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FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2020 - ETHIOPIA

NOT FREE

24 / 100

Political Rights 10 / 40

Civil Liberties 14 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

19 / 100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

OVERVIEW

Ethiopia is undergoing a transition set off by the 2018 appointment of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came to power after Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned the face of mass protests at which demonstrators demanded greater political rights. Abiy has pledged to reform Ethiopia's authoritarian state, ruled by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) since 1991, and is in the process of rewriting the country's repressive electoral, terrorism, media, and other laws. However, Ethiopia remains beset by political factionalism and intercommunal violence, abuses by security forces and violations of due process are still common, and many restrictive laws remain in force. A major reorganization of the ruling party, growing conflict between ethnic communities, and new claims for self-determination have created a fluid political situation as the country prepares for elections in 2020.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2019

- In February, the government passed a new law on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that dispensed with many restrictions imposed by the previous, draconian law, which had been in effect since 2009. The new law retained some restrictive provisions, but Ethiopia nevertheless saw a notable increase in activity by rights groups after it was enacted.
- In June, several high-profile assassinations, including of the chief of staff of the defense forces as well as the Amhara regional president, resulted in lockdowns of Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa, as well as several nationwide internet blackouts.
- Communal violence continued to cause massive displacement, particularly in border areas between regional states. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 522,000 people were displaced due to violent conflict in the first half of 2019, bringing the number of displaced people in the last two years to well over 3 million.
- In November, a major reorganization of the ruling-party coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), saw three of its four main members (as well as several affiliates) approve a merger into a new unitary platform, the Prosperity Party. The Tigrayan People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (TPLF), the original core of the EPRDF coalition, was the only member organization to oppose the merger. This development, officially recognized by the electoral board in December, marked a major shift away from an ethnic-based to a pan-Ethiopian political organization.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

A ELECTORAL PROCESS

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? 0 / 4

The president is the head of state and is indirectly elected to a six-year term by both chambers of Parliament. The prime minister is head of government, and is selected by the largest party in Parliament after elections, or in the case of a resignation.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed—a former military officer from Ethiopia’s largest ethnic group, the Oromo, and a longstanding member of the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)—was sworn in as prime minister in April 2018, succeeding Hailemariam Desalegn, who had resigned in February 2018 amid growing protests at which demonstrators demanded greater political rights. Abiy was reconfirmed at the EPRDF party congress in October 2018 and is expected to lead the EPRDF’s successor organization, the Prosperity Party, into the 2020 election.

The last parliamentary elections, which led to the selection of Desalegn as prime minister in 2015, were not held in accordance with democratic standards.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? 0 / 4

The bicameral Parliament includes the 153-seat House of Federation, whose members are elected by state assemblies to five-year terms, and the House of People’s Representatives, with 547 members directly elected to five-year terms.

The 2015 parliamentary and regional elections were tightly controlled by the EPRDF, with reports of voter coercion, intimidation, and registration barriers. The opposition lost its sole parliamentary seat, as the EPRDF and its allies took all 547 seats in the House of People’s Representatives. The next parliamentary elections are slated for 2020.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies? 2 / 4

The 2015 elections were held on time and official results were released within a month. However, opposition parties repeatedly questioned the independence of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), and the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) party alleged that it blocked its leaders from registering as candidates.

A number of reforms to the electoral system and its oversight have taken shape under Prime Minister Abiy. In November 2018, parliament confirmed Birtukan Mideksa, a prominent, previously exiled former opposition leader, to serve as head of the NEBE. In August 2019, Parliament unanimously passed the Ethiopian Election, Political Parties Registration, and Election Ethics law. Some opposition parties claimed that consultations processes ahead of the bill’s approval were inadequate. Some also expressed frustration over a provision requiring civil servants to resign their positions before running for office, and another that requires a national political party to register 10,000 members to participate in an election (up from 1,500 previously) and a regional party to secure at least 4,000 members (up from 750 previously). However, the law provides an updated and more complete framework for the 2020 elections than had been mandated previously, and represents a step toward multiparty democracy.

Separately, in June 2019, the parliament postponed a planned census due to a spike in unrest associated with various ethnic conflicts. The census is a key step toward demarcating constituencies.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because the approval of a new electoral law, despite some criticism from opposition parties, represents a step toward multiparty democracy.

B POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings? 2 / 4

During the premierships of Abiy's predecessors, opponents of the EPRDF found it nearly impossible to operate inside Ethiopia and were subject to prosecution under restrictive antiterrorism and other legislation. However, political reforms starting in 2018, as well as that year's approval of a widespread amnesty, have permitted increasing political plurality and mobilization. In June 2018, Parliament removed Ginbot 7 and two other groups—Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)—from its list of terrorist organizations as a first step toward fostering peaceful and constructive political dialogue. Prisoners like Merera Gudina and Bekele Gerba, both from the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) were released, and former leaders such as Andargachew Tsige and Berhanu Nega, both of Ginbot 7, were able to return to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's political party landscape underwent major changes in 2019, as groups prepared for the next year's elections. In November, a major reorganization of the ruling party coalition, the EPRDF, saw three of its member parties (as well as several affiliates) approve a merger into a new unitary platform, the Prosperity Party. The TPLF—the key member of the EPRDF coalition—was the only member organization to oppose the merger. The merger, officially recognized by the electoral board in December, marks a major shift away from an ethnic-based to a pan-Ethiopian political organization. The TPLF, for its part, became a new opposition force in the north of the country.

Earlier, in July, the ONLF officially opened its office in Addis Ababa. And in Oromia, Jawar Mohammed, a key activist in the region's anti-EPRDF protests, in December announced his intention to compete in the upcoming election on the list of the OFC.

Abiy's administration has pledged reforms that will ease the legal and practical requirements for parties to operate, though substantial changes are necessary before political parties can carry out activities freely. In October 2019, a planned protest by the Balderas Council, a political movement started by journalist Eskinder Nega, was cancelled after the Addis Ababa government banned the rally; a number of related arrests took place, some before the date of the planned protest.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because a number of political groups were removed from lists that designated them as terrorist organizations, and they were permitted to operate during the year.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 1 / 4

The EPRDF still maintains numerous formal and informal advantages over opposition parties, and there are no opposition parties represented in Parliament. However, the changes Prime Minister Abiy's government began to implement in 2018 improved conditions for opposition groupings, which may now prepare more openly for the 2020 parliamentary elections. Abiy in August 2018 expressed a commitment to democratic polls, and pledged that he would not allow his reforms to delay the vote. The government's willingness to facilitate a November 2019 referendum on the future status of the Sidama zone and accept its outcome can be seen as initial evidence of a new tolerance of opposition activity. (The zone saw an overwhelming majority voting in favor of statehood for their region, and at least 10 other zones have made similar requests.)

The new electoral law passed in August 2019 also exemplifies the government's rhetorical commitment towards inclusive multiparty elections. Since several regions—Tigray, Oromia, and Somali in particular—now have well-organized opposition parties with a history of popular support, the opposition camp stands a better chance than in previous elections to curb the ruling party's complete hold on power.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 1 / 4

The authoritarian one-party system in Ethiopia has largely excluded the public from genuine political participation, though nascent attempts by Abiy to include more diverse voices in the political system are starting to yield positive results. Moreover, Abiy has taken steps to curtail the role of Ethiopia's powerful military in the country's politics.

Patronage networks, often based on ethnicity, continue to drive political decision-making, especially in rural regions.

Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because Abiy's reforms to the previous authoritarian one-party system have allowed a greater degree of freedom to express political choices.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 1 / 4

Women hold nearly 39 percent of seats in the lower house and 32 percent in the upper house, but in practice, the interests of women are not well represented in politics. Prime Minister Abiy has made some effort, however, to include women in high-level decision-making processes. In 2018, women were appointed to a number of prominent positions including the presidency, head of the NEBE, president of the Supreme Court, and to half of all cabinet posts.

Since 1991, political parties in Ethiopia have primarily been based on ethnicity. The country's major ethnic parties have been allied with the EPRDF, but have historically had little room to effectively advocate for their constituents. However, this is starting to change with the transformation in 2019 of the EPRDF—a coalition of ethnic-based regional parties—into the Prosperity Party, a national platform under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy. This development has raised the profile of ruling-party structures in Ethiopia's peripheral regions, where local ruling parties had previously been denied full membership in the EPRDF. (Populations in Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul Gumuz—officially termed “emerging regions”—are notably underrepresented in national politics since their local ruling parties were affiliates rather than full members of the EPRDF coalition.) At the same time, the merger has rekindled longstanding fears of smaller regions of being dominated by the more populous ethnic groups.

C FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 0 / 4

None of Ethiopia's nominally elected officials were chosen through credible elections. The country's governance institutions have long been dominated by the EPRDF. At the end of 2019, however, three of the coalition's four main ethnic-based parties reorganized to form the Prosperity Party, leaving a fluid political situation at the end of 2019.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 2 / 4

Corruption and unequal resource distribution are significant problems that have contributed to the unrest that has plagued Ethiopia in recent years. The government has taken some steps to address the issue, which remains a priority for Prime Minister Abiy's administration.

