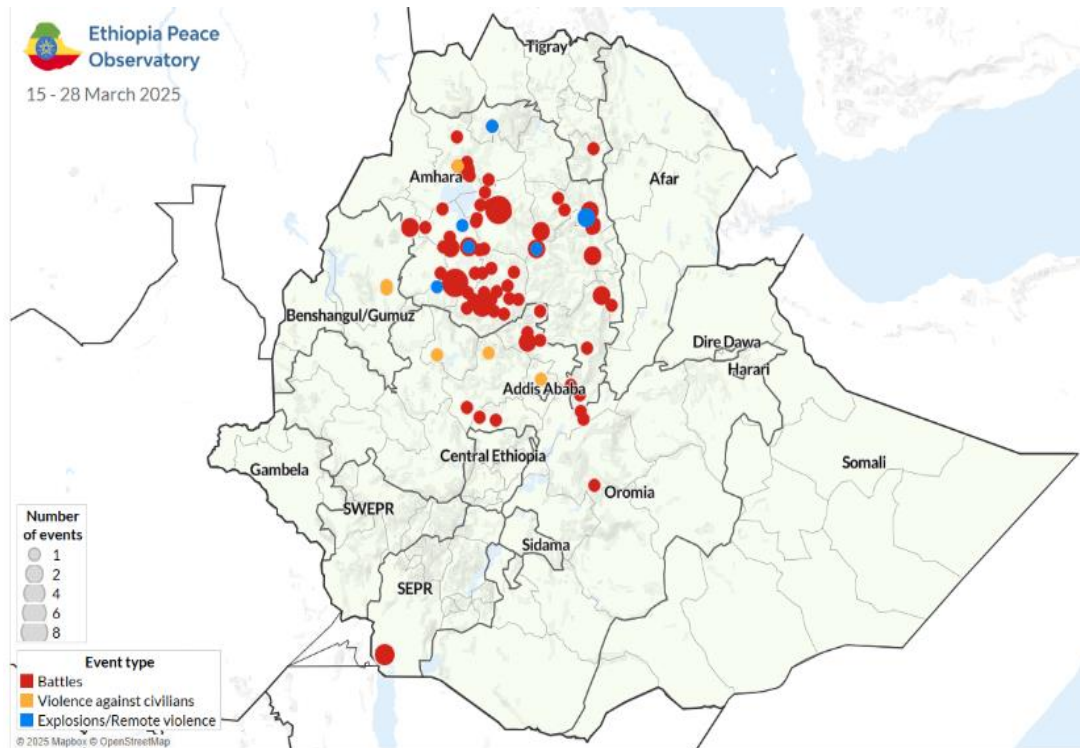
³¹ EPO, [The pursuit of peace in Amhara region](#), 5 July 2024

³² EPO, [Ethiopia Weekly Update \(8 October 2024\)](#), 9 October 2024

³³ EPO, [Ethiopia Weekly Update \(17 December 2024\)](#), 18 December 2024

December 2024 to 31 January 2024 observed: From 15 December 2024 to 31 January 2025, ACLED records 97 battles ... The majority of battle incidents were recorded in North Shewa, East Gojam, and West Gojam zones, indicating a slight shift from the prior period, during which most battle events occurred in West Gojam zone, followed by East Gojam and North Shewa zones.³⁴

- 9.2.6 The EPO 2 April 2025 Ethiopian situation update noted: 'From 19 to 28 March, ACLED records 79 battle events between Fano militias and government security forces, mostly ENDF. The majority of these battles were reported in the West Gojam zone, followed by the East Gojam and South Gondar zones.'³⁵ ACLED also produced the map below showing areas of fighting 15 to 28 March 2025³⁶.



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9.3 Protagonists

- 9.3.1 The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) June 2024 report on the human rights situation in Ethiopia (OHCHR June 2024 report) noted: 'In the Amhara region, Government forces (ENDF, Amhara Regional police, including Amhara Special Forces, and state affiliated militias) were pitted against Fano militia.'³⁷
- 9.3.2 In October 2024 the Danish Immigration Services (DIS) published a report on the security and humanitarian situation in Tigray, Oromia and Amhara and the situation for political opponents. The report was based on various sources including a fact-finding mission in Addis Ababa from 11 to 17 May 2024 (DIS October 2024 report). It observed:

'The conflict in Amhara is marked by the presence of both state and non-

³⁴ ACLED, [Ethiopia situation update \(5 February 2025\)](#), 5 February 2025

³⁵ EPO, [Ethiopia situation update](#), 2 April 2025

³⁶ EPO, [Ethiopia situation update \(2 April 2025\)](#), 2 April 2025

³⁷ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraph 11), June 2024

state armed actors. State armed groups active in the region include the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), the Federal Police, the Amhara Police, the Amhara local militia, and the Amhara Anti-Riot Force. Among the non-state armed groups are the Fano, which is a movement of decentralised groups. It is difficult to distinguish between the state-affiliated “Amhara militia”, “Amhara Special Forces” and “Amhara Fano militia”. Moreover, Eritrean forces have trained and supplied weapons to Fano during the Tigray war. Reportedly, Fano forces are still being trained in Eritrea.’³⁸

- 9.3.3 A February 2024 briefing paper by the Rift Valley Institute (RVI), an independent, research and training nongovernmental organisation that works with communities and institutions in eastern and central Africa³⁹ (RVI February 2024 paper), citing various sources, provided more detail about the Fano. It noted:

‘... Fano are understood to be armed groups from the Amhara region which see themselves as defending the interests of the region’s population. However, the origin of the term goes back centuries, and in Amharic refers to “someone who travels of their own volition” or a “band of leaderless soldiers who were not accountable to anybody” ...

‘More recently, in 2016, youth-led protests in the Amhara region coined themselves as “Fano”, although the (mostly) peaceful nature of the demonstrations marked a break with the previously armed character of the groups. In combination with the Oromo Qerroo protest movement, the Fano challenged the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), significantly contributing to the accession of Abiy Ahmed and the Prosperity Party (PP) to power in 2018 ...

‘Increasingly, signs of Fano militancy and involvement in armed conflicts started to appear, particularly those associated with causes seen as being important to Amhara nationalist interests ... The [Tigray] war provided an opportunity for the Fano to build camps, recruit and train fighters, and utilize the logistics, security, and administrative networks of the government ...

‘The Fano insurgency includes a wide range of loosely aligned groups, the majority of which are small and operate autonomously. The movement is generally decentralized, fragmented, organized from the bottom up, and lacks a formal organizational structure that unites groups in the different parts of the Amhara region where the Fano are most active: Shoa, Gondar, Gojam, and Wollo. However, some of the larger groups are now evolving into politico-military forces with a national agenda—at its most radical this is the overthrow of Abiy Ahmed’s government, albeit this objective seems rather unlikely. Given the inherent difficulty of achieving this, the Fano groups have begun to use language that suggests they recognize the need to build alliances with other nationalist groups to pursue their objectives.’⁴⁰

- 9.3.4 A November 2024 report by The New Humanitarian highlighted that Fano, once made up of 120 district militias, was evolving into a more unified structure. In July 2024, several factions selected opposition figure and journalist Eskinder Nega as their leader. However, this move was rejected by 4 key Fano groups, which dominate Gojam, Wollo, Shewa, and parts of Gondar. These groups, while maintaining independent leadership,

³⁸ DIS, [Ethiopia Security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray ...](#) (pages 28 to 29), October 2024

³⁹ RVI, [About RVI](#), no date

⁴⁰ RVI, [Understanding the Fano insurgency in Ethiopia's Amhara ...](#) (pages 2 to 3), February 2024

coordinate through an online leadership council. Zemene Kassie, formerly part of the Eritrean-backed Ginbot 7 insurgency, is the most notable figure in this coalition. Nega's faction, the Amhara Fano People's Organisation, is primarily based in Gondar⁴¹.

- 9.3.5 According to the EPO's 2 April 2025 update on Ethiopia, 4 Fano militias—from Gondar, Shewa, Gojjam, and Wello—launched a joint offensive on 19 March 2025, named Andinet (meaning “unity” in Amharic), aimed at security force bases in the Amhara region. On 21 March 2025, the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) confirmed the attacks but stated they had successfully contained the operation.⁴² The report further explained: ‘Fano militias have found it challenging to unify under a single command. This fragmentation has resulted in rivalry among Fano militia leaders, each vying to become the leader of the Fano. Such competition has occasionally resulted in conflicts between the militias. This and the prolonged war, which is affecting the daily life of Amharas, have weakened popular support for Fano militias.’⁴³
- 9.3.6 On 9 May 2025, Borkena.com, a platform that publishes news and opinions about Ethiopia⁴⁴ reported that Amhara Fano in Gojjam, Amhara Fano in Wollo, Amhara Fano Unity in Gondar and Amhara Fano in Shewa had announced the formation of Amhara Fano National Force (AFNF) whose core mission is to coordinate the Amhara struggle⁴⁵.
- 9.3.7 According to the November 2024 New Humanitarian report the main Fano groups are ‘Amhara Fano People's Organisation (led by Eskinder Nega), Amhara Fano in Wollo (led by Mihret Wedajo), Amhara Fano Gojjam (led by Zemene Kassie), Amhara Fano in Gondar (led by Baye Kenaw) and Amhara Fano Shewa Command (led by Desalegn Siyasibshewa).’⁴⁶
- 9.3.8 A report by the Uppsala University Conflict Data Program which provides data on organized violence⁴⁷ (UCDP 2024 report) described the Fano militias as fragmented into various sub-groups organized by geography:
- In East and West Gojjam, the main faction was the Amhara Popular Force (APF) led by Zemene Kassie
 - Gondar Fano was split into multiple groups - the Amhara Fano Unity in Gondar (AFUiG), led by Mesafint Tesfu operated in north Gondar and the Fano for Existence, Justice, and Democracy Movement (FEJDM), led by Wubante Abate until his death in battle in March 2024 in South Gondar
 - In Welo (both North and South), several factions existed, the most prominent being East Amhara Fano (EAF) under Mihret Wedajo. In southern Welo, former ASF commander Fantahan Muhabaw was a key military figure
 - In the Shewa area, notable groups included fighters under Belete Shegaw and the Amhara Fano Free People Movement (AFFPM), led by

⁴¹ The New Humanitarian, [Who is Fano? Inside Ethiopia's Amhara rebellion](#), 12 November 2024

⁴² EPO, [Ethiopia situation update](#), 2 April 2025

⁴³ EPO, [Ethiopia situation update](#), 2 April 2025

⁴⁴ Borkena, [About Borkena](#), 14 January 2013

⁴⁵ Borkena.com [Amhara Fano National Force \(AFNF\) organization announced](#), 9 May 2025

⁴⁶ The New Humanitarian, [Who is Fano? Inside Ethiopia's Amhara rebellion](#), 12 November 2024

⁴⁷ UCPD, [About UCPD](#), 17 May 2024

Asseged Mekonnen⁴⁸.

- 9.3.9 For more information on the various Fano groups and their area of operation see RVI, [Understanding the Fano insurgency in Ethiopia's Amhara Region](#) (pages 3 to 6), February 2024.
- 9.3.10 With respect to the size and strength of Fano, an April 2024 report by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) stated that the exact size of Fano is uncertain. However, during the Tigray conflict, estimates placed the combined strength of Fano and the Amhara Regional Special Forces at approximately 200,000 fighters.⁴⁹
- 9.3.11 The UCDP 2024 report noted that when the Amhara Regional Special Forces (ARSF) were disbanded in 2023 an estimated 60% of its 30,000-strong force defected and joined Fano with some analysts suggesting that the ARSF may have been as large as 100,000, with up to a third of them leaving the force and joining Fano⁵⁰. The DIS October 2024 report stated one source stated that 'more than 75% of youth in Amhara have joined Fano.'⁵¹

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9.4 Areas of control

- 9.4.1 The Critical Threats Project (CTP), which conduct intelligence analysis on unclassified information to assess threats to the US and its allies⁵² noted in its 26 September 2024 African File updates (CPT September 2024):
- 'Fano has ... claimed to briefly capture significantly more villages or rural districts, called woredas ... ACLED recorded 15 Fano-claimed captures in July, nine in August, and another four in September. CTP has recorded a further 19 claimed captures in September from Amhara-affiliated media sources, although it cannot confirm these claims. These figures are exponentially larger than the monthly average of two to three villages from September 2023 to June 2024. Fano also claimed to hold local elections to set up local administrations in seized areas, creating mechanisms to maintain its influence even though government forces often reenter most areas when Fano withdraws after the brief seizures.'⁵³
- 9.4.2 A 12 November 2024 article by The New Humanitarian, an independent, non-profit newsroom that produces daily news and analysis on current events and trends from conflicts areas⁵⁴, stated: 'According to Fano, they control over 80% of Amhara, with the government only holding the main towns, and most of the highways. Government troops have also defected – or surrendered – in significant numbers. At least 30% of the Fano soldiers The New Humanitarian spoke to were former ENDF or Amhara regional forces.'⁵⁵ The report added that Fano control most of Gojjam, Wollo, Shewa, and parts of Gondar.'⁵⁶
- 9.4.3 On 11 April 2025 Associated Press reported that Fano claimed to be in

⁴⁸ UCPD [Fano](#), 2024

⁴⁹ BAMF, [Country report 69 Ethiopia Domestic political situation](#), April 2024

⁵⁰ UCPD [Fano](#), 2024

⁵¹ DIS, [Ethiopia Security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray ...](#) (pages 28 to 29), October 2024

⁵² CTP, [The project](#), no date

⁵³ CTP, [Africa File, September 26, 2024: Fano Offensive in Ethiopia's Amhara ...](#), 26 September 2024

⁵⁴ The New Humanitarian, [About us](#), no date

⁵⁵ The New Humanitarian, [Who is Fano? Inside Ethiopia's Amhara rebellion](#), 12 November 2024

⁵⁶ The New Humanitarian, [Who is Fano? Inside Ethiopia's Amhara rebellion](#), 12 November 2024

control of 80% of Amhara. The report stated: ‘In a statement last month, Amhara’s deputy head of security said the government had “freed” 2,225 of Amhara’s 4,174 subdistricts. It was not clear how many more were under Fano control.’⁵⁷

9.4.4 On 13 April 2025 Borkena.com reported:

‘In its latest update, the Ethiopian Defense Force (EDF) announced significant military gains against what it referred to as ... “the extremist group” in a Sunday social media post. The term ... “extremist group” refers to Fano forces ...

‘A senior military commander stated that decisive measures had been taken against armed groups operating across multiple districts, including, North Shoa (Menth Mama), North Wollo (Raya Kobo), Lasta, South Wollo (Saynet Ajibar, Amhara Saynet, Woreily), North Gojjam, East Gojjam (Debre Elias, Enarge Enawuga), Enebse

‘The EDF claimed to have “annihilated” several extremist forces and captured a “considerable number” of fighters, though no specific figures were provided. It also reported seizing assault rifles and ammunition, adding that fleeing rebels had abandoned their logistical supplies ...

The EDF’s claims remain unverified by independent sources ...

The announcement follows recent OLA reports of major battlefield successes... Meanwhile, Fano forces in Amhara continue their “Operation Unity,” now in its third week, claiming substantial territorial gains. The operation reportedly focuses on synchronized offensives across multiple fronts.’⁵⁸

9.4.5 An April 2025 Associated Press report quoted a Fano fighter from the Gojam area claiming that Fano controls over 80% of the Amhara region and has captured numerous enemy soldiers. In contrast, Amhara’s deputy security chief stated last month that the government had “freed” 2,225 out of 4,174 subdistricts, though it remains unclear how many are still under Fano control⁵⁹.

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9.5 State of emergency August 2023 to June 2024

9.5.1 The EPO 20 August 2024 report on Fano insurgency stated:

‘Following the killing of the head of the Amhara Prosperity Party in April, an estimated 13 political and security officials were targeted in armed attacks across the region. Several local officials were likewise killed in August, according to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. There was also a report indicating that the regional police and kebele militias might have aligned with the Fano militias’ cause. This forced many local and security officials to leave their homes and towns, creating governance and security vacuums in various areas of Amhara region, leading Fano militias to control several locations within the region at the outset of the conflict in August 2023. This prompted the Amhara regional government to ask the federal government on 3 August 2023 to take all necessary measures, as the insecurity in the region was beyond the control of regional security forces.

