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Sexual Violence in Ethiopia

January 2022



Since the start of the conflict in Ethiopia November 2020, sexual violence has been a continuous feature of the conflict by occupying armed forces. Conflict-related sexual violence has been rampant and has affected hundreds of women and girls who have been repeatedly and systematically targeted by soldiers from both sides of the conflict as they occupy and move through territory.¹ In some incidents women and girls were raped in front of their male family members, some of whom were held at gunpoint and forced to watch the attacks. In Tigray, there were also reports of male family members being forced to rape their female members and shot if they refused.

Reports of conflict-sexual violence have continued to come light, particularly as conflict parties regain control of their territory, and it is unclear how these patterns will change in the context of the current ceasefire, particularly in light of recent reports of attacks on civilians in Afar region by TPLF forces. Various reported perpetrator statements suggests that sexual violence was used as a deliberate tactic in an ethnic conflict and as a form of revenge.

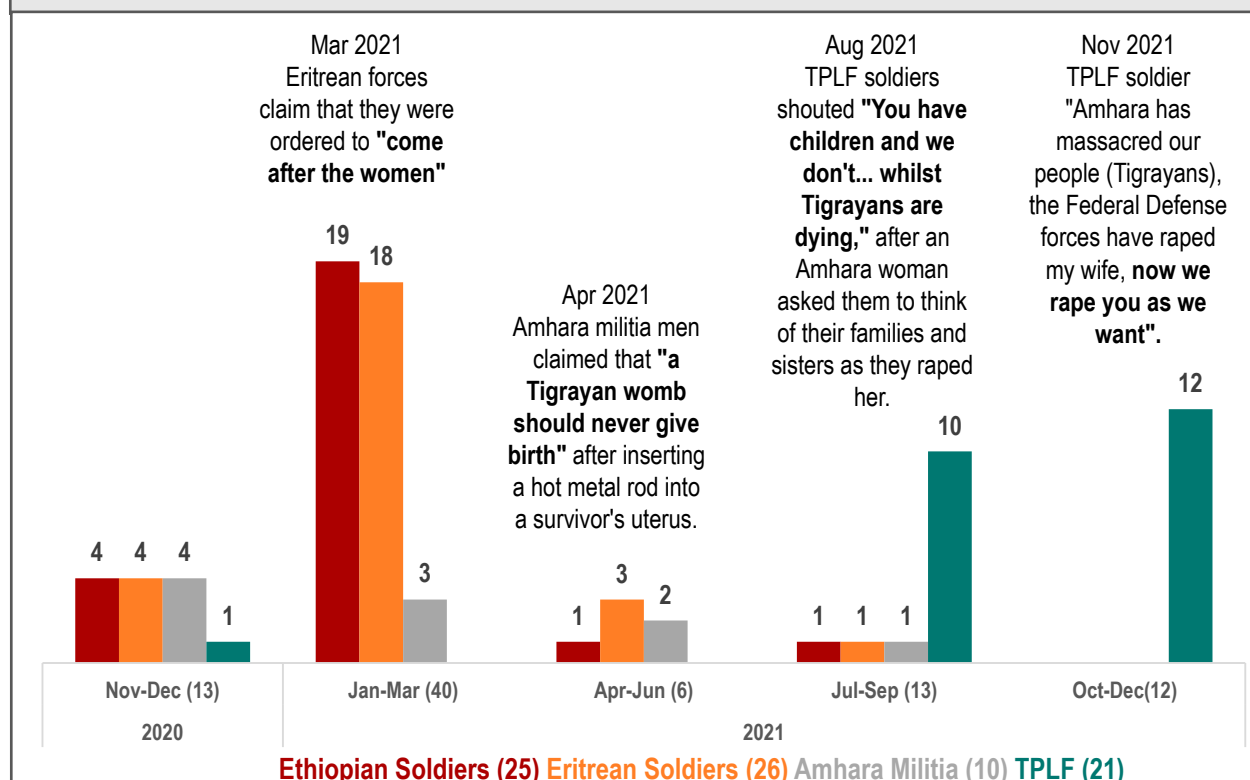
Analysed incidents	Women/girls affected	Perpetrators involved
84 ²	471	260

Source: Sexual Violence in Ethiopia. Download on [HDX](#).

This document by [Insecurity Insight](#) analyses a sample of 84 reported incidents of conflict-related sexual violence that occurred in Ethiopia between November 2020 and December 2021 in order to provide insight into the patterns and nature of reported conflict-related sexual violence in the country. The incidents in this report do not show the full-scale of sexual violence incidents in Ethiopia and we welcome any collaboration in order to enhance monitoring and reporting of these incidents.