Numerous high-profile military and government officials were arrested and charged with corruption in 2018 and 2019, with most proceedings still ongoing at year's end. Notable arrests include more than two dozen high-level employees of the military-run Metals and Engineering Corporation (MeTEC), including its chief executive, who were arrested in 2018. In December 2019, the former chief executive of the Ethiopian Electric Corporation was charged with corruption involving land-clearing projects for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), along with 49 other individuals including former senior officials of MeTEC.

Earlier, in January 2019, Bereket Simon, a former communications minister and an EPRDF founding member, was arrested on corruption charges. A number of other government figures were charged with corruption in 2019, including 59 officials who were arrested in one sweep in April on charges of corruption and economic sabotage. However, their summary arrest was perceived by some as selective and politically motivated.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 1 / 4

Although EPRDF operations and decision-making processes have generally been opaque, the government has attempted to increase transparency in recent years, and in 2018 consulted with community organizations and journalists to advance reform efforts. The Legal and Justice Affairs Advisory Council was established in June 2018, and has a three-year term to study the country's restrictive terrorism, media, and NGO laws and recommend reforms to them. The council includes a number of legal professionals with various areas of expertise.

After the June 2019 assassinations of the Amhara region president and two of his aides, the government blocked internet and mobile networks for more than a week, during which communication and access to information was highly restricted. No official reasons for the shutdown were communicated to the public. Similarly, authorities did not provide adequate information about decisions to postpone the 2019 Sidama referendum, which was scheduled for July but delayed before being held in late November.

Government procurement processes remain largely opaque. Major real estate projects in Addis Ababa and the renovation of the imperial palace were recently awarded to Chinese and Middle Eastern companies without full transparency of the tender and decision-making processes.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

D FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 1 / 4

After years of severe restrictions on press freedom, the government took initial steps to increase freedoms for independent media in 2018, when a number of prominent journalists were released from prison. Addis Ababa then hosted the World Press Freedom Day in May 2019, but enthusiasm surrounding the event was soon dampened by the arrests of two journalists—Berihun Adane and Getachew Ambachew of the privately owned Satellite Radio and Television (ASRAT)—under terrorism laws in June. In October, a group of five journalists working for Sagalee Qeerroo Bilisummaa, a media affiliate for an opposition Oromo youth movement, were charged with “incitement to terrorism” under the same law. Berihun was released in September, while the other six remained in prison at the end of 2019. Several other journalists were detained for shorter amounts of time in connection with their reporting during the year.

Ethiopia's media landscape is dominated by state-owned broadcasters and government-oriented newspapers. Since Abiy took office in 2018, the government has eased restrictions on independent media, permitting both greater freedom for journalists and a more diverse range of news for consumers. That year, the government lifted bans on 264 websites (including news sites and blogs) and television networks. Among the outlets allowed to reopen were the diaspora satellite television stations Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and the Oromo Media Network (OMN), which had been charged with inciting terrorism and banned in 2017. They each opened offices in Ethiopia after the bans were lifted, and the charges against both networks were dropped.

The government has promised to revise its controversial 2008 mass media law, which gives broad powers to the government to prosecute defamation, but at the end of 2019 legislation had not yet been approved.

Ethiopia's state-owned telecommunications monopoly, Ethio Telecom, suspended internet service for more than a week in early June 2019, and again following the assassination of the defense forces chief of staff later that month, preventing the free flow of information. Social media and communications platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have also been blocked intermittently.

Hate speech and the deliberate spreading of misinformation on social media have been blamed for fanning the flames of violent conflict in several regions of Ethiopia. In April 2019, the government circulated the draft of a hate speech law which makes the intentional publication, distribution, and possession of false information illegal. However, Amnesty International and other observers have criticized the proposed law for being overly vague, potentially opening the door for misuse by public authorities to curb freedom of expression. The law was before Parliament as of December.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 1 / 4

The Ethiopian constitution guarantees religious freedom, and different faith groups have coexisted in the country for centuries. Prime Minister Abiy has promoted reconciliation between Ethiopia's main faith groups, including through the 2018 release of Muslim activists who had been arrested in 2015 for protesting the government's treatment of Muslims.