⁵⁷ AP, [Is Ethiopia at war again? A look at the rebellion in one of its most powerful ...](#), 11 April 2025

⁵⁸ Borkena.com, [Ethiopian Defense Force Claims Military Advance Over Rebels in ...](#), 13 April 2025

⁵⁹ AP, [Is Ethiopia at war again? A look at the rebellion in one of its most powerful ...](#), 11 April 2025

The federal government promptly declared a state of emergency (SoE) on 4 August 2023.⁶⁰

- 9.5.2 In June 2024 the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published an update report on the human rights situation in Ethiopia in 2023 and incidents occurring in January 2024 that was based on a range of sources (OHCHR June 2024 report). It observed in respect of the SoE:

‘The declaration of a six-month national SoE under Article 93(1) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution on 4 August 2023 ... by the Council of Ministers was reportedly prompted by the difficulty in maintaining law and order by the Amhara regional administration where “illegal activities accompanied by weapons” were spreading ... The issuance of the SoE was preceded by the Amhara regional state President’s call on 3 August 2023 for the Federal Government’s intervention, indicating the security situation in Amhara region had exceeded capacities of regular law enforcement capacity in the region.

‘The SoE suspended judicial review of detentions conducted on account of the SoE, while implicitly restricting other non-derogable rights. The SoE decree laid down several offenses, with penalties of imprisonment ranging from three to ten years. One of the crimes set out under the law was the provision of “moral support” to armed groups. The law also left out several of the rights delineated under Art. 4(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Ethiopia in 1993, as non-derogable, including the right to life, right to a fair trial, non-retroactivity of criminal law, and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. In addition, the rule of *nullem crimen sine lege* (no crime without law) stipulated under Art. 15(1) of the ICCPR remained far from being respected ...’⁶¹

- 9.5.3 The same source added:

‘A General Command Post (GCP) headed by the Director General of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and comprising the ENDF, Federal Police, Government Communication Service, and the ruling Prosperity Party, was constituted to enforce the SoE at federal level. Four command posts (West Amhara, East Amhara, Northwest Amhara, and Central Showa) were also established in Amhara region to enforce the SoE. The General/Emergency Command Post may order the closure or suspension of media houses suspected of misconduct and the vagueness of the qualification of misconduct can be arbitrarily applied, affecting individuals, CSOs, and media outlets. The House of People’s Representatives approved the SoE on 14 April 2023, as required by the Constitution...’⁶²

- 9.5.4 According to the August 2024 EPO weekly update: ‘The state of emergency ended in June 2024 after the government announced that it was in firm control of all but eight of the region’s 266 woredas.’⁶³ However, BBC-Monitoring briefing of 2 October 2024 observed: ‘A six-month state of emergency imposed in the [Amhara] region in August 2023 to quell the conflict was in February 2024 extended for another four months. However, despite having expired in June 2024, the government has not officially

⁶⁰ EPO, [Amhara conflict: Fano insurgency](#), 20 August 2024

⁶¹ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 50 to 51, 53), June 2024

⁶² OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 50 to 51, 53), June 2024

⁶³ EPO, [Ethiopia Weekly Update \(6 August 2024\)](#), 7 August 2024

9.6 Peace negotiations

9.6.1 The OHCHR June 2024 report noted:

‘The National Dialogue Commission (NDC) on its part, has undertaken peace initiatives including wide-ranging consultations with diverse socio-professional, political, the diaspora and CSO groups and called for peace across Ethiopia from May through December 2023. The NDC’s initiative to convene a diversity of representatives, including elders, intellectuals, CSOs, and other stakeholders, including from Amhara, was a positive step and would increase the legitimacy of the process as it would allow parties to put across their demands and issues. The Commission also invited armed groups to participate in the national dialogue process, reiterating its intention to provide a safe environment for their participation. However, armed groups did not formally commit to participating in the consultation process ...’⁶⁵

9.6.2 The EPO July 2024 monthly update reported:

‘In June [2024], leaders of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and the Amhara regional administration held a consultation meeting with selected participants and prominent Amharas in Addis Ababa and in seven zones in Amhara region. A concluding conference was held in the regional capital, Bahir Dar, on 24 and 25 June. The meetings sought to find solutions for the lack of security in the region. Participants raised various questions for the ENDF leaders, including the mass arrest of Amharas, the killing of civilians in the region, and disputed territories at the border of Tigray and Amhara regions ...’⁶⁶

9.6.3 On 4 August 2024 the VoA reported:

‘Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that negotiations are in progress with armed militias in the Amhara region to peacefully resolve the ongoing conflict there.

‘Speaking at a meeting with financial leaders in Addis Ababa on Friday, the prime minister said the federal government has been making efforts to reach out to the rebels but hinted that a lack of unity among the armed groups could be an obstacle.

‘I haven’t revealed this so far but to let you know today, it has been a while since we started talks with armed groups operating in the Amhara region,’ he said in Amharic, speaking to participants of the meeting. ‘The problem so far is that there is no centralized group. When we reach an understanding with one group we don’t agree with the other.’

‘The prime minister said efforts have been made to make the groups come together to “create enabling conditions for talks. But we have started talks with some of the groups; there are groups that have started continuous talks with the government,” he said.

‘The prime minister did not identify which armed groups were involved in the talks and when the talks started. The format of the talks is also not yet clear.

⁶⁴ BBC Monitoring, [Briefing: Ethiopia vows to deal with Fano militia 'in the language...](#), 2 October 2024

⁶⁵ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraph 38), June 2024

⁶⁶ EPO, [Ethiopia Monthly Update | June 2024: The pursuit of peace in Amhara region](#), 5 July 2024

‘A spokesperson for one of the Fano armed groups fighting in the Amhara region denies talks with the government ... Simeneh Mulatu, head of the foreign and diaspora affairs department for the Fano militias in Gojjam, told VOA that there have not been any talks or negotiations they started with the government.

‘Despite the prime minister’s remarks, an official with the Amhara region’s peace council set up in June also appears to be unaware of the reports of talks with the armed militias. Eyachew Teshale told VOA that they are not aware of any formal peace talks that are going on between the government and the Fano armed group.’⁶⁷

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9.7 Security incidents

9.7.1 The DIS October 2024 report noted:

‘Since August 2023, the level of violence has remained high in Amhara, and throughout 2023, hostilities between Fano and the federal forces persisted in the region with most clashes occurring in the rural areas with the use of drone strikes, air strikes and heavy artillery ...

‘Armed clashes also broke out in August 2023 between Fano militias and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Dera woreda, which is a disputed territory located on the border between the Amhara and Oromia regions. Both Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups reside in this area, and Amhara residents have petitioned for this area to be administered by the Amhara region for the last two decades.’⁶⁸

9.7.2 The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a US-based non-profit organisation specializing in disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping. It collects information on the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence events and fatalities⁶⁹. ACLED explained how its information is collected:

‘ACLED researchers systematically collect and review the latest reports from selected local, national and international sources, including media, vetted social media accounts, government and NGO reports, and partner organizations. ACLED researchers work to triangulate reports when and where possible, but they do not independently verify events or gather first-hand information on the ground. ACLED’s [local partners](#) often verify and collect first hand information. ACLED employs [a range of sourcing strategies](#) to ensure the data are timely and reliable.’⁷⁰

9.7.3 The ACLED database features political violence events defined as: ‘the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation, or with distinct political effects.’⁷¹ Political violence events include battles, explosions /remote violence, violence against civilians, excessive force against protesters and riots⁷².

9.7.4 From 1 April 2023 to 30 April 2025 ACLED recoded 2,432 political violence events which comprised of 1,898 (78.0%) battles, 162 (6.7%)

⁶⁷ VoA, [Ethiopia PM says talks underway with armed groups; one group denies...](#), 2 August 2025

⁶⁸ DIS, [Ethiopia Security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray ...](#) (pages 29 to 30), October 2024

⁶⁹ ACLED, [About ACLED](#), no date

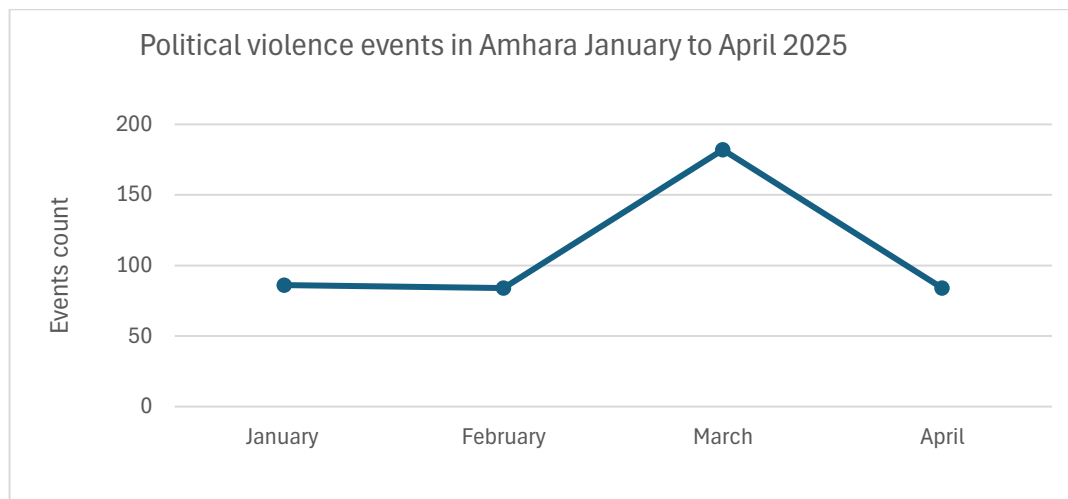
⁷⁰ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 37), updated 1 November 2023

⁷¹ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 9), 3 October 2024

⁷² ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 11), 3 October 2024

explosions/remote violence, 357 (14.7%) violence against civilians, 4 (0.2%) riots and 11 protests (0.5%) protests⁷³.

- 9.7.5 From January to April 2025 ACLED recorded 436 political violence events consisting of 367 (84%) battles, 48 (11%) violence against civilians, and 21 (5%) explosions and remote violence.⁷⁴ CPIT has produced below table based on ACLED data showing trends in political violence from January to April 2025



- 9.7.6 The ACLED database also features reported fatalities resulting from political violence. ACLED explained that it: 'only records estimated fatalities when reported by the source material. When and where possible, ACLED researchers seek out information to triangulate the fatality numbers reported by sources, but ACLED does not independently verify reported fatality estimates. Additionally, ACLED is a living dataset, so all fatality figures are revised and corrected — upward or downward — if new or better information becomes available.'⁷⁵
- 9.7.7 ACLD cautioned that: Fatality data are typically the most biased, and least accurate, component of conflict reporting. They are particularly prone to manipulation by armed groups, and occasionally the media, which may overstate or underreport fatalities for political purposes. These figures should therefore be understood as indicative estimates of reported fatalities, rather than definitive fatality counts.'⁷⁶ Additionally, ACLED does not collect data on injuries therefore fatalities refer to reported deaths⁷⁷.
- 9.7.8 From 1 January 2023 to 30 April 2025, ACLED recorded 7,720 political violence fatalities in Amhara. Of these, 5,391(69.8%) resulted from battles, 896 (11.6%) from explosions and remote violence, 1,414 (18.3%) from violence against civilians and 19 (0.3%) from protests and riots⁷⁸.
- 9.7.9 From January to April 2025 ACLED recorded 1,253 fatalities in Amhara of which 906 resulted from battles, 41 from violence against civilians, and 6 from explosions and remote violence. CPIT Has produced below table showing trends in fatalities from January to April 2025⁷⁹. This is shown in

⁷³ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025

⁷⁴ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025

⁷⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 23), 3 October 2024

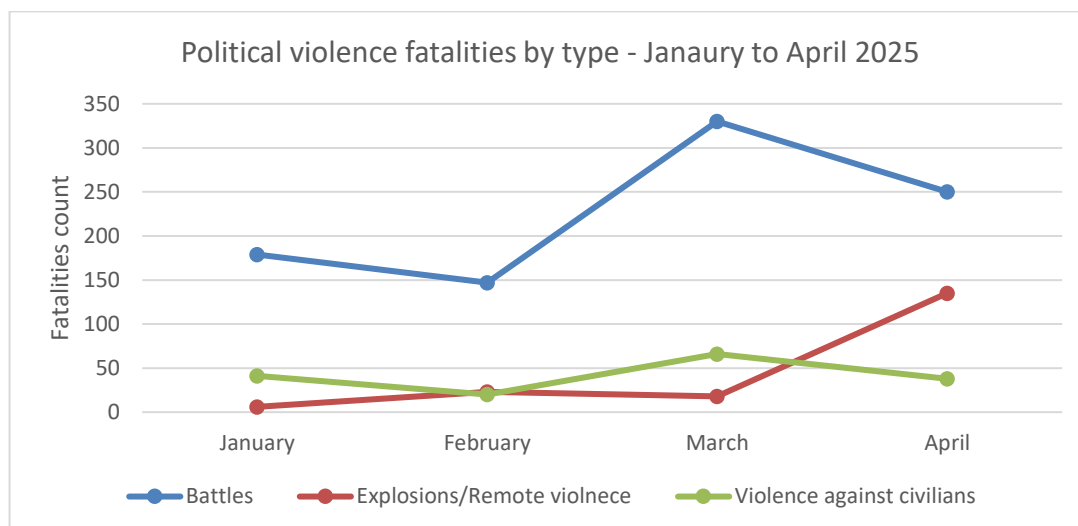
⁷⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 23), 3 October 2024

⁷⁷ ACLED, [FAQs](#) (How are injuries and fatalities recorded?), 1 November 2023

⁷⁸ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025

⁷⁹ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025

graph below.



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10. Humanitarian situation in Amhara region

10.1 Displacement

- 10.1.1 According to the 10 June 2024 OCHA situation report, as of March 2024 there were approximately 670,000 IDPs in Amhara Region.⁸⁰ The WHO also noted in a July 2024 report that nearly a million internally displaced persons (IDPs) were scattered across 38 collective sites and host communities in Amhara⁸¹.
- 10.1.2 The International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM) which regularly monitors and publishes information on migration and displacement, including internal displacement, estimated the number of internally displaced people (IDP) in Amhara in June 2023 to be 436,805 (9.96% of the national caseload). It also noted that there were 1,422,074 (43.91% of national caseload) returning IDPs⁸². As of April 2024, IOM DTM estimated the IDP population in Amhara at 174,608 (5.28% of national IDP caseload) and 951,931 returning IDPs (36.8% of the national caseload)⁸³.
- 10.1.3 The same source explained regarding the IDP numbers in Amhara: 'Even though accessibility in Amhara has improved since round 34 (August - September 2023), data collection in Amhara region continues to be affected due to insecurity. In previous rounds the caseload from Amhara region represented almost 10% of the total national displacement caseload identified. Therefore, the IDP regional (for Amhara) and national figures should likely be higher.'⁸⁴
- 10.1.4 According to the January 2025 Ethiopia Health Cluster bulletin '50% of IDPs are found in the eastern part of the Amhara region, highest number of the IDPS are found in North Shoa, North Wollo zones and Oromo special Zone.'⁸⁵

⁸⁰ OCHA, [Ethiopia - Situation Report](#) (page 12), 10 June 2024

⁸¹ WHO, [Bridging Gaps in Health and Nutrition Services for IDPs and Crisis-Affected ...](#), 5 July 2024

⁸² IOM DTM, [DTM Ethiopia national Displacement Report 16...](#) (pages 9, 13), 22 August 2023

⁸³ IOM DTM, [DTM Ethiopia — National Displacement Report 19 ...](#) (pages 8, 12), 26 July 2024

⁸⁴ IOM DTM, [DTM Ethiopia — National Displacement Report 19 ...](#) (page 8), 26 July 2024

⁸⁵ Health Cluster Ethiopia, [Health Cluster Bulletin Ethiopia 1-31 December 2024](#), 24 January 2025

10.2 Humanitarian need

10.2.1 In April 2024, the World Health Organisation Public Health Situation Analysis (WHO PHSA), whose purpose is to identify the current health status and potential health threats, the functioning of the health system, and the humanitarian health response⁸⁶, reported that according to the Ethiopian government assessment of food security needs in 2024, 3.5 million people in Amhara needed food assistance and 2.3 million required immediate food assistance. Additionally, local authorities revealed some 452,850 people across six districts [woredas] required emergency food assistance. WFP targeted 650,000 people in Amhara with unconditional food and nutrition assistance⁸⁷.