Reported incidents of Sexual Violence since the start of the conflict

November 2020 - December 2021: 84 analysed incidents



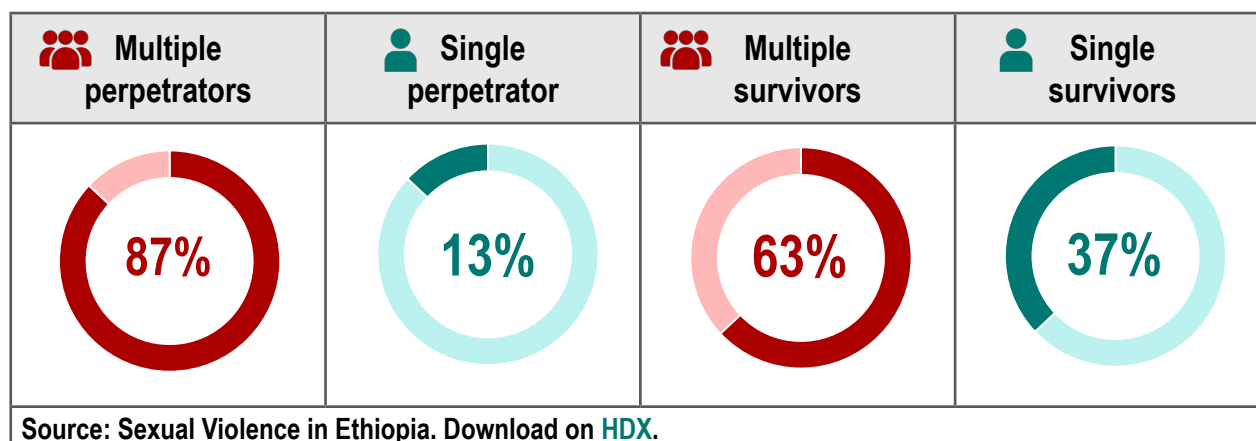
Source: Sexual Violence in Ethiopia. Download on [HDX](#).

During the occupation of Tigray, ENDF soldiers, Eritrean soldiers and Amhara militia systematically targeted and attacked Tigrayan women (61 incidents from an analysed sample of 84 incidents included reference to 279 survivors). With the effective blockade in Tigray, which has been in effect since late June 2021, survivors of sexual violence are being prevented from obtaining essential post-rape care preventing them from an adequate and sustained response to their needs. Reports have come to light that female IDPs who have sought shelter in IDP camps across Tigray are being sexually exploited in order to meet their basic needs. Eritrean refugees have also been attacked and raped inside refugee camps by both TPLF and Eritrean soldiers.

As Ethiopian forces regained control of areas in Amhara region, reports have come to light that Amhara women and girls were also systematically targeted and attacked by TPLF forces during their incursion into the region between August 2021 and November 2021 (20 incidents from an analysed sample of 84 incidents included reference to 140 survivors).

Incidents of sexual violence were also reported in Afar region, with at least 49 women and girls reported being sexually assaulted by TPLF whilst the forces were occupying the area.

The majority of these incidents (71 incidents from a sample of 84 reported incidents) took the form of gang rapes, where several men perpetrated sexual violence as a group. At least 17 incidents involved more than five perpetrators acting together.



Need for independent and safe reporting mechanisms

Conflict-sexual violence has been a consistent feature of the conflict and perpetrators from both sides have committed attacks of sexual violence whilst occupying territory. Reports of sexual violence have continued to emerge and it is evident that there is a need to establish an independent investigation into conflict-related abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence.

Reports have also come to light of survivors, health workers and journalists being threatened by perpetrators against reporting these attacks, therefore it is critical that safe, anonymous and independent reporting mechanisms are in place so survivors can safely report these incidents and perpetrators can be held accountable for their actions.

Although both sides have claimed that they would investigate these reported incidents of sexual violence by their soldiers, so far there has been very little progress in this regard and incidents of sexual violence continue to emerge and occur.

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Data limitations

This document was compiled as part of an event-based approach to documenting attacks involving sexual violence. Event descriptions from multiple sources were cross-checked and consolidated into a single dataset of recorded incidents that were coded using standard definitions. The incidents reported are neither a complete nor a representative list of all attacks involving sexual violence during the conflict in Ethiopia between November 2020 and December 2021, and have not been independently verified.

The figures presented in this report can be cited as the total number of publicly available reports of attacks and of the number of women and girls affected by such conflict-related sexual violence in Ethiopia between November 2020 and December 2021, as identified by Insecurity Insight.

The data summarised in this document has been systematically compiled from information available in open sources, as published in the [Reporting Sexual Violence Monthly News Brief](#).

The dataset suffers from limitations inherent in the information provided by the sources used. These publicly available sources use different methodologies, and certain biases within individual sources influence the data. Also, the information provided may contain inaccuracies. Most importantly, the cases referred to are not a representative sample of sexual violence in Ethiopia, but merely reflect the attacks that survivors and their families were courageous enough to report.

Definitions used in this report

- **Mass rape:** refers to an incident where multiple survivors/victims experienced sexual violence in the same location at the same time.
- **Gang rape:** refers to an incident where a single survivor or victim was attacked by multiple perpetrators.
- **Survivor:** refers to an individual who has experienced sexual violence.
- **Victim:** refers to an individual who has been killed during or after an act or acts of sexual violence.

Footnotes

¹ Until now, Insecurity Insight has not seen reports of sexual violence directed against boys or men. It is unclear whether these events are not reported or whether direct conflict related sexual violence is exclusively directed against females.

² Reports of these incidents were taken from hundreds of emerging reports about systematic sexual violence that has occurred in Afar, Amhara and Tigray region by Amhara militia, Ethiopian soldiers, Eritrean soldiers and TPLF soldiers. Many more attacks have occurred and have not been reported.

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