However, religion has increasingly become a divisive factor in Ethiopian politics, and local conflicts have featured violence along religious lines. Attacks on some 30 churches, most belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the Somali Region, between July 2018 and September 2019 left approximately 100 people dead, including a number of priests. Several churches belonging to Protestant denominations were destroyed in violence between ethnic groups in southern Ethiopia in February 2019; the same month, three mosques were reportedly attacked in Amhara State. In December, there were reports of attacks on four more mosques as well as one church in the same region. Orthodox leaders called off mass demonstrations planned for September 2019 to protest attacks on religious establishments in favor of renewed dialogue with the Ethiopian government, but their concerns have not been assuaged.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because attacks on places of worship and religious establishments have accompanied increasingly politicized conflicts between ethnic groups.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 1 / 4

Academic freedom remains restricted in Ethiopia, though academics have become markedly more vocal on political and economic matters since the lifting of the state of emergency in 2018. Conferences and lectures at state universities have addressed controversial topics and featured a number of speakers who criticized the EPRDF government. Current academics such as Addis Ababa University (AAU) economics professor Alemayehu Geda have been vocal in their opposition to government policies, while former AAU academics Berhanu Nega and Merera Gudina have been among the most prominent opposition politicians since their return from exile and release from prison, respectively, in 2018. Direct political indoctrination of university students—through mandatory trainings on government policy or pressure to join the ruling party—also seems to have abated under Abiy, although partly as a consequence of the weakening of EPRDF party structures in general.

With few exceptions, institutions of higher education are funded and administered by the federal government, which also sets admission standards and student quotas. The Ministry of Education still monitors and regulates official curricula.

Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because academics have become more involved in public discourse, and because political indoctrination and forced party membership for students have eased.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 1 / 4

Wide-reaching surveillance programs and the presence of the EPRDF at all levels of society have inhibited private discussion. However, broad political changes starting in 2018, including the release of political prisoners and lifting of bans against prominent government critics in the media and other sectors, has fostered a more open atmosphere for free expression among ordinary people.

E ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4

The ruling EPRDF government has repeatedly restricted freedom of assembly, including through the use of deadly force to break up demonstrations. The government is also known to shut down internet access and impose highly restrictive states of emergency in response to unrest, curtailing people's ability to organize. Since 2016, the government has twice imposed a state of emergency under which public meetings of any kind were subject to political approval. Restrictions have eased somewhat since the most recent state of emergency ended in June 2018; once-banned political movements such as Ginbot 7 and the Oromo Liberation Front held mass rallies later that year to mark the return of their leadership from exile. In October 2019, hundreds of thousands of people including vocal opposition leaders attended an Irreecha celebration (the Oromo thanksgiving) in Addis Ababa; it was the first time city authorities allowed the festivities in the country's capital.

However, freedom of assembly is still regularly restricted. In March 2019, a planned press conference by the Balderas Council was disrupted by local police after being prohibited by the government. In October, a planned demonstration by the same group was cancelled after being prohibited, and several organizers were arrested. Clashes between protestors and local security forces also took place in 2019, including in Bahir Dar, Gondar, and Hawassa.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? 2 / 4

The passage of a new civil society law in February 2019 dispensed with many restrictions that had been placed on NGOs by the draconian 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation, which prohibited work on political and human rights issues and had forced international NGOs working on human rights and democratic governance to leave the country. However, a number of questionable provisions remain, such as a ceiling on administrative expenses. The federal Civil Society Organizations Agency also retains broad powers.

While the new law had not yet been fully implemented at year's end, restrictions on NGOs working on human rights and governance eased noticeably after it was enacted. International funding for local advocacy organizations has resumed, too, resulting in a much more active and visible human rights community. In the first half of 2019, Human Rights Watch and the US-based National Endowment for Democracy both held official events in Addis Ababa for the first time in nearly a decade, convening a growing number of local rights and advocacy organizations. Several international NGOs have reopened offices in Addis Ababa or are in the process of doing so.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because a new law dispenses with many of the constraints NGOs had faced previously, allowing for more NGO activity during the year.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 1 / 4

The Ethiopian Constitution recognizes the right of workers to join trade unions, and more than 500,000 of them are organized under the umbrella of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). However, CETU has refrained from openly challenging the government, and independent unions have faced harassment in the past. There has not been a legal strike in Ethiopia since 1993. Workers at Ethiopia's Hawassa industrial park, many of whom earn wages below the national poverty line, were prevented from unionizing and staged an unsanctioned strike in March 2019.

Despite this, a large number of chambers of commerce and business associations exist for different industries and locations. The largest and oldest among them, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, is a regular critic of government policy, while the federally-organized Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, of which the Addis Chamber is a member, has been more aligned with official policy.

Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because some labor unions, professional organizations, and workers' groups have demonstrated autonomy from the government.