10.2.2 The OCHA situation report 10 June 2024 noted:

‘High malnutrition rates have been recorded in the Amhara Region ... The North Shewa, as well as South and North Wello zones, show a high prevalence of severe and moderate acute malnutrition among under-five children (CU5) and pregnant and lactating women (PLW). Of particular concern is the condition of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in places like Debre Birhan (North Shewa) where the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates across IDP sites is three-folds higher than the emergency threshold (above 15 per cent). The lack of regular and adequate food assistance (due to resource shortfalls and insecurity limiting access) contributes to the situation, while children drop out of school due to inadequate school feeding interventions.’⁸⁸

10.2.3 The DIS report October 2024 noted:

‘Amhara region has high malnutrition rates due to a combination of drought in some areas and unusual rainfall and severe storms in other areas as well as the ongoing fighting in large parts of the region. Furthermore, the federal government has exacerbated this situation as the authorities have denied farmers in Amhara access to critical resources, such as fertilisers and seedlings. The absence of these critical agricultures resources has created a famine-like situation and starvation in the Amhara region ... According to projections from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network for the period June–September 2024, parts of Amhara will be in category 3 (crisis) on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which classifies the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and acute malnutrition. The situation is predicted to be most challenging in most of East Gojjam, North Wollo, South Wollo, and North Shewa. Parts of Central Gondar and South Gondar are classified in category 2 (stressed), while the western parts of Amhara (West and Central Gondar, Awi, Bahir Dar, North, West, and East Gojjam) are categorised at level 1 (minimal).’⁸⁹

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10.3 Humanitarian access

10.3.1 The USSD 2023 HR report noted: ‘Federal and regional authorities erected an extensive system of checkpoints on the road connecting regions to the

⁸⁶ Health Cluster, [Public Health Situation Analysis Standard Operating Procedures](#), 29 August 2018

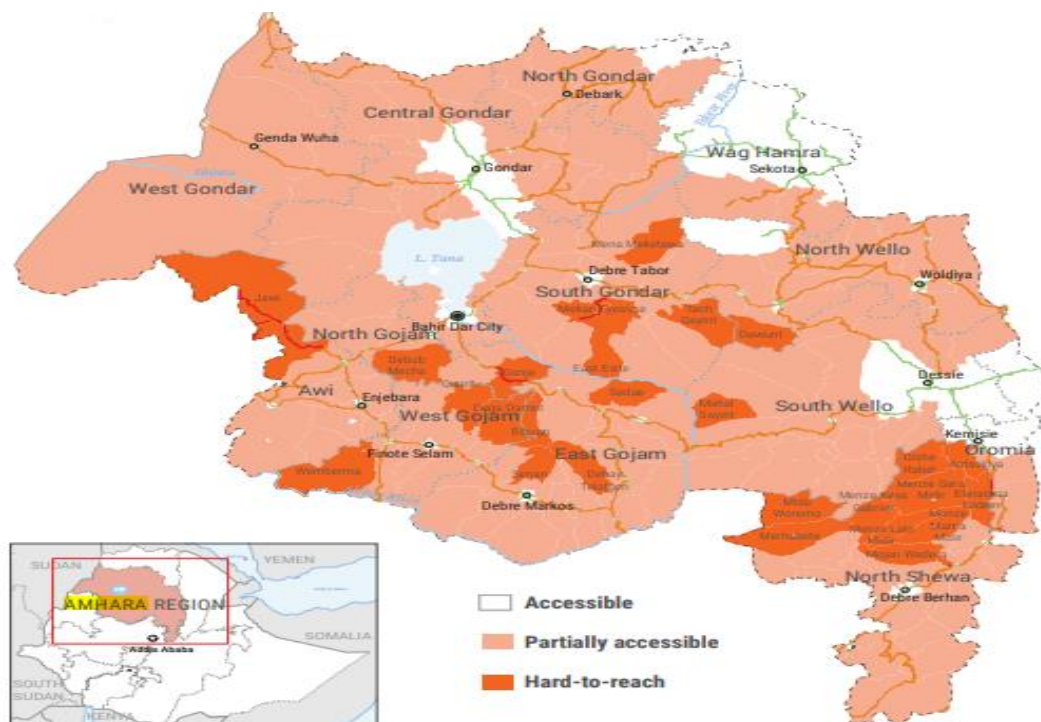
⁸⁷ WHO, [Ethiopia Public Health Situation Analysis \(PHSA\)](#) (page 4), 11 April 2024

⁸⁸ OCHA, [Ethiopia Situation Report](#) 10 June 2024

⁸⁹ DIS, [Ethiopia – Security situation in Amhara, Oromia and ...](#) (pages 31 to 32), 22 October 2024

center, which at times impeded travel for those seeking to deliver humanitarian assistance.⁹⁰ The EHRC July 2024 report noted that in 2023/24 rising crime and the repeated closure of roads continued to negatively affected food prices as well as access to health and education services in Amhara⁹¹.

- 10.3.2 On 3 October 2024 VoA reported that the World Food Program (WFP) identified the conflict in Ethiopia's Amhara region as the most significant obstacle to its humanitarian efforts. According to WFP's Ethiopia country director, Zlatan Milisic, increasing insecurity—especially in Amhara—is severely affecting aid deliveries and putting operations at high risk. He noted that, so far in 2024, 8 humanitarian workers have been killed and over 20 people abducted, with 6 of the deaths occurring in the Amhara region⁹².
- 10.3.3 The OCHA humanitarian update report March 2025 noted: 'Throughout 2024, movement and access restrictions have obstructed humanitarian operations in conflict-affected areas, leaving populations without basic services like health care, education, and clean water.'⁹³
- 10.3.4 The OCHA 30 November 2024 [national access map](#) categorised Amhara as either 'partially accessible' or 'hard to reach'. The 13 December 2024 OCHA situation report noted that hundreds of thousands of people in need of humanitarian assistance are in hard-to-reach areas, with ongoing conflict and violence hampering access to basic services and disrupting aid operations.⁹⁴ OCHA has produced an accessibility of map of Amhara reproduced below which indicated that Amhara was either 'partially accessible' or 'hard to reach':



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⁹⁰ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia](#) (section 3D), 24 April 2024

⁹¹ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to July ...\)](#) (page 17), July 2024

⁹² VOA, [Ethiopian military boosts operations in Amhara region](#), 3 October 2024

⁹³ OCHA, Ethiopia: [Humanitarian Update](#), 27 March 2025

⁹⁴ OCHA, [Ethiopia Situation Report](#) (page 4), 13 December 2024

⁹⁵ OCHA, Ethiopia: [Humanitarian Update](#) (page 3) 27 March 2025

- 10.3.5 However, January 2025 UNHCR report noted that ‘although the security situation in the Amhara remained volatile, humanitarian operations continued’ yet ‘the risk of extortion and harassment targeting UN convoys and public transport remains a concern.’⁹⁶
- 10.3.6 The March 2025 OCHA humanitarian update also reported significant accessibility improvements in Amhara Region, particularly in Bugna and Raya Kobo woredas, which had faced severe food insecurity due to conflict and climate-related shocks. A major breakthrough occurred in December 2024 with the reopening of the road to Bugna, which enabled humanitarian actors to deliver life-saving aid, including nutrition and medical supplies. Raya Kobo also saw limited but critical access which enabled delivery of nutrition supplies to health centers there. However, the overall situation across Amhara remained critical with malnutrition worsening in North and South Wello, North and South Gondar, and Wag Hamra. Meanwhile, strained food markets and high prices continue to undermine recovery efforts despite expectations of a better harvest⁹⁷.
- 10.3.7 As of 31 October 2024, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan reported the presence of 25 implementing agencies operating in the Amhara region, with many working across multiple sectors⁹⁸.

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10.4 Healthcare

- 10.4.1 An article by the Primary Health Care Performance Initiative (PHCPI), a partnership founded in 2015 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization and the World Bank Group, that focuses on transforming and strengthening primary health care globally ⁹⁹ noted:
- ‘The health system in Ethiopia is structured into three tiers ... National referral hospitals provide specialized services; regional referral hospitals in each of Ethiopia’s nine regions provide general referral services, and primary health care units (PHCU) operate at the woreda (district) and kebele (lowest administrative level) to provide primary health care services to communities. In rural areas, PHCUs are comprised of five health posts (one per kebele) which report to one health centre at the woreda level, which in turn reports to a primary hospital. In urban areas, primary health care units are typically health centres.’¹⁰⁰
- 10.4.2 According to a 2021 UNICEF report in the Amhara region, primary healthcare facilities and professionals serve more people than the national average, with 872 health centres and 3,565 health posts, meaning each centre and post serves approximately 25,845 and 6,321 people, respectively. Although Amhara’s hospital-to-population ratio is better than the national average, with one hospital for every 256,090 people, the density of health professionals - 1.04 per 1,000 population - is slightly below the national rate of 1.1. The region has 23,549 health professionals (including doctors, nurses, midwives, and health officers) and 8,496 health extension workers, highlighting a heavy workload and pressure on existing health

⁹⁶ UNHCR, [Sudan Situation 29 December 2024 – 4 January 2025](#) (page 8), 5 January 2025

⁹⁷ OCHA, Ethiopia: [Humanitarian Update](#) (page 3), 27 March 2025

⁹⁸ OCHA, [Ethiopia: HRP Implementation in 2024, Cumulative response in ...](#), 22 November 2024

⁹⁹ PHCPI, [About PHCPI](#), no date

¹⁰⁰ PHCPI, [Strengthening Primary Health Care Systems to Increase Effective Coverage ...](#), no date

services¹⁰¹. UNICEF has compiled a comparative table, shown below, outlining the number of health facilities and health workers in the Amhara region relative to national figures:.

	Number	Health facility/health worker to population ratio	
		Amhara	National
Health posts	3,565	1:6,321	1:5,811
Health centres	872	1:25,845	1:27,231
Hospitals	88	1:256,090	1:280,247
Medical doctors*	2,516	1:8,957	1:8,448
Nurses, midwives, health officers	21,033	1:1,071	1:963
Health extension workers (HEWs)	8,496	1:2,653	1:2,413

Sources: Ministry of Health (2020/21), Annual Performance Report, CSA population estimate for 2020²

* General practitioners, specialists, sub-specialists, dental surgeons

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10.4.3 In March 2025 OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange (OCHA HDX) provided data on health facilities in Ethiopia. According to the database, government health facilities in Amhara included 3,447 health posts, 90 hospitals, 863 health centres, 34 clinics/health offices and 8 public pharmacies. In addition, the region had several private health facilities including 10 hospitals 1,789 clinics, 135 speciality clinics, 1,727 pharmacies, 27 laboratories and 5 medical practices¹⁰³.

10.4.4 Table showing government health facilities in Amhara by type and location as of March 2025 based on OCHA HDX data¹⁰⁴:

Zone	Health post	Hospital	Health Centre	Clinic	Pharmacy
Awi	197	5	51	3	-
Central Gondor	417	11	86	3	-
East Gojam	403	12	102	-	-
North Gondor	122	3	29	7	-
North Shewa	480	12	98	5	
North Wello	305	6	65	6	1
Oromia (Amhara)	109	4	31	-	-
South Gondor	292	8	96	1	2
South Wello	528	13	138	1	4
Wag Hamra	115	3	30	-	-
West Gojam	408	10	119	8	1
West Gondor	71	3	18	-	-
Total	3,447	90	863	34	8

¹⁰¹ UNICEF, [Health Expenditure Analysis for Amhara National Regional State ...](#) (pages 3 to 4), 2021

¹⁰² UNICEF, [Health Expenditure Analysis for Amhara National Regional State ...](#) (pages 3 to 4), 2021

¹⁰³ OCHA HDX, [Ethiopia - Health Facilities, 4 March 2025](#), 4 March 2025

¹⁰⁴ OCHA HDX, [Ethiopia - Health Facilities, 4 March 2025](#), 4 March 2025

10.4.5 Table showing private health facilities in Amhara by type and location as of March 2025 based on OCHA HDX data¹⁰⁵:

Zone	Clinic	Speciality clinic	Pharmacy	Laboratory	Medical practice	Hospital
Awi	233	8	181	-	-	-
Central Gondor	138	29	152	1	2	2
East Gojam	189	11	155	3	2	-
North Gondor	14		19	-	-	-
North Shewa	172	13	182	1	-	-
North Wello	158	5	112	1	-	-
Oromia	82	2	88	2	-	-
South Gondor	112	6	81	3	-	-
South Wello	368	18	332	10	-	3
wag Hamra	7		9	-	-	-
West Gojam	228	43	378	6	-	5
West Gondor	88		38	-	-	-
Total	1,789	135	1,727	27	5	10

10.4.6 A July 2024 HRW report based on 58 remote interviews conducted between August 2023 and May 2024 and analysis of satellite imagery, videos and photographs posted online which documented the impact of the conflict in Amhara on the healthcare system in 13 towns noted:

‘By early March 2024, Amhara regional health officials stated that the ongoing conflict in the region ... caused extensive damage to the healthcare system in the region, claiming that “extremist forces,” pillaged 967 health facilities and seized 124 ambulances ...

‘Since the outbreak of hostilities in Amhara in August 2023 through at least May 2024, the Ethiopian military and other security forces have carried out attacks on health care in 13 towns in northwestern Ethiopia’s Amhara region. These forces have unlawfully attacked ambulances and medical transports; beat, arbitrarily arrested, and intimidated medical professionals; obstructed access to medical facilities, including by wrongfully arresting patients on mere suspicion of a Fano affiliation; endangered or disrupted the functioning of hospitals; interfered with access to humanitarian assistance; and denied the Amhara population the right to the highest obtainable standard of health.

‘Doctors in the region also consistently told Human Rights Watch that the conflict in Amhara has disrupted vital medical supplies, impairing the ability of hospitals to remain functional.

‘Warring parties’ actions have obstructed civilian access to functioning health care and undermined the availability, accessibility and acceptability of good quality health facilities, goods and services, especially for groups rendered vulnerable by the conflict. In September, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in a statement on Ethiopia, said that “hospitals are

¹⁰⁵ OCHA HDX, [Ethiopia - Health Facilities, 4 March 2025](#), 4 March 2025

struggling to care for the wounded and critically ill in areas where the security situation is particularly unstable.”¹⁰⁶

10.4.7 The OCHA 13 December 2024 situation report noted that more than 40% of health facilities in Amhara have been looted or damaged according to the Health Cluster, severely limiting access to health services. The report also noted several public health outbreaks such as cholera and malaria¹⁰⁷.

10.4.8 On 2 May 2025 Borkena.com reported:

‘The ongoing conflict and related challenges in the Amhara region have had a devastating impact on maternal healthcare, with the regional health bureau reporting to Ahadu Radio that 200 pregnant women have tragically lost their lives in the past nine months alone due to lack of adequate medical attention...

‘He further explained that the conflict has damaged lower-level healthcare infrastructure and facilities, posing a significant challenge to saving lives as effectively as needed.

‘According to a 2024 joint assessment report by the Amhara Public Health Institute and international partners, over 1,000 healthcare facilities across the region have been either partially or fully non-functional due to insecurity, lack of personnel, and supply disruptions. Particularly hard-hit areas include North Wollo, South Wollo, Gondar, and parts of the Oromia Special Zone, where access to health services has dropped by over 60% compared to pre-conflict levels.

‘The same report found that more than 40% of health centers in conflict-affected zones were looted or destroyed, leaving thousands without essential care. Mobile health teams and outreach services have also been suspended in many districts due to safety concerns.’¹⁰⁸

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10.5 Education

10.5.1 The OHCHR June 2024 report noted:

‘At least 39 schools were allegedly occupied and used by ENDF, and three attacks on schools by unidentified armed actors were registered. One example was an incident on 15 December 2023, during which at least three teachers were reportedly abducted from Dembecha Senior Secondary School, in Dembecha town, West Gojjam Zone, Amhara region. ...

‘Primary and secondary school enrolment in the region experienced a significant decline in 2023. The number of student enrolment for the 2023 academic year dropped to 2.9 million in 2023 from 6.2 million in 2022, as reported by the Amhara Regional Educational Bureau. Additionally, according to the Amhara Regional Educational Bureau, over 300 primary and secondary schools in the region were being used for military purposes, with 52 schools destroyed in violation of international law. Moreover, 10 universities in Amhara region remained closed by December 2023, due to insecurity.’¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ HRW, [“If the Soldier Dies, It’s on You” Attacks on Medical Care in Ethiopia’s...](#), 3 July 2024

¹⁰⁷ OCHA, [Ethiopia Situation Report](#) (page 4), 13 December 2024

¹⁰⁸ Borkena.com, [Amhara Conflict Severely Disrupts Maternal Care, Leaving 200 ...](#), 2 May 2025

¹⁰⁹ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 35, 61), June 2024

10.5.2 The EHRC July 2024 report noted:

‘As far as the situation in Amhara region is concerned, due to security problems in the region, educational activities are regularly disrupted in most places and, according to the Regional Education Bureau, as of January 2024, 3,516 primary and secondary schools and 225 high schools in the region have not yet begun classes for the 2023/24 academic year. While the initial plan for the fiscal year was to enrol more than 6.2 million pupils, only 3.6 million pupils were enrolled, and education was disrupted in three zones and 31 districts of the region. In addition to the destruction of schools linked to the armed conflict in the region or the use of schools for military purposes, attacks on schools by parties to the conflict are a cause for concern. For example, between July 2023 and the end of January 2024, when the armed conflict spread to the town of Bahir Dar, three schools were bombed, killing one teacher and injuring three teachers and one pupil, causing significant psychological damage to the pupils.’¹¹⁰

10.5.3 The OCHA situation report 10 June 2024 noted:

‘As of early April, according to the Education Cluster in the Amhara Region, 4,178 schools (41 per cent of the total in the region) have been closed due to the ongoing insecurity and impact of the northern Ethiopia conflict (2020-2022). Moreover, approximately 300 schools in various zones are damaged and around 350 schools are non-functional. About 89 per cent of the schools in East Gojam, West Gojam, and South Gondar zones are currently closed. In South Gondar alone, as of 12 March, approximately 26,000 students have dropped out of school, mainly due to persistent drought and insecurity ... Some districts, like Tsagbeji and Abergele in Wag Hamra Zone, have closed schools due to lack of school supplies.