F RULE OF LAW

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?1 / 4

The judiciary is officially independent, but in practice it is subject to political interference, and judgments rarely deviate from government policy. The November 2018 appointment of lawyer and civil society leader Meaza Ashenafi as president of the Supreme Court raised hopes for judicial reform, though no major improvements were registered in 2019.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?0 / 4

Due process rights are generally not respected. While more than 10,000 people who had been arbitrarily detained were released after the change of political leadership in 2018, hundreds of new arrests have taken place since. Several hundred supporters of a regional opposition movement were arrested in the days following the assassination of the president of Amhara state in June 2019.

The right to a fair trial is often not respected, particularly for opponents of the government charged under the antiterrorism law. A draft for a revised, less draconian antiterrorism law was circulated for public discussion in February 2019, but remained pending at year's end. Prohibitive new regulations, such as a ban on motorbikes in the capital, are regularly introduced on short notice and with no legal recourse.

In civil matters, due process is hampered by the limited capacity of the Ethiopian courts system, especially in the peripheral regions where access to government services is weak. As a result, routine matters regularly take years to be resolved.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?0 / 4

Ethnic violence and unrest continued in numerous regions of Ethiopia in 2019, as infighting between the constituent parties of the EPRDF coalition and the emergence of new ethnonationalist challengers in several regions accentuated conflicts over Ethiopia's federal system. In the south, clashes over plans for a separate regional state for the Sidama claimed dozens of lives, as did territorial disputes between Amhara and Tigray regional states in northern Ethiopia. Ethnic rivalries along the border of Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz as well as Afar and Somali regional states also resulted in bloodshed. At times, unrest was apparently exacerbated by hate speech on social media. In June, amid mounting political uncertainty and communal violence, Parliament voted to postpone the national census, which is a key milestone on the road to the elections scheduled for 2020. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, close to 2.9 million Ethiopians were displaced by violent conflict in 2018 alone, with an additional 522,000 in the first half of 2019.

Security forces frequently commit human rights violations including torture and extrajudicial killings, often with impunity.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?1 / 4

There are major regional discrepancies between Ethiopia's "highland" regional states—Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)—and the "lowland" states of Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul Gumuz. Populations in the latter four states have had less access to government services. Plans to replace EPRDF with a single national party prior to the 2020 elections could change this situation, but have not been confirmed.

Same-sex sexual activity is prohibited by law and punishable by up to 15 years' imprisonment. Women face discrimination in education. A gender gap persists in many aspects of economic life including land ownership, level of pay, and access to finance.

G PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 1 / 4

While the constitution establishes freedom of movement, local conflicts impede people's ability to travel freely. In 2019, blockades and temporary road closures were reported from the border of Amhara and Tigray, several parts of Oromia, as well as SNNPR and Somali regional states. In October, roads were also blocked in and out of Addis Ababa due to growing tensions between youth groups aligned with activist Jawar Mohammed and those supporting Prime Minister Abiy.

In April 2019, officials in Eritrea closed the border with Ethiopia, after the peace process between the two began to stall; it had been opened for the first time in 20 years the previous September. Nevertheless, in October, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was announced as winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in reducing tensions with neighboring Eritrea.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 1 / 4

Private business opportunities are limited by heavy government regulation of key industries and the dominance of state-owned enterprises in many sectors. State monopolies persist in the telecommunication, shipping, and aviation industries, while the financial sector is closed to foreign competition and effectively controlled by state-owned banks. The Abiy government has announced plans for significant economic reforms including the partial privatization of state monopolies, the licensing of private telecoms, the creation of bond and stock markets, and the promotion of private entrepreneurship. Initial steps realized in 2019 include the licensing of private capital goods leasing firms, and the opening of the banking sector to the Ethiopian diaspora.

All land must be leased from the state. The government has evicted indigenous groups from various areas to make way for infrastructure projects, such as the Gibe III dam in the Lower Omo Valley. Urban development projects in Addis Ababa and other cities have also repeatedly led to the forced resettlement of local tenants.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 1 / 4

Legislation protects women's rights, but these rights are routinely violated in practice. Enforcement of laws against rape and domestic abuse is inconsistent, and cases routinely stall in the courts. In 2018, a joint research project conducted by academics at Debre Markos University in Ethiopia and the University of Queensland in Australia concluded that almost half of Ethiopian women become victims of gender-based violence in their lifetimes.

Forced child marriage is illegal but common in Ethiopia, and prosecutions for the crime are rare. According to UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) statistics for 2018, 40 percent of women are married before the age of 18. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also illegal, but the law is inconsistently enforced, and the 2016 Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey found that 65 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 had undergone the practice. However, reports suggest that FGM rates have reduced in recent years due to efforts by both NGOs and the government to combat the practice.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 1 / 4

DESPITE NEAR-UNIVERSAL PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES VARIES WIDELY ACROSS REGIONS AND IS PARTICULARLY WEAK IN THE "EMERGING" LOWLAND STATES. CHILD LABOR IS PREVALENT IN MANY AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS. TRAFFICKING CONVICTIONS HAVE INCREASED IN RECENT

YEARS, THOUGH THE US GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO URGE ITS ETHIOPIAN COUNTERPARTS TO MORE AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE TRAFFICKING CASES. **FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2020 - ETHIOPIA**

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Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed—a former military officer from Ethiopia’s largest ethnic group, the Oromo, and a longstanding member of the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)—was sworn in as prime minister in April 2018, succeeding Hailemariam Desalegn, who had resigned in February 2018 amid growing protests at which demonstrators demanded greater political rights. Abiy was reconfirmed at the EPRDF party congress in October 2018 and is expected to lead the EPRDF’s successor organization, the Prosperity Party, into the 2020 election.

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A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? 0 / 4

The bicameral Parliament includes the 153-seat House of Federation, whose members are elected by state assemblies to five-year terms, and the House of People’s Representatives, with 547 members directly elected to five-year terms.

The 2015 parliamentary and regional elections were tightly controlled by the EPRDF, with reports of voter coercion, intimidation, and registration barriers. The opposition lost its sole parliamentary seat, as the EPRDF and its allies took all 547 seats in the House of People’s Representatives. The next parliamentary elections are slated for 2020.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies? 2 / 4

The 2015 elections were held on time and official results were released within a month. However, opposition parties repeatedly questioned the independence of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), and the Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) party alleged that it blocked its leaders from registering as candidates.

A number of reforms to the electoral system and its oversight have taken shape under Prime Minister Abiy. In November 2018, parliament confirmed Birtukan Mideksa, a prominent, previously exiled former opposition leader, to serve as head of the NEBE. In August 2019, Parliament unanimously passed the Ethiopian Election, Political Parties Registration, and Election Ethics law. Some opposition parties claimed that consultations processes ahead of the bill’s approval were inadequate. Some also expressed frustration over a provision requiring civil servants to resign their positions before running for office, and another that requires a national political party to register 10,000 members to participate in an election (up from 1,500 previously) and a regional party to secure at least 4,000 members (up from 750 previously). However, the law provides an updated and more complete framework for the 2020 elections than had been mandated previously, and represents a step toward multiparty democracy.

Separately, in June 2019, the parliament postponed a planned census due to a spike in unrest associated with various ethnic conflicts. The census is a key step toward demarcating constituencies.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because the approval of a new electoral law, despite some criticism from opposition parties, represents a step toward multiparty democracy.

B POLITICAL PLURALISM AND PARTICIPATION

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings? 2 / 4

During the premierships of Abiy's predecessors, opponents of the EPRDF found it nearly impossible to operate inside Ethiopia and were subject to prosecution under restrictive antiterrorism and other legislation. However, political reforms starting in 2018, as well as that year's approval of a widespread amnesty, have permitted increasing political plurality and mobilization. In June 2018, Parliament removed Ginbot 7 and two other groups—Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)—from its list of terrorist organizations as a first step toward fostering peaceful and constructive political dialogue. Prisoners like Merera Gudina and Bekele Gerba, both from the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) were released, and former leaders such as Andargachew Tsige and Berhanu Nega, both of Ginbot 7, were able to return to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's political party landscape underwent major changes in 2019, as groups prepared for the next year's elections. In November, a major reorganization of the ruling party coalition, the EPRDF, saw three of its member parties (as well as several affiliates) approve a merger into a new unitary platform, the Prosperity Party. The TPLF—the key member of the EPRDF coalition—was the only member organization to oppose the merger. The merger, officially recognized by the electoral board in December, marks a major shift away from an ethnic-based to a pan-Ethiopian political organization. The TPLF, for its part, became a new opposition force in the north of the country.

Earlier, in July, the ONLF officially opened its office in Addis Ababa. And in Oromia, Jawar Mohammed, a key activist in the region's anti-EPRDF protests, in December announced his intention to compete in the upcoming election on the list of the OFC.

Abiy's administration has pledged reforms that will ease the legal and practical requirements for parties to operate, though substantial changes are necessary before political parties can carry out activities freely. In October 2019, a planned protest by the Balderas Council, a political movement started by journalist Eskinder Nega, was cancelled after the Addis Ababa government banned the rally; a number of related arrests took place, some before the date of the planned protest.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because a number of political groups were removed from lists that designated them as terrorist organizations, and they were permitted to operate during the year.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 1 / 4

The EPRDF still maintains numerous formal and informal advantages over opposition parties, and there are no opposition parties represented in Parliament. However, the changes Prime Minister Abiy's government began to implement in 2018 improved conditions for opposition groupings, which may now prepare more openly for the 2020 parliamentary elections. Abiy in August 2018 expressed a commitment to democratic polls, and pledged that he would not allow his reforms to delay the vote. The government's willingness to facilitate a November 2019 referendum on the future status of the Sidama zone and accept its outcome can be seen as initial evidence of a new tolerance of opposition activity. (The zone saw an overwhelming majority voting in favor of statehood for their region, and at least 10 other zones have made similar requests.)