‘In total, due to the ongoing clashes, drought, and other compounding factors, more than 4.1 million children are out of school, 35 per cent of the total in the region for the current academic year. The cluster also reported that more than 1.5 million children need school feeding services, particularly in drought-stricken areas, 1.7 million children need scholastic materials and more than 56,000 teachers and educational personnel need psycho-social support. Regional authorities are planning a six-month curriculum to recover lost learning. School feeding programs have supported over 156,000 students in eight districts, but a significant increase in food and education support is still needed.’¹¹¹

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11. Human rights abuses and violations in Amhara

11.1 Extent of the violations

11.1.1 The OHCHR June 2024 report documented the human rights situation in Ethiopia through 600 monitoring missions, including 202 visits to detention facilities that involved observations of areas where violations were reported, speaking with victims and witnesses, and engagements with authorities and civil society. The findings of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law were made by applying a “reasonable grounds to believe”¹¹². The report noted that: ‘the most common

¹¹⁰ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...\)](#) (page 68), July 2024

¹¹¹ OCHA, [Ethiopia Situation Report](#) 10 June 2024

¹¹² OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraph 13), June 2024

violations included arbitrary arrests and detentions, followed by killings of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, and attacks on civilian property.¹¹³

11.1.2 A 2016 article by the Geneva Academy International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, a postgraduate educational and research institution established by the University of Geneva's Faculty of Law and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, noted that the terminology 'human rights violations' and 'human rights abuses' is inconsistently used in UN resolutions. However, the terms human rights abuses is typically used to refer to wrongful acts such as torture, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings that are committed by state actors while 'human rights abuses' refer to wrongful acts attributed to armed non-state actors¹¹⁴.

11.1.3 With regard to Amhara OHCHR June 2024 report noted:

'In 2023, a total of 179 incidents of human rights violations and abuses were documented in Amhara with 3,163 victims (1,099 men, 89 women, 1,975 unknown). During the SoE alone, from August 2023 to January 2024, 107 incidents of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law with 2,424 victims (689 men, 71 women, and 1,664 whose gender could not be determined) were documented.

'The major perpetrators [of human rights violations and abuses] were the ENDF, Amhara Regional Police and state affiliated militias. Besides Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Government forces used heavy artillery weapons that damaged homes and properties, while Fano resorted to gunshot and grenade attacks. OHCHR documented cases of extrajudicial killings, as well as attacks against civilians and civilian objects, resulting in heavy casualties. Additionally, the state of emergency declared in August 2023 suspended judicial review of detentions, leading to widespread arbitrary arrests not only in Amhara but also in other parts of the country.

'The Fano militia was responsible for killings of civilians, abuses of the right to physical integrity, attacks on and destruction of civilian objects; attacks against medical personnel; attacks against ambulances; and arbitrary arrests. Fano attacks targeted mainly Government forces and personnel ...'¹¹⁵

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11.2 Attack on civilians

11.2.1 The OHCHR June 2024 reported 740 civilian deaths and 370 injuries were recorded in Amhara in 2023 most of which were attributed to the government security forces¹¹⁶. The same source observed:

'The use of UAVs by the ENDF/Ethiopian Airforce resulted in numerous civilian casualties, with 18 recorded UAV strikes that caused 248 civilian deaths and injured 55 between 4 August and 31 December 2023, and destroyed vital facilities, for example schools and hospitals, as well as private homes ... Strikes continued to cause civilian suffering in 2024, with one UAV attack registered in January which resulted in 16 civilians killed.

¹¹³ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraph 2), June 2024

¹¹⁴ Geneva Academy, [Human Rights Obligations of Armed Non ...](#) (pages 4, 9 to 13, December 2016)

¹¹⁵ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 31, 36), June 2024

¹¹⁶ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 17, 22), June 2024

Also, the Fano attacks, and the operations carried out by state armed forces with summary executions in and shelling of civilian-inhabited areas in response between August 2023 and January 2024, spread fear amongst the population and claimed many lives.¹¹⁷

11.2.2 The EHRC July 2024 report noted: '... large numbers of civilians (including women, the elderly, the disabled and children) have been brutally killed by heavy artillery shelling and aerial bombardments (mostly by drones) that have not respected the principles of discrimination, strict necessity and proportionality.'¹¹⁸

11.2.3 On 21 January 2025 Reuters reported:

'Verifiable information is limited due to restrictions on communication networks in Amhara. The U.N.'s latest update said in June that at least 740 civilians were killed in 2023. But a further 115 civilians at least were killed between September and December last year, according to a new report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC). It cautioned that this was only a partial accounting of rights abuses over that period because of difficult working conditions.

'In one case, government forces arrested 11 civilians in Amhara's Eastern Gojjam Zone during house-to-house searches, accusing them of being relatives of Fano members or supporters, and then killed them at a military camp, the report said. In another, Fano fighters arrested 80 people in October who they said were local officials and government informants and then killed 38 of them in December, it said.'¹¹⁹

11.2.4 In September 2024 the US based Amhara Association of America (AAA) which self describes as an independent non-profit organization investigates and documents human rights violations against Amharas¹²⁰ but which the EPO described as 'one of the most critical public voices' of Prime Minister Abiy¹²¹ and the Africa Intelligence, which reports news on Africa in English and French, stated is among nearly 50 associations providing logistical and financial support to Fano¹²² published a report on human rights violations in Amhara between 4 August 2023 and 4 August 2024 (AAA September 2024 report). The report claimed that AAA documented 3,283 civilian casualties - 2,592 deaths and 691 injuries - across 16 zones and city administrations in the Amhara and Oromia Regions. The report further claimed that 3,128 of the civilian casualties - 2,460 deaths and 668 injuries - occurred in 12 zones and city administrations in Amhara and ENDF conducted at least 53 confirmed drone strikes which resulted in 551 civilian casualties - 433 deaths and 118 injuries.¹²³ The report did neither specify how it obtained this information nor its source. Hence, CPIT could not independently verify these claims. It should be noted that other sources reported significantly fewer number of fatalities.

11.2.5 In an updated report published on 24 November 2024, AAA claimed that between 25 September 2024 and 23 November 2024, ENDF carried out

¹¹⁷ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 33), June 2024

¹¹⁸ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...\)](#) (page 31), July 2024

¹¹⁹ Reuters, [Scores of Ethiopians die in long-running Amhara conflict, rights ...](#), 24 January 2024

¹²⁰ AAA, [About us](#), no date

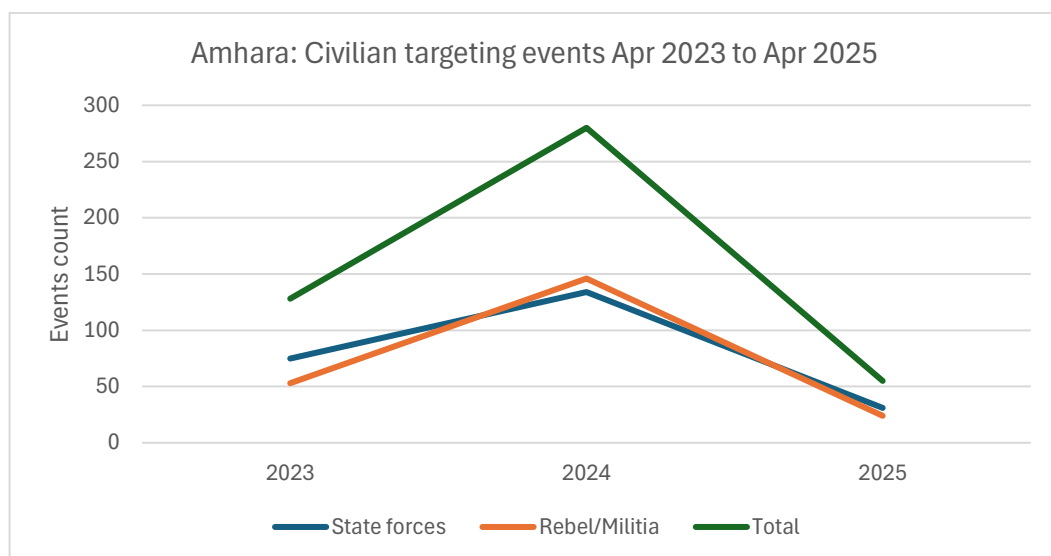
¹²¹ EPO, [Ethiopia Peace Observatory Weekly: 2 - 8 July 2022](#), 14 July 2022

¹²² Africa Intelligence, [Fano armed groups to announce merger in Amhara region](#), 27 March 2025

¹²³ AAA, [Report on Gross Human Rights Violations and Violations ...](#) (page 22), 17 September 2024

over 72 drone and airstrikes across 38 woredas in 10 zones which resulted in 434 casualties (321 deaths and 113 injuries) with most of the casualties being civilians¹²⁴. The report provided dates and locations of the attacks but not the sources of its information.

- 11.2.6 The EHRC [report](#) 'The human rights situation in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia' [in Amharic and translated using Chat GPT] covering the period from mid-September to December 2024, January 2023 (EHRC January 2025 report) noted that government security forces allegedly killed 8 civilians in South Gondar Zone after clashes with Fano militias. In North Gondar Zone, security forces reportedly killed at least 4 civilians, including women and children, through indiscriminate gunfire, injuring 5 others. During the burial of the deceased, 3 more civilians were killed by security forces. The report also accused Fano militias of killing 8 civilians in West Gondar Zone for allegedly supporting the Prosperity Party government or fighting alongside the military¹²⁵.
- 11.2.7 The ACLED database features 'civilian targeting events' defined as 'events in which civilians were the main or only target of an event.'¹²⁶ Events in this category include riots, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians¹²⁷. From 1 April 2023 to 30 April 2025 ACLED recorded a total of 465 civilian targeting events of which states forces were responsible for 240 (52%) of the events and rebel groups and political/identify militias responsible for 223 (48%) of the events. During the same period, ACLED recorded 1,983 fatalities from civilian targeting of which 1,440 (73%) were caused by state forces and 543 (27%) by rebel and political/identify militias¹²⁸. This is shown in below charts:



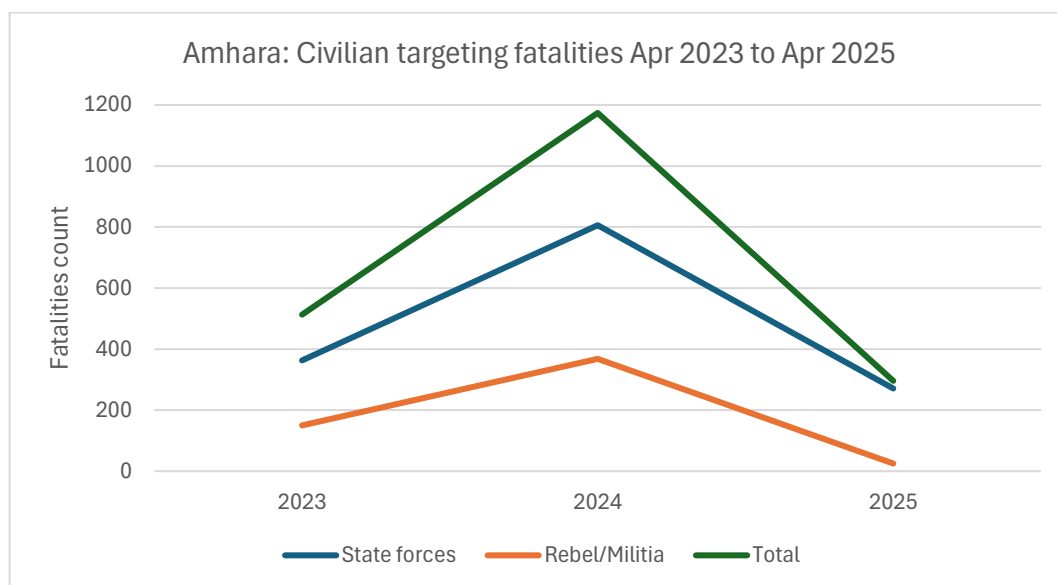
¹²⁴ AAA, [Summary of recent recorded drone and air strikes in ...](#) (pages 1 to 2), 24 November 2024

¹²⁵ EHRC, [The human rights situation in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia](#), 24 January 2025

¹²⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 23), 3 October 2024

¹²⁷ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (page 23), 3 October 2024

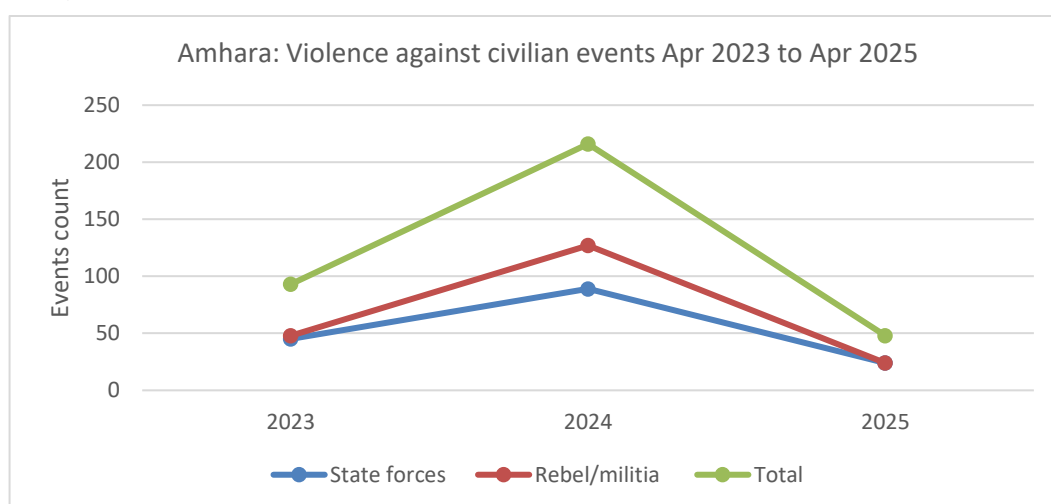
¹²⁸ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025



11.2.8 From January to April 2025 ACLED recorded 55 events of which state forces were responsible for 31 (56%) and rebel and political/identity militia for 24 (44%). During the same period ACLED recorded 296 fatalities of which 271 (92%) were caused by state forces and 25 (8%) by rebel and political/identity militias¹²⁹.

11.2.9 The ACLED data base also features 'violence against civilians' defined as 'violent events where an organized armed group inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants.'¹³⁰ Violence against civilian events include sexual violence, attack, and abduction/forced disappearance¹³¹.

11.2.10 From 1 April 2023 to 30 April 2025, ACLED 357 events in this category out of which state forces were responsible for 158 (44%) and rebel and political/identity groups responsible for 199 (66%). During the same period ACLED recorded 1,384 fatalities of which 853 (62%) were caused by state forces and 531 (38%) by rebels and political/identity groups¹³². This is shown in figures below:

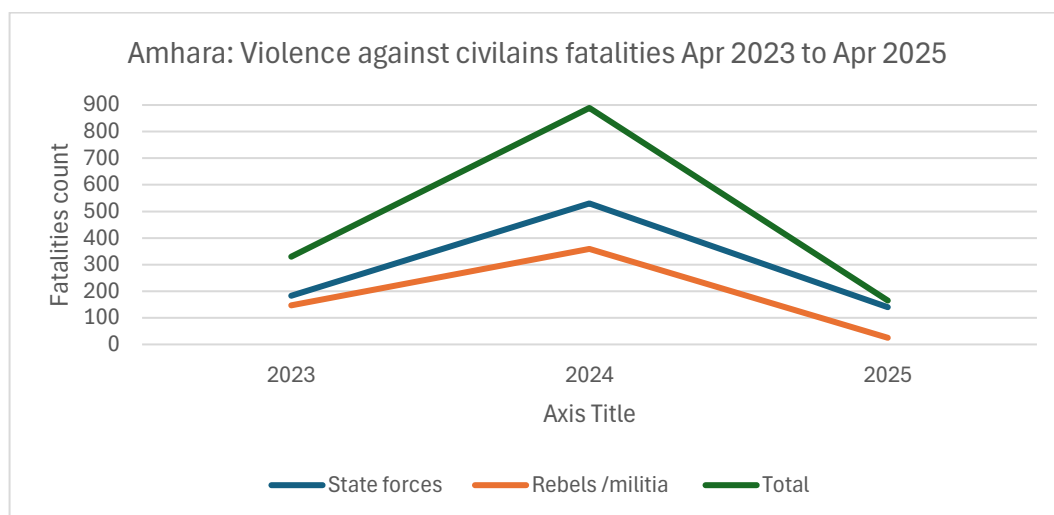


¹²⁹ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025

¹³⁰ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (pages 18), 3 October 2024

¹³¹ ACLED, [ACLED Codebook](#) (pages 11, 23), 3 October 2024

¹³² ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025



11.2.11 From January to April 2025 ACLED recorded 48 events of civilian violence of which state forces were responsible for half and rebel and political militia were responsible for the other half. During the same period ACLED recorded 165 fatalities out which state forces were responsible for 140 (85%) and rebel and political/identify militia for 25 (15%) of the fatalities¹³³.

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11.3 Extra-judicial killing

11.3.1 The USSD 2023 HR report noted: ‘During the year, government counterinsurgency campaigns against the Fano militia in Amhara Region [among others] ... continued, with numerous reports of unlawful killings, including killings of civilians.’¹³⁴

11.3.2 In February 2024 Amnesty International (AI) published a briefing on extra-judicial killings in Bahir Dar by ENDF soldiers which was based on 32 remote interviews with eye witnesses, family members of victims, healthcare professionals and community and religious leaders between 1 November to 18 December 2023, with one additional interview on 6 January 2024¹³⁵. The report stated:

‘Fighting between the Fano militia and ENDF soldiers erupted on 5 August 2023, initially around Mulugeta Real Estate in Abune Hara, in Bahir Dar. According to residents, a Fano militia leader, Zemene Kassie, used to live in the development. From 5 August, Fano militia captured several parts of Bahir Dar, including kebeles (sub-cities) 14, 16, 13, 7, 8, and Kebele 11 (also known as Abay Mado). They withdrew from these areas on 9 August 2023. Amnesty International verified the extrajudicial executions of 6 civilians by ENDF soldiers in Abune Hara and Lideta neighbourhoods on 8 and 9 August.

‘Two months after the first fighting in Bahir Dar, fighting broke out again in the city, mainly in Seba Tamit area, on 10 October 2023. In this neighbourhood, Amnesty International verified the extrajudicial executions of 5 civilians and one patient in a health centre by ENDF soldiers on 10 and 11 October¹³⁶.

¹³³ ACLED, [Explorer](#) (organised violence/Ethiopia/Amhara/Event type/) accessed 13 May 2025

¹³⁴ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia](#) (section 1A, 11), 24 April 2024

¹³⁵ AI, [... Extrajudicial executions in Bahir Dar by ENDF soldiers](#) (page 4), 26 February 2024

¹³⁶ AI, [... Extrajudicial executions in Bahir Dar by ENDF soldiers](#) (page 4), 26 February 2024

11.3.3 On 4 April 2024 Human Rights Watch reported:

‘Early in the morning of January 29, Fano forces attacked a contingent of Ethiopian soldiers in Merawi, about 30 kilometers south of the Amhara regional capital, Bahir Dar. The Fano fighters then withdrew, leaving the town to the Ethiopian federal forces. During a six-hour period, Ethiopian soldiers shot civilians on the streets and during house-to-house searches. Scores were killed, mostly men, but also women. The soldiers also pillaged and destroyed civilian property.

‘On February 24, Ethiopian armed forces summarily executed up to eight civilians in Merawi following another attack by Fano fighters in the town ...

‘Human Rights Watch was unable to determine the total number of civilian deaths in Merawi. Community leaders shared two lists of victims with a total of 40 names of people who were identified and buried in Merawi. Three residents estimated that over 80 people were killed, including some buried elsewhere.’¹³⁷

11.3.4 On 21 February 2024 the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCRP), which works to mobilize the international community to act in situations where populations are at risk of mass atrocity crime¹³⁸, reported:

‘According to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), at least 66 people were extrajudicially executed in January during a string of attacks by Ethiopian federal forces in the Amhara region. The executions occurred in the context of fighting between the federal government and local Amhara militia known as “fano,” ... In one of the deadliest incidents since the violence broke out, at least 45 people were killed, including a child and a pregnant woman, in the town of Merawi, East Gojjam Zone, on 29 January. Reports indicate that federal forces went house to house targeting civilians and accusing them of supporting the fano, who had previously occupied the town. Some witnesses said the attack was revenge for a fano assault earlier that day. The EHRC reported on other incidents in the same area, including a 19 January attack that killed 15 people in Berenta district and another on 15 January that killed six in Quarit district, which neighbors West Gojjam Zone.’¹³⁹

11.3.5 According to the OHCHR June 2024 report at least 89 civilians were reportedly extra-judicially killed by Government forces in Merawi town¹⁴⁰.

11.3.6 The EHRC report on the human rights situation in Ethiopia July 2024 (EHRC July 2024 report) observed:

‘Unlawful/Extrajudicial killing of civilians by government security forces remain a serious concern in the context of the ongoing armed conflict in the Amhara region. These killings are perpetrated for suspicion of “hiding weapons”, “supporting Fano”, “providing information to Fano”, and women and children are also victims of these violations. There have been extrajudicial killings of civilians who have been arrested during a house to house search or found in the street following armed clashes that have lasted for one or two days in a given area. In this regard, it is possible to mention the extrajudicial killings of civilians by government security forces in the

¹³⁷ HRW, [Ethiopia: Military Executes Dozens in Amhara Region](#), 4 April 2024

¹³⁸ GCRP, [Who we are](#), no date

¹³⁹ GCRP, [Atrocity Alert No. 383: Ukraine, Haiti and Ethiopia](#), 21 February 2024

¹⁴⁰ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraph 34), June 2024

towns of Bahir Dar, Adet, Debremarkos, Debre Tabor, Jigga, Lemi, Majete, Merawi, Bikolo, Materto Lemariam, Shawa Robit and Udwa during different periods of the last six months ...

‘Extrajudicial killing of civilians continues to be a concern in areas affected by ongoing or past armed conflicts and, in some cases, outside a context of conflict. Witnesses said that on 28 February 2024, students at St. Gabriel’s Church in Barakat Kebele, Mecha District, North Gojam Zone, Amhara Region, returned to their dormitories at around 11:00 pm after completing the day’s programme. Afterwards members of the government security forces arrived at around 12:30 am midnight and took the students out of their dormitory, shot and killed 11 students ... accusing them of: “insulting ” ... Witnesses added that there were no armed group in the area at the time of the incident.

‘On 15 March 2024, in the Zenzelma area of Bahir Dar town in the Amhara region, Ato Birhanu Shibabau Kagan, Ato Balai Kagan and Ato Teshome Yebeltal were arrested by government security forces, one in his shop and the other two at their homes, because they were “wanted for questioning”. On 16 March 2024, it was confirmed that they had been shot dead in a neighbourhood known as Gudo Bahar, Kebele 14, Bahir Dar town.

‘On 15 April 2024 at 9:00 am, in a kebele called Agona, Este district, South Gondar zone, Amhara region, while the government security forces were travelling from Este district to Lai Giant district, they were suddenly ambushed by the armed forces operating in the area (commonly known as Fano); subsequently, as soon as the militants had fled the area, government security forces entered the area (Agona kebele) and killed 7 civilians (1 woman and 6 men).’¹⁴¹

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11.4 Arrest and detention

11.4.1 For information on state of emergency see [State of emergency August 2023 to June 2024](#)

11.4.2 The USSD HR report 2023 noted: ‘While the government generally enforced the law effectively, there were widespread allegations of government security forces targeting individuals for arrest and detention based on ethnicity in response to the conflict in the north of the country ... In August the government imposed a state of emergency, under which thousands of individuals were arbitrarily detained, many allegedly targeted on the basis of their Amhara ethnicity.’¹⁴²

11.4.3 On 19 February 2024, AI reported: ‘Since the declaration of the state of emergency in August 2023, Ethiopian media has reported mass arrests in the capital Addis Ababa and in Amhara region. On 6 February 2024, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed confirmed to the House of People’s Representatives that thousands had been detained, and many subsequently released after receiving “education”. He also confirmed that hundreds are still in detention under the state of emergency.’¹⁴³

11.4.4 The EHRC June 2024 report covering the period between June 2023 and

¹⁴¹ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report ...](#) (pages 31, 32, 33), July 2024

¹⁴² USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia](#) (section 5), 22 April 2024

¹⁴³ AI, [Ethiopia: Authorities must stop using state of emergency law to silence ...](#), 19 February 2024

June 2024 observed:

‘... since the declaration of the State of Emergency, many people have been subjected to prolonged detention in both formal and informal detention centers, many being held for days or weeks without being informed of their whereabouts. EHRC has in particular received numerous complaints from victims and their families of people detained in informal facilities in Addis Ababa and the Amhara region, concerning the lack of water, sanitation and other basic services, as well as exposure to various health problems, abuse, insults, beatings and other inhumane treatment ...

‘Many people, including members of the media and political parties, have been arrested in ... the regions of Amhara ... as part of the implementation of the State of Emergency, but without instructions from the Command Post ...

‘In addition to the arrests and locations announced by the State of Emergency Command Post in the Amhara region, the Commission has received numerous complaints from families and witnesses about arbitrary arrests carried out by the government security forces during the State of Emergency, particularly in the towns of Bahir Dar, Debre Tabor, Debre Markos, Finote Salam, Gondar, Lalibela, Mekaneselem, Kobo and Showa Robit. People arrested by the government security forces are usually accused of “supporting the armed group” and/or “hiding weapons”, while the families of the detainees have repeatedly filed complaints with the Commission alleging inhumane treatment of the detainees ...’¹⁴⁴

11.4.5 The OHCHR June 2024 report noted:

‘Following the declaration of the state of emergency, high numbers of arbitrary arrests, predominantly of ethnic Amhara people in different parts of the country, were documented ...

‘The arrested persons were often initially detained in police detention centers and later transferred to ENDF detention camps. Official detention centers for the SoE were established in four places in the Amhara region - in Central Gondar Zone, South Wollo Zone, North Shewa Zone and in Bahir Dar city, as well as the Awash 40 detention center in Afar region.’¹⁴⁵

11.4.6 The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo), an independent body that is responsible for collecting, analysing and presenting country of origin information to the Norwegian Immigration Authorities¹⁴⁶ published a report in June 2024 [Etiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av konflikten i Amhara-regionen](#) [Conditions for Amharas in Addis Ababa, in light of the conflict in the Amhara region] in Norwegian] (Landinfo June report 2024). CPIT has used ChatGPT to translate the report. The report noted that following Fano's attacks on major cities in Amhara in August 2023, authorities conducted mass arrests of Amharas in the region under emergency laws. The report further noted that there was limited information on the number of detainees, their profiles, the duration of their detention, and other circumstances surrounding the arrests¹⁴⁷.

11.4.7 On 2 October 2024 BBC Monitoring reported:

‘The Ethiopian government has announced that the army has launched a

¹⁴⁴ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...\)](#) (pages 15, 18), July 2024

¹⁴⁵ OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 3, 20), June 2024

¹⁴⁶ Landinfo, [About Landinfo](#), no date

¹⁴⁷ Landinfo, [Etiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av konflikten ...](#) (page 3) 27 June 2024

"law enforcement operation" against the ethnic Amhara Fano militia in the restive Amhara Region, the state-owned Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) reported on 1 October.

"The defence forces' public relations director, Col Getnet Adane, has said the law enforcement operation to ensure sustainable peace and accountability in Amhara Region will be intensified," said ENA ...

"We have been trying to promote peace, but it [Fano] has chosen the barrel of the gun. So, we have to talk to it in the language it chose," said army spokesman Col Getnet Adane at a media briefing he gave together with his regional government counterpart Mengesha Fentaw.

'Mengesha said the operation will also target what he called Fano financiers and sympathisers. "The operation will target the group's leaders who give directives, rabble-rousers within government institutions and the group's financial and information sources within trade organisations," said Mengesha ... He said those "wrongly detained" would be released after investigations.'¹⁴⁸

- 11.4.8 A November 2024 Amnesty International investigative report based on interviews with 2 people recently released from detention, 5 family members of detained individuals, and 9 authoritative sources familiar with the mass detention (AI November 2024 report) noted:

'...since 28 September 2024 the task force [composed of Ethiopia's federal army and Amhara regional security authorities] has filled four makeshift detention camps across the Amhara region with thousands of civilians ... Eight people who have documented different instances of mass arrest consistently reported to Amnesty International that thousands of people are currently detained in four major makeshift detention camps in the towns of Dangla, Seraba (Chilga), Choris (Kombolcha), and Shewa Robit ... [for location see [Amhara region](#)].

'An individual recently released from Dangla makeshift camp reported that there were approximately 1,610 detainees [it is not clear how the individual arrived at this figure] , with more people being detained as he was released. He also reported that authorities have been constructing additional detention rooms out of metal sheets in the Dangla camp due to overcrowding in existing spaces. Amnesty International has also verified that new structures were erected in October. Another witness who visited arrested individuals in the Choris Military camp said they have seen at least hundreds of people detained.

'Members of the judiciary and prosecutors have also been arrested, particularly those who challenged executive interference in political cases, according to four interviewees.

'A judge who spoke with Amnesty International on condition of anonymity confirmed that 9 judges and court staff from across the region remain detained, while four others were released on 20 October ...

'Similarly, a senior prosecutor told Amnesty International that at least 13 prosecutors have been detained across the region. In both cases, detainees have not been brought to court and have been held for between two weeks to a month without due process.

¹⁴⁸ BBC Monitoring, [Briefing: Ethiopia vows to deal with Fano militia 'in the ...'](#), 2 October 2024

‘Others arbitrarily arrested are members of the academic community across the region. Amnesty International received a list of 11 academic staff members detained from Wollo University. A credible source stated that, after over a month in arbitrary detention at the Chorisa makeshift camp, these individuals were finally brought before a court this week ...

‘... The Amhara Region Judges Association on 17 October 2024 issued a statement with a list of judges who were arbitrarily arrested as part of the ongoing mass arrest campaign. “Over the past year, harassment of judges has increased to the point of loss of life, and we recorded the arbitrary arrest of 35 judges, mainly due to their judicial conduct” reads the statement.’¹⁴⁹

- 11.4.9 The EHRC January 2025 report raised concerns about mass detentions in Amhara. According to the report from 27 September 2024 individuals from diverse backgrounds including government officials, security personnel, judges, legal experts, council members, merchants, journalists, educators, women, youth, private sector workers, religious leaders, and students were detained across various locations. The report noted that while some detainees were released after short periods, over 6,000 people remained in detention in four temporary detention centers in Dangila, Chilga (Seraba military camp), Kombolcha, and Shewa Robit. A small number of those formally charged were moved to correctional facilities to await trial. Except for a limited release on January 18, 2025, most detainees had not been brought before a court, and this situation continues as of the report’s publication¹⁵⁰.
- 11.4.10 A January 2025 AI news report also noted that despite the release of hundreds of detainees, including three judges, women, elderly individuals, and those with chronic health issues, thousands still remained arbitrarily detained and authorities continued to conduct arbitrary arrests in Amhara¹⁵¹. The report did not specify the exact number of those still in detention.

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11.5 Conflict-related sexual violence

- 11.5.1 The OHCHR June 2024 report noted that in Amhara cases of sexual violence, including conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) were recorded but remained generally underreported. The report stated: ‘In Amhara, five incidents of CRSV affecting 33 victims (including a minor), in the context of the conflict between the Government forces and Fano militia, were all perpetrated by the ENDF. According to the report 25 incidents and 27 victims of CRSV were reported in Oromia where the victims were both Amhara and Oromo people and 5 incidents affecting 33 victims were reported in Amhara all perpetrated by the ENDF¹⁵².
- 11.5.2 The EHRC July 2024 report noted that it ‘received evidence from government health institutions of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by members of the government security forces in areas of armed conflict in the Amhara region.’¹⁵³
- 11.5.3 On 23 October 2024 the University World News, an online global higher

¹⁴⁹ AI, [Ethiopia: End the month-long arbitrary detention of thousands in Amhara ...](#), 6 November 2024

¹⁵⁰ EHRC, [The human rights situation in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia](#), 24 January 2025

¹⁵¹ AI, [Ethiopia: Urgent international action needed to end mass arbitrary ...](#), 28 January 2025

¹⁵² OHCHR, [Update on the human rights situation in Ethiopia](#) (paragraphs 24 to 25), June 2024

¹⁵³ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 ...](#) (page 22 to 23), July 2024

education publication, which provides in-depth, independent news and commentary on higher education and research worldwide, both North and South¹⁵⁴, citing the Higher Education Forum, a forum for higher education institutions in Amhara, reported that more than 5,000 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have sought clinical care in the year leading up to September 2024. The Higher Education Forum highlighted that this figure likely represented only a small portion of the actual cases¹⁵⁵.