The new electoral law passed in August 2019 also exemplifies the government's rhetorical commitment towards inclusive multiparty elections. Since several regions—Tigray, Oromia, and Somali in particular—now have well-organized opposition parties with a history of popular support, the opposition camp stands a better chance than in previous elections to curb the ruling party's complete hold on power.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 1 / 4

The authoritarian one-party system in Ethiopia has largely excluded the public from genuine political participation, though nascent attempts by Abiy to include more diverse voices in the political system are starting to yield positive results. Moreover, Abiy has taken steps to curtail the role of Ethiopia's powerful military in the country's politics.

Patronage networks, often based on ethnicity, continue to drive political decision-making, especially in rural regions.

Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because Abiy's reforms to the previous authoritarian one-party system have allowed a greater degree of freedom to express political choices.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 1 / 4

Women hold nearly 39 percent of seats in the lower house and 32 percent in the upper house, but in practice, the interests of women are not well represented in politics. Prime Minister Abiy has made some effort, however, to include women in high-level decision-making processes. In 2018, women were appointed to a number of prominent positions including the presidency, head of the NEBE, president of the Supreme Court, and to half of all cabinet posts.

Since 1991, political parties in Ethiopia have primarily been based on ethnicity. The country's major ethnic parties have been allied with the EPRDF, but have historically had little room to effectively advocate for their constituents. However, this is starting to change with the transformation in 2019 of the EPRDF—a coalition of ethnic-based regional parties—into the Prosperity Party, a national platform under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy. This development has raised the profile of ruling-party structures in Ethiopia's peripheral regions, where local ruling parties had previously been denied full membership in the EPRDF. (Populations in Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul Gumuz—officially termed “emerging regions”—are notably underrepresented in national politics since their local ruling parties were affiliates rather than full members of the EPRDF coalition.) At the same time, the merger has rekindled longstanding fears of smaller regions of being dominated by the more populous ethnic groups.

C FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 0 / 4

None of Ethiopia's nominally elected officials were chosen through credible elections. The country's governance institutions have long been dominated by the EPRDF. At the end of 2019, however, three of the coalition's four main ethnic-based parties reorganized to form the Prosperity Party, leaving a fluid political situation at the end of 2019.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 2 / 4

Corruption and unequal resource distribution are significant problems that have contributed to the unrest that has plagued Ethiopia in recent years. The government has taken some steps to address the issue, which remains a priority for Prime Minister Abiy's administration.

Numerous high-profile military and government officials were arrested and charged with corruption in 2018 and 2019, with most proceedings still ongoing at year's end. Notable arrests include more than two dozen high-level employees of the military-run Metals and Engineering Corporation (MeTEC), including its chief executive, who were arrested in 2018. In December 2019, the former chief executive of the Ethiopian Electric Corporation was charged with corruption involving land-clearing projects for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), along with 49 other individuals including former senior officials of MeTEC.

Earlier, in January 2019, Bereket Simon, a former communications minister and an EPRDF founding member, was arrested on corruption charges. A number of other government figures were charged with corruption in 2019, including 59 officials who were arrested in one sweep in April on charges of corruption and economic sabotage. However, their summary arrest was perceived by some as selective and politically motivated.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 1 / 4

Although EPRDF operations and decision-making processes have generally been opaque, the government has attempted to increase transparency in recent years, and in 2018 consulted with community organizations and journalists to advance reform efforts. The Legal and Justice Affairs Advisory Council was established in June 2018, and has a three-year term to study the country's restrictive terrorism, media, and NGO laws and recommend reforms to them. The council includes a number of legal professionals with various areas of expertise.

After the June 2019 assassinations of the Amhara region president and two of his aides, the government blocked internet and mobile networks for more than a week, during which communication and access to information was highly restricted. No official reasons for the shutdown were communicated to the public. Similarly, authorities did not provide adequate information about decisions to postpone the 2019 Sidama referendum, which was scheduled for July but delayed before being held in late November.