11.5.4 The OCHA situation report 13 December 2024 noted:

‘Since the conflict began in July 2023 in Amhara Region, and as of October 2024, the regional Public Health Institute (APHI) reported 1,681 survivors, including 1,645 women and 36 men, that sought help for sexual violence in 32 health facilities. Nearly 47 per cent of these survivors are under 18. However, this data only reflects reports from a small fraction of health facilities, with under-reporting due to fear of stigma, retaliation, and access issues. The absence of the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) further complicates efforts to assess the full scale of GBV incidents.’¹⁵⁶

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11.6 Criminology

11.6.1 An April 2024 World Health Organization Public Health Situation Analysis (WHO PHSA) report noted that Amhara has seen an increase in criminality and looting of aid consignments.¹⁵⁷

11.6.2 The EPO 13 September 2024 monthly update report observed: ‘General insecurity has increased significantly during the Fano insurgency, and a number of kidnappings for ransom cases were reported in August [2024] ... On 3 September, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission said it had found that a breakdown of security and governance structures as a result of prolonged conflicts in Amhara ... had led to attacks targeting civilians, both by parties to the conflict and by criminal elements.’¹⁵⁸

11.6.3 On 22 October 2024 Africa Defense Forum (ADF), a magazine published quarterly by U.S. Africa Command¹⁵⁹ reported a rise in abductions across Ethiopia, particularly in the conflict-affected Amhara and Oromia regions, fueled by political instability, ethnic tensions, and overstretched security forces. The report noted that kidnappings which initially targeted students, civil servants, farmers, and industrial workers had expanded to broader populations and new areas with victims frequently alleging that officials and security forces were complicit, either by turning a blind eye or profiting from ransom payments¹⁶⁰.

11.6.4 On 3 October 2024, Voice of America (VoA) reported a rise in abductions in Ethiopia’s conflict-affected Amhara and Oromia regions, with police in Amhara recording 287 cases in 2023/2024, though actual numbers may be higher due to underreporting. The EHRC attributed the increase to the broader political and security crisis, noting that kidnappings have become

¹⁵⁴ University World News, [About us](#), no date

¹⁵⁵ UWN, [Universities forum raises alarm over rising sexual violence](#), 23 October 2024

¹⁵⁶ OCHA, [Ethiopia - Situation Report](#) (pages 4 to 5), 13 December 2024

¹⁵⁷ WHO, [Ethiopia Public Health Situation Analysis \(PHSA\)](#) (page 5 to 6), 11 April 2024

¹⁵⁸ EPO, [In Amhara, over 7 million people are exposed to political violence](#), 13 September 2024

¹⁵⁹ ADF, [About ADF](#), no date

¹⁶⁰ ADF, [Kidnappings in Ethiopia’s Amhara, Oromia Regions Stoke Fear](#), 22 October 2024

common and were perpetrated by a range of actors including armed groups, criminal networks, and even elements within the security forces. The EHRC further noted that while many kidnappings were financially motivated others were linked to political agendas¹⁶¹.

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12. Treatment of Amharas outside Amhara region

12.1 Addis Ababa

12.1.1 For information on the number of Amhara in Addis Ababa see [Demography](#)

12.1.2 On 14 August 2023 the VoA reported:

‘Authorities in Ethiopia are carrying out mass arrests of hundreds, even thousands, of people in the capital, Addis Ababa, after deadly unrest in the country’s Amhara region, lawyers and witnesses said ...

‘... “[T]here has been widespread arrest of civilians who are of ethnic Amhara origin,” the state-appointed Ethiopian Human Rights Commission said Monday, calling on the federal authorities to cease the detentions. Activists say ethnic Amharas are being targeted in the mass arrests.

‘Two lawyers said the emergency measures [SoE] also appear to be in effect in the capital, Addis Ababa, where suspects are being held at police stations, schools and other makeshift detention centers after being swept off the streets. The lawyers, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution.

‘One lawyer said he visited seven schools and police stations last week where “hundreds” of people were held. The other lawyer, citing police sources, said 3,000 people had been arrested in Addis Ababa. A third lawyer said he encountered several young people last week at police stations and courts in Addis Ababa who had been arrested and accused of having links to the Fano militia ...

The federal government said only 23 people have been arrested under the state of emergency in Addis Ababa ...’¹⁶²

12.1.3 The EHRC July 2024 report noted:

‘Arbitrary detention, mass detention or detention in informal detention centres in violation of court orders occurred in virtually every region. The problem has been exacerbated in particular for those detained in Addis Ababa detention centres and those transferred from Addis Ababa to Awash Arba military camp and other informal detention centres during the State of Emergency. For instance, in Addis Ababa, people whose right to bail has been granted by court remain in detention for long periods without being released on the grounds that they are “wanted by the Command Post”.

‘...in Addis Ababa, many people were detained in the Dejazmach Wendyirad and Derartu Tulu schools in a manner that did not respect human dignity. Following the Commission’s monitoring and investigation, most of them were released, while others were transferred to an ordinary detention centre.’¹⁶³

12.1.4 The Landinfo June 2024 report noted:

¹⁶¹ VoA, [Ethiopian military boosts operations in Amhara region](#), 3 October 2024

¹⁶² VoA, [Witnesses Say Mass Arrests Underway in Ethiopian Capital](#), 14 August 2024

¹⁶³ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...](#) (page 18), 5 July 2024

‘No sources provide a concrete and comprehensive account of how many Amharas were detained in Addis Ababa following the introduction of the state of emergency in August 2023. Sources describe the arrests as "mass arrests" (Anna, 2023) and a "crackdown" (Jalloh, 2023) but do not specify numbers. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2024) states that 4,879 people were detained from the beginning of the state of emergency in August until the end of 2023 but does not specify how the arrests were distributed between Addis Ababa and Amhara.

‘It is therefore unclear how many Amharas were detained in Addis Ababa during this period, but it is reasonable to assume that at least several thousand were affected. Sources Landinfo consulted during its October 2023 trip also did not provide specific figures. Source A7 [expert in conflict and security studies] estimates that the total number of detainees nationwide was between 10,000 and 30,000 but does not specify how many were detained in Addis Ababa. Source A1 (an Ethiopian civil society organization) estimates the number to be "at least 10,000" but emphasizes that this is an estimate and that the organization does not have concrete figures.

‘However, sources agree that "most" arrests occurred in Amhara, in areas with active conflict, and to a relatively lesser extent in Addis Ababa.’¹⁶⁴

12.1.5 Landinfo June 2024 report observed regarding the arrests of Amharas in Addis Ababa:

‘Landinfo's impression from conversations with sources in Addis Ababa in October 2023, as well as from previous fact-finding missions, is that authorities in Addis Ababa have a strong security focus. This means that authorities primarily monitor individuals who may pose a security risk in the city, such as those planning actions that could harm government targets or civilians.

‘Most recently, around 50 people linked to the armed group of Amhara opposition politician Eskinder Nega were arrested, suspected of planning to "create chaos" after weapons and satellite phones were found (Ethiopia Observer, 2024). Furthermore, Addis Ababa police arrested "several dozen" suspects following a shootout between Fano and police in April 2024 and increased security measures in the city with checkpoints at city exits (The Ethiopian Cable, 2024)...

‘So far, Landinfo has not been able to confirm reports of widespread arrests in Addis Ababa in recent months, except for the exceptions mentioned above. Most arrests there appear to be directed at individuals planning actions against targets in Addis Ababa. However, sources pointed out that individuals with clear ties to Fano (e.g., those who contribute money, weapons, etc.) will also be detained in Addis Ababa.

‘According to Source A2 (an international organization, meeting in Addis Ababa, October 2023), such individuals are known to the intelligence service and are under surveillance.’¹⁶⁵

12.1.6 The Landinfo June 2024 report noted that several sources compared the Ethiopian government's reactions to Tigrayans during the Tigray War (2020–2022) with their current responses to Amharas in Addis Ababa. They noted that the authorities' reactions to Amharas are less severe and that they had

¹⁶⁴ Landinfo, [Etiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av konflikten ...](#) (page 4), 27 June 2024

¹⁶⁵ Landinfo, [Etiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av...](#) (pages 5), 27 June 2024

not observed examples of socio-economic repercussions such as revocation of business licenses or dismissals in security-sensitive sectors seen during the Tigray War. Additionally, Amharas have not faced the same level of hate rhetoric as Tigrayans did. One source highlighted that the authorities' actions against Amharas are more targeted, unlike the broader detentions of Tigrayans based on ethnicity during the Tigray War¹⁶⁶.

12.1.7 The same source added: 'Following the wave of arrests in August 2023, the number of arrests in Addis Ababa has decreased ... there have been no new reports of large-scale arrests of Amharas, though isolated cases still occur.'¹⁶⁷ CPIT could not find any reporting on ongoing arrest and detention of Amharas in Addis Ababa in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

12.1.8 However, on 14 August 2024 the EHRC issued a statement in which it stated: 'In Addis Ababa city administration, there has been widespread arrest of civilians who are of ethnic Amhara origin ... EHRC has received multiple reports from families and friends of detainees, but the Commission has not yet been granted access to monitor the conditions of detentions since the declaration of the State of Emergency.'¹⁶⁸

12.1.9 The same source added:

'Many people, including members of the media and political parties, have been arrested in Addis Ababa... as part of the implementation of the State of Emergency, but without instructions from the Command Post ...

'Arbitrary detention, mass detention or detention in informal detention centres in violation of court orders occurred in virtually every region. The problem has been exacerbated in particular for those detained in Addis Ababa detention centres and those transferred from Addis Ababa to Awash Arba military camp and other informal detention centres during the State of Emergency. For instance, in Addis Ababa, people whose right to bail has been granted by court remain in detention for long periods without being released on the grounds that they are "wanted by the Command Post". After the declaration of the State of Emergency, many people were arrested without orders from the Command Post and did not appear in court for a long period of time on the pretext of "current situations".'¹⁶⁹

12.1.10 The DIS October 2024 report observed:

'Outside the Amhara region, particularly in Addis Ababa, the maltreatment of those associated with Fano continues through extensive surveillance, arbitrary detention, and ethnic profiling. The government employs various methods to suppress any perceived threats from the Amhara community ...

'The international organisation interviewed for this report stated that Amharas in Addis Ababa are at risk of arbitrary detention by the security forces; there are reports of security forces showing up at night at the houses of ethnic Amhara people conducting searches in their houses. There are reports about ethnic profiling based on information about where people are from. The EHDRC agreed and further elaborated that the authorities are conducting large-scale house searches in Addis Ababa. The checks are supposed to find or target people who support or affiliate with any of the

¹⁶⁶ Landinfo, [Ethiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av...](#) (pages 4 to 5), 27 June 2024

¹⁶⁷ Landinfo, [Ethiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av konflikten ...](#) (page 4), 27 June 2024

¹⁶⁸ EHRC, [The human rights impact of the armed conflict on civilians in Amhara ...](#), 14 August 2024

¹⁶⁹ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...](#) (pages 15, 18), July 2024

armed groups. Based on reports, the authorities detain thousands of ethnic Amharas in Amhara and Addis Ababa for shorter or longer periods of time, suspecting them of supporting the Fano militias, in particular in August 2023 but also afterwards. Along these lines, the academic researcher stated that the authorities demolish Amhara houses...

'Furthermore, the academic researcher added that the authorities explicitly advise business owners in the private sector and managers in the public sector not to employ people of Amharic origin'¹⁷⁰

12.1.11 The Landinfo June 2024 report observed:

'According to the European Centre for Law and Justice (2023), there have been consistent reports since early 2023 of "discriminatory displacement" of Amharas from areas on the outskirts of Addis Ababa. These areas are called Sheger City, an urban development project intended to be integrated into Addis Ababa to provide housing and new infrastructure due to rapid population growth.

'According to Source A9 (resource person meeting in Addis Ababa, October 2023), these areas are largely inhabited by poor Amharas, living in houses built without official permits.

'Around 3,500 homes have been demolished in these areas. The authorities justify the demolitions by stating that the houses were built illegally in areas needed for urban development projects. However, the authorities have been accused of selective treatment of residents based on ethnicity, as Amharas are reportedly the primary group affected by the demolitions ...

'Although the source believes the forced relocations are not directly related to the conflict in Amhara or suspicions that those being relocated are involved in the conflict, but rather a result of the authorities wanting to "clean up the city" of the poor and homeless, many Amharas perceive it as a targeted measure specifically affecting them in light of the ongoing conflict.'¹⁷¹

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12.2 Oromia and Benshangul Gumuz

12.2.1 The 2024 Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index Ethiopia country report covering the period February 2021 to March 2023 (BTI 2024 report) noted:

'At the regional level, ethnic minorities lack political empowerment and frequently experience discriminatory attacks on their personal property or businesses. This disturbing trend has worsened in recent years. Ethnic Amhara residing in the Oromia region, the Benshangul/Gumuz region and parts of Ethiopia's south encounter widespread violence ... Local governments regularly face accusations of either ignoring or participating in violence against minority residents, while also neglecting the needs of impoverished individuals within these communities.'¹⁷²

12.2.2 The US CRS January 2024 paper noted: Some Amhara assert that they have been victims of "genocide," citing ethnically targeted attacks in Oromia and other states, and they accuse Abiy's government of ignoring or even

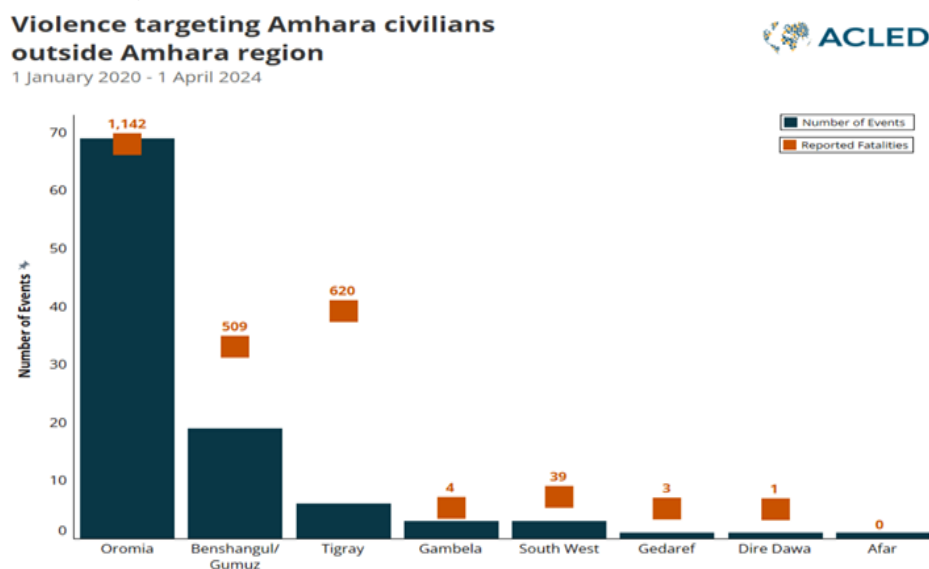
¹⁷⁰ DIS, [Report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and...](#) (pages 49 to 50), 22 October 2024

¹⁷¹ Landinfo, [Etiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av...](#) (page 6), 27 June 2024

¹⁷² BTI, [Ethiopia Country Report 2024](#) (political and social integration), 19 March 2024

supporting the violence.¹⁷³ The EHRC's July 2024 report noted that in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, authorities have been conducting mass arrests, citing ongoing security issues as justification. Individuals who identify as Amhara have faced harassment, arbitrary detention, and limitations on their freedoms, often based on accusations of supporting the Fano militia¹⁷⁴.

- 12.2.3 The EPO 20 August 2024 noted that 'Amhara settlers continued to be victims of intermittent pogroms in Oromia and Benshangul/Gumuz regions'¹⁷⁵ and produced a chart reproduced below that showed violent incidents against Amhara civilians from January 2020 to April 2020.



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- 12.2.4 With respect to Oromia the BTI 2024 report noted:

'... since November 2022, Amhara ethnic militias residing in western Oromia, who are locally also identified as Fano, have started to challenge the state's monopoly on the use of force in the area. The Oromos and the regional authorities claim that these militias came from the neighboring Amhara region, while Amhara refuted this claim and insisted the militias were established locally to defend fellow residents from OLA attacks, which have been frequent in these areas since 2018.'¹⁷⁷

- 12.2.5 The June 2024 report by the AAA claimed that between 29 May and 2 June 2024, ENDF in collaboration with the Oromia Special Forces (OSF) and militant groups like Qeerro and Gachna-Sirna, conducted an ethnic-based massacre in which over 21 Amhara residents were killed. Additionally, 20 civilians were detained across various kebeles in Abe-Dongoro Woreda, Horo Guduru Wollega Zone. According to the report the killings were motivated by the government's claims that the victims were extremists or had ties to extremist Amhara groups¹⁷⁸. In an updated report on 22 July 2024, AAA claimed that 19 Amhara civilians were killed and several others were injured and arrested by OSF and Qeerro in identity-based attacks in

¹⁷³ USCRS, [Ethiopia: In Brief](#) (pages 7 to 8) 23 January 2024

¹⁷⁴ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...\)](#) (pages 43), July 2024

¹⁷⁵ EPO, [Amhara conflict: Fano insurgency](#), 20 August 20-24

¹⁷⁶ EPO, [Amhara conflict: Fano insurgency](#), 20 August 20-24

¹⁷⁷ BTI, [Ethiopia Country Report 2024](#), (political and social integration), 19 March 2024

¹⁷⁸ AAA, [Tragic Massacre: 24 Amhara Civilians Killed and Hundreds Detained by Abiy ...](#), 3 June 2024

various kebeles of Nono Woreda, West Shewa Zone in June 2024¹⁷⁹.

12.2.6 In its August 2024 publication, the Asylum Research Centre (ARC), a charitable incorporated organisation in the UK that provides country of origin information research services to support asylum claims and undertakes advocacy and training with the aim of improving the quality of refugee status determination¹⁸⁰, referenced the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) March 2024 report titled [National Inquiry into Persons Deprived of Liberty](#) (in Amharic version) that covered events from November 2020 to November 2023 which noted that armed clashes between the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and Amhara militants in Wollega zones which resulted in human rights violations that included ethnically targeted attacks with OLA targeting ethnic Amharas, while Amhara militants targeted ethnic Oromos¹⁸¹.

12.2.7 The 5 November 2024 EPO weekly update noted:

'On 30 October, OLA/OLF-Shane militants reportedly killed at least 38 civilians in Dereba, Kure, and Bitisi areas in Birbirs Gali kebele, located 18 kilometers east of the city of Meki in East Shewa zone. According to witnesses, perpetrators conducted house-to-house searches, shooting civilians and burning houses after accusing the victims of supporting the government ... As with many of the previous high-fatality civilian targeting incidents involving the OLA/OLF-Shane, the victims of this attack were predominantly ethnic Amhara and Gurage.'¹⁸²

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13. Treatment of opposition groups

13.1 General

13.1.1 Lifos December 2024 report observed:

'From siding with the federal government during the Tigray war, Amhara ethno-nationalist forces, particularly the Fano militias, instead became a prominent security challenge to the federal government. The turnaround has resulted in repressive actions by the latter against Amhara political opponents and armed groups. Amhara Fano militias and supporting forces, as well as political parties, journalists and others, have been targeted.

'Migration Analysis also finds that the authorities' approach and reactions to people who are perceived as oppositional or clearly critical of the authorities include arbitrariness and unpredictability. For example, during large-scale waves of arrests, the authorities have had sweeping powers to arrest individuals on the basis of vaguely worded prohibitions and the absence of court orders. During the state of emergency declared in 2023, and possibly beyond, mass arrests appear to have been used to filter out persons of interest. It is also reported that insecurity inhibits residents' willingness to express themselves in a way that could be perceived as critical of the government.

'Furthermore, it can be deduced from the developments that the judiciary and security forces have been used to weaken opposition voices. Since

¹⁷⁹ AAA, [Report on ongoing identity-based attacks against the Amhara community in ...](#), 22 July 2024

¹⁸⁰ ARC, [About us](#), no date

¹⁸¹ ARC, [Ethiopia Query Response: The Human Rights Situation in Oromia ...](#) (page 84), August 2024

¹⁸² EPO, [Ethiopia Weekly Update](#) (5 November 2024), 5 November 2024

2023, a state of emergency with emergency legislation as well as law and order operations appear to have been used to counteract peaceful opposition alongside the aim of combating armed groups. It is unclear to Migration Analysis to what extent opposition politicians and others who have been arrested in these contexts have actually been involved with armed opposition organisations or have been suspected of it.’¹⁸³

13.1.2 The same source added:

‘The conflict in the Amhara region has led to severe maltreatment and human rights abuses against individuals associated with or perceived to be associated with the Fano movement ...

‘In the Amhara region, the federal government’s indiscriminate labeling of all Amhara people as “Fanos” has led to widespread targeting and persecution. This broad-brush approach means that the federal government considers anyone who opposes them a Fano representative. Practically, Fano has become a name for all Amhara armed resistance movements ...’¹⁸⁴

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13.2 Ethiopia Citizens for Social Change (EZEMA)

13.2.1 A 24 June 2021 article by Africa Confidential, a fortnightly newsletter on politics in Africa based in London, stated: ‘EZEMA is a coalition of Patriotic Ginbot 7 (PG7), the Ethiopian Democratic Party, All Ethiopian Democratic Party, the Semayawi Party (Blue), the Gambella Regional Movement and former leaders of Unity for Democracy and Justice, organised by Berhanu Nega and PG7.’¹⁸⁵

13.2.2 In March 2022, the DIS published a brief report that provided an overview of the political situation in Ethiopia which focused on various political parties (DIS March 2021). It observed with respect to EZEMA:

‘... Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA) was founded in May 2019 through the merger of seven opposition parties, including Ginbot 7. It is a pan-Ethiopian party. EZEMA is close to the [prosperity Party] PP. Berhanu Nega, the formerly exiled founding leader of Patriotic Ginbot 7, leads the party. EZEMA is the only opposition party that will field candidates in most of the electoral districts. The party was active in 400 electoral districts across all regional states in October 2019 and had an estimated 6,000 -7,000 members. Its main support may be in urban areas.

‘EZEMA was conducting its party activities in Addis Ababa, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Tigray without significant challenges in October 2019. In Amhara, members had been arrested in connection with the assassinations in June 2019.’¹⁸⁶

13.2.3 The EHRC July 2024 report noted that since the state of emergency was declared, many members of the media, political parties and civil society have been arrested in Addis Ababa, Amhara among other regions with and sometimes without orders of the Command Post. Among those arrested were members of EZEMA party¹⁸⁷. The same source added:

¹⁸³ Lifos, [Etiopien: Partierna EZEMA, NaMA och Balderas i ljuset ...](#), (page 8), 18 December 2024

¹⁸⁴ DIS, [Report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and..](#) (pages 49, 50), 22 October 2024

¹⁸⁵ Africa Confidential, [‘War casts shadow over Abiy’s election plan’](#), 24 June 2021

¹⁸⁶ DIS, [Ethiopia Political opposition parties – recent developments](#) (page 13), March 2021

¹⁸⁷ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to July ...](#) (page 41), July 2024

‘Since November 2023, there has been a restructuring issue in the Arbaminch Zuriya district in the Gamo zone of the South Ethiopia region, where members of the Zaise ethnic group live. Following this issue, the leaders and members of the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice / EZEMA / party operating in Arbaminch Zuriya district, Gamo zone, were arrested on grounds of "destabilizing the area and causing harm to human life and injury". At the time, about ninety members and leaders of the party were arrested by government security forces in connection with the alleged security situation in the area and detained at Arbaminch Prison, Arbaminch District Police Office, Arbaminch Municipal Police Office and Zeise Elgo Kebele Administration Office.’¹⁸⁸

- 13.2.4 On 3 October 2023 Borkena.com reported that Dr. Chane Kebede, the party chairman, was detained at his home in Addis Ababa on 24 September 2023 by the command post and was later transferred to Awash Arba detention center. The party stated that the arrest was unrelated to his duties within the party and emphasized that an internal investigation confirmed this. Following the arrest, the party’s National Executive Committee held an emergency meeting on September 30, 2023, reaffirming ECSJ’s commitment to peaceful, citizenship-based political engagement and rejection of ethnic or armed struggle as means to attain power. The party stressed that any member deviating from these principles would be held accountable, as ECSJ believes political stability can only be achieved through legal, democratic processes and meaningful national consultations. ECSJ urged members and supporters to adhere strictly to its peaceful path, warning that failure to do so could worsen political instability and deepen national hardship¹⁸⁹.
- 13.2.5 On 8 June 2024 Borkena.com reported that Yeshiwas Assefa, a former Ezema leader, was arrested on 31 May 2024 at his residence in Addis Ababa for allegedly inciting violence¹⁹⁰.
- 13.2.6 A 20 February 2024 BBC monitoring news alert stated: ‘Ezema is the only opposition party that has agreed to work with the government, with its leader serving as the country’s current minister of education.’¹⁹¹
- 13.2.7 On 17 October 2024 a BBC Monitoring News Alert stated: ‘The opposition Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (Ezema) party has reported arrests and beatings against its members by government forces in South Ethiopia Region.’ however, the same report stated: ‘Ezema is known to work with the government for the most part, with its leader, Birhanu Nega, serving as the country’s education minister since 2021.’¹⁹²
- 13.2.8 In December 2024, Lifos, the Swedish Migration Agency, published an English summary of the report, [Etiopien: Partierna EZEMA, NaMA och Balderas i ljuset av en auktoritär utveckling](#) (Ethiopia: EZEMA, NaMA, and Balderas parties in light of authoritarian developments], based on various sources. (Lifos December 2024 report). It observed with respect to EZEMA: ‘Since its emergence in 2019, EZEMA is reported to have largely supported the federal government. In its position in favour of national unity and against ethnically based politics, EZEMA has been ideologically close to the

¹⁸⁸ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to July ...](#) (page 46), July 2024

¹⁸⁹ Borkena.com, [Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice says the arrest of president...](#), 3 October 2023

¹⁹⁰ Borkena.com, [Unlawful Arrest Continues Despite End Of State Of Emergency](#), 8 June 2024

¹⁹¹ BBC Monitoring, [Ethiopian party warns nation's existence 'in danger'](#), 20 February 2024

¹⁹² BBC Monitoring, [Ethiopian party reports 'arrests, beatings' of members by ...](#), 17 October 2024

government. Since its formation, several sources have downplayed the party's vulnerability to interference from the federal government, including EZEMA representatives ...

'At the same time, international and Ethiopian reporting show that that there have been problems in relation to federal authorities, not least in the form of arrests – including in Addis Ababa during the state of emergency declared in 2023. In October 2024, EZEMA also communicated about arrests combined with violent treatment in Southern Ethiopia. The message also contained a strong statement critical of the government.'¹⁹³

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13.3 National Movement of the Amhara (NaMA)

13.3.1 The DIS March 2021 noted that the NaMA is an ethno-nationalist party that was founded in June 2018 and operated in Amhara, Addis Ababa, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Oromia.'¹⁹⁴

13.3.2 On 7 April 2025 BOrken.com reported that NaMA, an ethnic Amhara opposition party with limited representation in Ethiopia's Parliament, held its third party congress in Addis Ababa instead of its usual venue in Bahir Dar, though it is unclear if this shift was due to regional security concerns. The report noted that unlike past incidents where opposition parties faced difficulties securing venues in the capital, NaMA encountered no such issues. The congress re-elected Belete Molla, currently serving as Minister of Innovation and Technology in Abiy Ahmed's cabinet as its chairman. According to the report, NaMA which was once a popular youth-driven opposition force, had seen its support wane in the Amhara region amid accusations of aligning with the ruling Prosperity Party. Notably, former spokesperson and MP Christian Tadele was jailed during the August 2023 state of emergency, with his parliamentary immunity revoked six months later.'¹⁹⁵

13.3.3 The DIS October 2024 report mentioned that Christian Tadele, an Amhara opposition politician from NaMA, was arrested and detained in a military camp after becoming critical of the government despite holding immunity as a member of parliament. After seven months in detention he was taken to court.'¹⁹⁶ On 30 March 2024 Habesh, an independent news platform that reports on Ethiopia¹⁹⁷ reported:

'Christian Tadele, who had been a member of Parliament since 2021, had his immunity revoked on March 14, 2024, seven months after being arrested on August 4, 2023...

'The Ministry of Justice's Directorate General of Organized and Transboundary Crime Affairs has charged Christian Tadele, Yohannes Buyalew, and 50 others with terrorism offenses ... The charges allege that the defendants sought to achieve their political objectives through the use of force. The reports further mention that the defendants had been gathering

¹⁹³ Lifos, [Etiopien: Partierna EZEMA, NaMA och Balderas i ljuset av...](#) (page 8), 18 December 2024

¹⁹⁴ DIS, [Ethiopia Political opposition parties – recent developments](#) (page 14), March 2021

¹⁹⁵ Borkena.com, [NaMA Third Congress picks Belete Molla as Chairperson](#), 7 April 2025

¹⁹⁶ DIS [Ethiopia Security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray...](#) (page 112), October 2023

¹⁹⁷ Habesha (The), [About The Habesha](#), no date

since 2022 with the intention of forming the Amhara Fano Unity Council.¹⁹⁸

13.3.4 The AAA September 2024 report listed 4 NaMA members who had been arrested since April 2023. These were:

- Christian Tadele, HOPR member NaMA arrested in Addis Ababa on 4 August 2023
- Habtamu Belayneh Mekonnen, Amhara Region Council Member arrested in Addis Ababa 1 March 2024
- Dessalegn Chanie, HOPR member arrested in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2024 and was released on 24 March 2024
- Zerihun Gessesse, blogger and human rights activist arrested in Kombolcha (Amhara region) on 29 April 2023 29-Apr-23¹⁹⁹.

13.3.5 On 2 October 2024, an English translation of Ethiopia an Insider [article](#) (in Amharic) by AAA stated:

‘NaMA member of parliament Ato Zemene Hailu and Amhara Region Council Prosperity Party elect Ato Melkamu Teshome were detained by security forces according to their family members and colleagues who spoke to “Ethiopia Insider”. The two council members are currently being held in the 9th police station in Bahir Dar city...

‘The Amhara Region and FDRE National Defense Force in a joint statement yesterday said, “a law enforcement operation” was underway in order to “ensure peace for the regional government and its people”. The statement stated that this action would “hold accountable” those forces “involved in abductions and looting” and from cities “coordinate” this work.

‘In addition to this the regional government stated individuals responsible for serving as “logistics and intelligence sources” for “extremist” forces would be held accountable.’²⁰⁰

13.3.6 The Lifos December 2024 report observed:

‘In the case of NaMA, there is a history of government intervention. For example, there were reports of arrests of some NaMA politicians after the assassination of the Amhara regional president in June 2019, and then also during the 2021 election campaign, when the federal government responded to the opposition with repression.

‘When the law and order operation began in Amhara in the first half of 2022, and the government increasingly began to target Amhara nationalist forces, NaMA linked persons were reportedly among the politicians arrested alongside the Amhara armed opposition. Further arrests were reported after the conflict in Amhara escalated and a state of emergency was declared in August 2023.

‘As the authorities have not only targeted individuals fighting in the armed groups during the conflict, but also those who support them, it seems likely that the authorities are paying attention to NaMA because of their Amhara nationalist stance.

‘There have been reports that members of Amhara political groupings in

¹⁹⁸ Habesha (The), [MP and Councilmen Facing Terrorism Charges: Abiy Ahmed's ...](#), 30 March 2024

¹⁹⁹ AAA, [Report on Gross Human Rights Violations and ...](#) (pages 30, 31, 32), 17 September 2024

²⁰⁰ Ethiopian Insider, [NaMA member of parliament and Prosperity Party Amhara...](#), 2 October 2024

particular have been the target of repressive interventions by the government during the Amhara conflict and that NaMA members have been detained. At the same time, Migration Analysis' impression is that a connection or perceived connection to NaMA has not automatically led to repressive interventions by the authorities during or at the start of the conflict. In the limited information environment with data on unpredictability and arbitrariness in government reactions against dissidents, Migration Analysis notes that also external Ethiopia expertise consulted in the autumn of 2024 found it difficult to assess NaMA's vulnerability in the current situation. In line with the factors discussed above for influencing the authorities' approach to people who oppose the government, particularly those within NaMA who turned against the government during the party's internal split appear to be a focus of the government.'²⁰¹

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13.4 Balderas for Genuine Democracy (Balderas)

13.4.1 Landinfo December 2024 report [translated by Chat GPT] noted:

'Balderas for True Democracy (or simply Balderas, formerly also known as Addis Ababa Caretaker Council and The Balderas Council) is a movement that, until August 2022, was led by the prominent journalist and activist Eskinder Nega. The movement was registered as a political party in early 2020.

'Eskinder Nega was sentenced to 18 years in prison in 2012 under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP) for criticizing the government's arrests of journalists and opposition activists. While imprisoned, he was held at Kaliti prison in Addis Ababa. He was released in February 2018.

'Two sources from Migration Analysis reported in October 2019 that Prime Minister Abiy released Eskinder Nega from captivity in 2018, but by then, the group had become sensitive to the Ethiopian government.

Balderas opposes the Oromo claims to Addis Ababa, and Eskinder Nega became a leading figure in the resistance. In 2019, Eskinder stated that the movement's goal was for Addis Ababa to be a distinct part of Ethiopia, not part of the Oromia region.

As for ethnic connections, a source in October 2019 described there being an ethnic element in Balderas, in the sense that the Amhara group had dominated it. According to the source, the movement itself was not ethnic, but there was clearly a conflict between it and the Oromo group. The International Crisis Group described Balderas as a partner to the Amhara nationalist group NaMA during the time of the general elections in 2021

In March 2022, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung expressed that Balderas was closely aligned with the Amhara nationalists. A contact in Addis Ababa, in October 2022, believed that Balderas was pro-Fano, but not as focused on the Amhara people as it was on Addis Ababa. Migration Analysis notes that this view was expressed before the escalation of the conflict in Amhara between the army and armed Amhara groups (especially the Fano militias) in 2023. The same contact stated that the members/sympathizers were mainly Amhara, though they could also belong to other ethnic groups. The source did not believe that Oromos were members of Balderas, or at least

²⁰¹ Lifos, [Etiopien: Partierna EZEMA, NaMA och Balderas ...](#) (pages 9 to 10), 18 December 2024

not many, given that the party's politics are opposed to the Oromos and Oromia.

A contact in October 2022 noted that Balderas was mostly active in Addis Ababa and very focused on the capital. The party's view is that Oromia is in the process of taking over the capital, and that the ruling Prosperity Party is not protecting the interests of the city's non-Oromo inhabitants. To reach out, the party reportedly conducted online campaigns and had YouTube channels. One of the sources from the Danish Immigration Service suggested that Eskinder's commitment to multi-party democracy could be questioned, and that many had claimed he had engaged in hate rhetoric, particularly against the Oromo population.²⁰²

- 13.4.2 With respect to government treatment of Balderas, response to an information request by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) citing various sources dated 29 September 2021 noted:

'Norway's Landinfo reports that in March 2019, the party had to cancel a planned demonstration due to the absence of police protection, despite having notified the police in advance (Norway 17 June 2021 ...). According to Amnesty International, Eskinder Nega, leader of the Balderas Party, was prohibited from holding press conferences in Addis Ababa in March and June 2019 (Amnesty International 7 June 2019). Similarly, Ezega.com, an Ethiopian media organization based in the US and in Ethiopia (Ezega.com n.d.), quotes Eskinder Nega as stating that an October 2019 demonstration planned by the Balderas Party had to be cancelled by party leadership to not "go against law and order and ... to stop the arrest against members of the [party]", despite allegedly having obtained permission to demonstrate (Ezega.com 13 Oct. 2019).

'Sources report that Eskinder Nega was arrested in July 2020 in connection with the violent aftermath of the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa (Ethiopia Insight 20 Sept. 2020) and was charged with terrorism in September 2020 (Ethiopia Insight 20 Sept. 2020; Amnesty International 7 Apr. 2021 ...). Other sources report that along with Nega, four "leading Balderas officials" (Ethiopia Insight 20 Sept. 2020) or [translation] "four other leading figures" (Norway 17 June 2021 ...) were also arrested and charged (Ethiopia Insight 20 Sept. 2020; Norway 17 June 2021...'²⁰³

- 13.4.3 On 3 April 2023, Addis Insight, a digital news platform that reports Ethiopian news²⁰⁴ reported the detention of Amaha Dagneu, the Deputy President of the Balderas for Genuine Democracy party. According to the report, the government has repeatedly targeted the party's leaders and supporters to prevent them from holding their mandatory general assembly meeting. The report further stated that Amaha was detained on 11 March 2023 without a warrant, was released but was again detained on 1 April 2023 in light of government crackdown on prominent Amharas following a call for anti-government protests across the Amhara²⁰⁵.

- 13.4.4 The AAA September 2024 report listed 16 members of the Balderas party who were arrested between February 2023 and August 2024. All but one of the arrests occurred in Addis Ababa. The report included details such as the

²⁰² Landinfo, [Ethiopia: Forhold for amharer i Addis Abeba, i lys av...](#) (pages 36 to 37), 27 June 2024

²⁰³ IRBC, [Ethiopia: Treatment of members of opposition parties, particularly ...](#), 29 September 2021

²⁰⁴ Addis Insight, [About us](#), no date

²⁰⁵ Addis Insight, [Ethiopian Government Abducts Deputy President of Balderas for ...](#), 3 April 2023

names, locations, dates of arrests, and release information for those detained. By August 2024, 12 of the 16 arrested members had been released²⁰⁶.

13.4.5 The Lifos December 2024 report [ChatGPT translation] observed:

‘In March 2023, the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) criticized the government for limiting the opposition's ability to meet. In its statement, the board said that Balderas was among the parties subjected to undue pressure and denied the right to hold meetings. On March 12, Balderas was prevented from holding a general assembly due to threats from an unnamed government official. At the time, leader Ameha Dagneu, who according to the party had been arrested the day before, was involved. The spokesperson stated that the intention behind the arrest was to exert pressure on the party.

‘Amnesty International reported that at least 30 members and leaders of Balderas were arrested in Addis Ababa during March and April 2022. They were reportedly released after a few days without charges. In June of the same year, Sintayehu Chekol, a senior leader in the party, was arrested. According to a court decision, he was to be released on bail, but the police are reported to have taken him to Addis Ababa, where he remained in detention at various police stations until his release in November 2022.

In response to Migration Analysis' question about how members and supporters of NaMA and Balderas are treated by authorities in the context of the ongoing conflict in Amhara, a researcher stated in October 2024 that members of political Amhara groups had specifically been targeted in Amhara and also in Addis Ababa. Among these were members of NaMA and Balderas. In Addis Ababa, the focus was on those suspected of links to the rebellion in Amhara. Balderas was reported to be much more sought after than NaMA. They were seen as a group of hard-line Amharas. Some were said to have been long-term detainees, others had been released, and some were still in detention.’²⁰⁷

13.4.6 The same source concluded:

‘In the case of Balderas, there is also a history of state repression before tensions in Amhara escalated. The party is reported to be Amhara-dominated. It is also said to be close to Amhara nationalists and in favour of the Fano. In May 2023, it was further revealed that the party's founder, and until August 2022 party leader, Eskinder Nega, had taken command of an Amhara-based militia. The armed group is described as anti-government and appears to have become part of the Amhara nationalist Fano militias ... Overall, we find indications that the authorities' interest in intervening repressively against the party may be heightened in the current political situation. Not least, we take into account the party's Amhara profile, together with information from a researcher in the autumn of 2024, which claimed that Balderas are regarded as hard-line Amharas, are significantly more in the searchlight than the Amhara nationalist NaMA, and still had people who were in long-term detention. Another circumstance to which we pay attention is the information provided by the electoral authority NEBE in 2023 about undue pressure and restrictions on the party by the government.’²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ AAA, [Report on Gross Human Rights Violations and...](#), (pages 31 to 32), 17 September 2024

²⁰⁷ Lifos, [Etiopien: Partierna EZEMA, NaMA och Balderas i ljuset ...](#), (page 40), 18 December 2024

²⁰⁸ Lifos, [Etiopien: Partierna EZEMA, NaMA och Balderas i ljuset ...](#), (page 8), 18 December 2024

13.5 Fano members and supporters

- 13.5.1 The EHRC July 2024 report on the human rights situation in Ethiopia observed that government security forces engaged in ‘unlawful/extrajudicial killing of civilians’. The report stated: These killings are perpetrated for suspicion of “hiding weapons”, “supporting Fano”, “providing information to Fano”, and women and children are also victims of these violations.’²⁰⁹
- 13.5.2 The EPO 20 August 2024 report noted: ‘Government forces were [...] accused of carrying out extrajudicial killings of civilians they accused of being members or supporters of Fano militias.’²¹⁰ In its 8 October 2024 weekly update, EPO reported that on 2 October 2024 the Amhara regional government and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) announced a new military operation against Fano militias which would target Fano leaders, supporters, and those providing it logistical aid, including civil servants and business owners²¹¹.
- 13.5.3 The DIS October 2024 report noted that the Ethiopian government’s crackdown on Fano resulted in ‘extrajudicial killings inside and outside the Amhara region’²¹².
- 13.5.4 In a press briefing dated 29 August 2023, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that more than 1,000 people, many of which were young people of Amhara ethnic origin suspected of being Fano supporters, were arrested in mass house-to-house searches under the State of Emergency²¹³.
- 13.5.5 The EHRC July 2024 report noted: ‘Following the declaration of a State of Emergency in the Amhara region, several people have been arrested for allegedly “supporting Fano” or “having family links with members of Fano” or “supporting the armed group” and/or “hiding weapons” and that the treatment of the detainees is inhumane.’²¹⁴
- 13.5.6 According to the EPO 20 August 2024 report: ‘An unidentified number of people, including journalists and members of the House of Peoples Representatives and Amhara regional and Addis Ababa city councils, were arrested over accusations that they were linked with the militia [Fano].’²¹⁵
- 13.5.7 The DIS October 2024 report observed: ‘... The federal government often detain Individuals suspected of Fano affiliations without due process and subject them to torture. The EHRC further stated that ... the federal government carry out arrests and killings in Amhara based on suspicion and accusations of being a Fano member, support for the group or having family who the authorities perceive as members of Fano.’²¹⁶
- 13.5.8 On 14 February 2024, the AAA reported that the government ‘terminated employment of an unknown number of Amharas from their jobs (particularly within the Addis Ababa city administration) accusing them of supporting or

²⁰⁹ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report ...](#) (pages 31 to 32), July 2024

²¹⁰ EPO, [Amhara conflict: Fano insurgency](#), 20 August 2024

²¹¹ EPO, [Ethiopia Weekly Update \(8 October 2024\)](#), 9 October 2024

²¹² DIS, [Ethiopia Security situation in Amhara, Oromia and Tigray ...](#) (page 49), October 2024

²¹³ OHCHR, [Press briefing Ethiopia: Deteriorating human rights situation](#), 29 August 2023

²¹⁴ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report](#) (pages 42 to 43, 51 to 52), July 2024

²¹⁵ EPO, [Amhara conflict: Fano insurgency](#), 20 August 2024

²¹⁶ DIS, [Report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and..](#) (pages 49, 50), 22 October 2024

spying for Fano.²¹⁷

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13.6 Fano member family members

- 13.6.1 The EHRC July 2024 report noted that following the declaration of a State of Emergency several people were arrested for having family links with members of Fano²¹⁸.
- 13.6.2 The DIS October 2024 report observed that the federal government conducted arrests and killings in Amhara based on suspicions and accusations, 'having family who the authorities perceive as members of Fano. The Ethiopian government's crackdown on Fano extends to the families of those suspected of being members or supporters. Family members face various forms of persecution, including surveillance, harassment, and violence.'²¹⁹
- 13.6.3 The January 2025 EHRC [report](#) documented an incident in Amhara in which 'government security forces allegedly killed eight civilians in South Gondar Zone following confrontations with Fano militias. According to the report, the victims were accused of being "Fano family members" or "supporting Fano"²²⁰.

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14. Freedom of movement

- 14.1.1 The USSD 2023 HR report noted with respect to in country movement:
- 'The government restricted movement in some areas, especially into and out of regions experiencing violence, including parts of ... Amhara ...
- 'Throughout the year, the Oromia Region and Federal Police frequently restricted movement into the capital Addis Ababa during public holidays and similar events, citing security concerns ...
- 'On January 25, media reported Oromia police had restricted movement of youth from the Amhara Region through Oromia. According to the report, members of the regional police erected checkpoints and were turning away youth passengers traveling to Addis Ababa from Gojjam and Gondar areas of the Amhara Region. On February 13, news network DW Amharic talked to passengers who said they were forced to return to Dejen town of the Amhara Region as Oromia police at Goha Tsion checkpoint told them to return to their point of origin. Passengers told DW Amharic the ban included all types of passengers, including those traveling to Addis Ababa for medical treatment and permanent residents of Addis Ababa who had traveled to the Amhara Region for business.'²²¹
- 14.1.2 Abebe and Moges March 2024 article stated, '... in recent years, civilians attempting to enter Addis Ababa from the Amhara region have been barred, seemingly because they are perceived as a collective security threat.'²²²
- 14.1.3 The EHRC July 2024 report observed:

²¹⁷ AAA, [War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in Context of the Abiy...](#), 14 February 2024

²¹⁸ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report](#) (pages 42 to 43, 51 to 52), July 2024

²¹⁹ DIS, [Report on the security situation in Amhara, Oromia and..](#) (pages 49, 50), 22 October 2024

²²⁰ EHRC, [The human rights situation in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia](#), 25 January 2025

²²¹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia](#) (section 3D), 24 April 2024

²²² Abebe and Moges, Foreign Policy, [Analysis - Ethiopia's Amhara Conflict Could...](#), 6 March 2024

'The conflict in the Amhara region have made movement from one town to another challenging. The process of going through multiple checkpoints set up either by government security or the armed group operating in the region (commonly "Fano") and the danger of being caught in an exchange of fire has made road transportation difficult for residents who opt for it only as a last resort. The armed conflict in the region has led to a shortage of fuel, which is mainly sold informally (on the black market), making transport costs extremely high and creating problems for the movement of people.

'In addition, the security problem and increase in crime, as well as road closures by government security forces or armed groups for consecutive days or short periods, continued to cause economic and social problems, negatively impacted commodity prices, incomes, as well as access to health and education services in the Amhara ...'²²³

- 14.1.4 A September 2024 report by CTP referring ACLED noted that Fano militants conducted multiple attacks on key highways, including 10 on the A3 road connecting Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar, and 7 on the B30 highway near Gondar and disputed areas in Tigray. In August, Fano intensified efforts to disrupt communication routes by launching 13 additional attacks along the A3 and expanding operations to the B31 road with 12 attacks. In September, Fano renewed attacks along the B30 and initiated an offensive to seize the C34 road, which links Amhara to Sudan. They carried out 10 attacks on the C34, capturing the Metema border area and reportedly forcing ENDF troops to retreat into Sudan. This control enables Fano to regulate cross-border movement and trade. Fano militias have also repeatedly surrounded and attacked Gondar and Woldia—strategic transport hubs—since July, aiming to control vital road networks within the region²²⁴.

- 14.1.5 The EPO weekly update 17 December 2024 reported:

'On 9 December, representatives of various Fano militias announced road closures in East Gojam, West Gojam, North Wello, and South Wello zones, impacting civilians' daily activities. According to a representative of Gojam Fano militias, the road closures were implemented to safeguard civilians from ongoing armed conflicts with government security forces ... The road closures in Gojam zones were lifted on 17 December. The main road connecting Dessie, the administrative hub of South Wello, to Addis Ababa was opened on 11 December. The last time Fano militias announced such road closures was on 3 October after the government announced another round of operations against the group. The roads were reopened a week later.'²²⁵

- 14.1.6 Travel within Amhara and between Amhara and Addis Ababa is possible by air. On 8 August 2023, the VoA reported that Ethiopian Airlines had suspended all flights to the Amhara region due to the conflict. The airline announced the cancellation of flights to Bahir Dar - the regional capital. This followed earlier cancellations to Dessie (Kombolcha), Gondar, Lalibela, and Bahir Dar²²⁶. On 9 August 2023 Ethiopian Airlines announced it would resume scheduled flights to Bahir Dar and Gondar²²⁷ and in July 2024 it

²²³ EHRC, [Annual Ethiopia Human Rights Situation Report \(June 2023 to ...\)](#) (pages 43), July 2024

²²⁴ CTP, [Africa File: Fano Offensive in Ethiopia's Amhara ...](#), 26 September 2024

²²⁵ EPO, [Ethiopia Weekly Update](#) 17 December 2024)

²²⁶ VoA, [Ethiopia's National Carrier Halts Flights to Amhara Region Amid Clashes](#), 8 August 2023

²²⁷ The Reporter, [Ethiopian Airlines to resume flights to two cities in Amhara region](#), 9 August 2023

resumed direct flights between Bahir Dar and Kombolcha²²⁸.

- 14.1.7 None of the sources consulted reported that Amhara were mistreated at airports travelling internally and internationally (see [Bibliography](#)).

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²²⁸ Fana Broadcasting Corporate, [Ethiopian to resume direct flights between Bahir ...](#), 18 July 2024

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Overview
 - Geography, demography and language
- Fano insurgency
 - Root causes
 - Geographic spread of fighting
 - Protagonists
- Declaration of State of Emergency
- Security situation
 - Organized violence and fatalities
 - Civilian targeting and casualties
 - Criminality
- Human rights situation
 - arbitrary arrest and detention
 - sexual violence
 - extra-judicial killing
- Fano including treatment of members, supporters and family members
- Treatment of Amhara opposition political parties including EZEMA, NaMA, Balderas
- Treatment of journalist and those critical of government
- Situation of Amharas outside Amhara including Addis Ababa, Benshangul/Gumuz and Oromia
- Humanitarian situation
 - Humanitarian access including access to food
 - Provision of services including health and education
- Situation of Tigrayans outside Tigray including Addis Ababa Internal relocation including freedom of movement.

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[Ethiopia: End the month-long arbitrary detention of thousands in Amhara Region](#), 6 November 2024. Accessed: 13 May 2025

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
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The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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Changes from last version of this note

None. First version

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