Government procurement processes remain largely opaque. Major real estate projects in Addis Ababa and the renovation of the imperial palace were recently awarded to Chinese and Middle Eastern companies without full transparency of the tender and decision-making processes.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

D FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND BELIEF

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 1 / 4

After years of severe restrictions on press freedom, the government took initial steps to increase freedoms for independent media in 2018, when a number of prominent journalists were released from prison. Addis Ababa then hosted the World Press Freedom Day in May 2019, but enthusiasm surrounding the event was soon dampened by the arrests of two journalists—Berihun Adane and Getachew Ambachew of the privately owned Satellite Radio and Television (ASRAT)—under terrorism laws in June. In October, a group of five journalists working for Sagalee Qeerroo Bilisummaa, a media affiliate for an opposition Oromo youth movement, were charged with “incitement to terrorism” under the same law. Berihun was released in September, while the other six remained in prison at the end of 2019. Several other journalists were detained for shorter amounts of time in connection with their reporting during the year.

Ethiopia's media landscape is dominated by state-owned broadcasters and government-oriented newspapers. Since Abiy took office in 2018, the government has eased restrictions on independent media, permitting both greater freedom for journalists and a more diverse range of news for consumers. That year, the government lifted bans on 264 websites (including news sites and blogs) and television networks. Among the outlets allowed to reopen were the diaspora satellite television stations Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and the Oromo Media Network (OMN), which had been charged with inciting terrorism and banned in 2017. They each opened offices in Ethiopia after the bans were lifted, and the charges against both networks were dropped.

The government has promised to revise its controversial 2008 mass media law, which gives broad powers to the government to prosecute defamation, but at the end of 2019 legislation had not yet been approved.

Ethiopia's state-owned telecommunications monopoly, Ethio Telecom, suspended internet service for more than a week in early June 2019, and again following the assassination of the defense forces chief of staff later that month, preventing the free flow of information. Social media and communications platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have also been blocked intermittently.

Hate speech and the deliberate spreading of misinformation on social media have been blamed for fanning the flames of violent conflict in several regions of Ethiopia. In April 2019, the government circulated the draft of a hate speech law which makes the intentional publication, distribution, and possession of false information illegal. However, Amnesty International and other observers have criticized the proposed law for being overly vague, potentially opening the door for misuse by public authorities to curb freedom of expression. The law was before Parliament as of December.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 1 / 4

The Ethiopian constitution guarantees religious freedom, and different faith groups have coexisted in the country for centuries. Prime Minister Abiy has promoted reconciliation between Ethiopia's main faith groups, including through the 2018 release of Muslim activists who had been arrested in 2015 for protesting the government's treatment of Muslims.

However, religion has increasingly become a divisive factor in Ethiopian politics, and local conflicts have featured violence along religious lines. Attacks on some 30 churches, most belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the Somali Region, between July 2018 and September 2019 left approximately 100 people dead, including a number of priests. Several churches belonging to Protestant denominations were destroyed in violence between ethnic groups in southern Ethiopia in February 2019; the same month, three mosques were reportedly attacked in Amhara State. In December, there were reports of attacks on four more mosques as well as one church in the same region. Orthodox leaders called off mass demonstrations planned for September 2019 to protest attacks on religious establishments in favor of renewed dialogue with the Ethiopian government, but their concerns have not been assuaged.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because attacks on places of worship and religious establishments have accompanied increasingly politicized conflicts between ethnic groups.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 1 / 4

Academic freedom remains restricted in Ethiopia, though academics have become markedly more vocal on political and economic matters since the lifting of the state of emergency in 2018. Conferences and lectures at state universities have addressed controversial topics and featured a number of speakers who criticized the EPRDF government. Current academics such as Addis Ababa University (AAU) economics professor Alemayehu Geda have been vocal in their opposition to government policies, while former AAU academics Berhanu Nega and Merera Gudina have been among the most prominent opposition politicians since their return from exile and release from prison, respectively, in 2018. Direct political indoctrination of university students—through mandatory trainings on government policy or pressure to join the ruling party—also seems to have abated under Abiy, although partly as a consequence of the weakening of EPRDF party structures in general.

With few exceptions, institutions of higher education are funded and administered by the federal government, which also sets admission standards and student quotas. The Ministry of Education still monitors and regulates official curricula.

Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because academics have become more involved in public discourse, and because political indoctrination and forced party membership for students have eased.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 1 / 4

Wide-reaching surveillance programs and the presence of the EPRDF at all levels of society have inhibited private discussion. However, broad political changes starting in 2018, including the release of political prisoners and lifting of bans against prominent government critics in the media and other sectors, has fostered a more open atmosphere for free expression among ordinary people.

E ASSOCIATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RIGHTS

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4

The ruling EPRDF government has repeatedly restricted freedom of assembly, including through the use of deadly force to break up demonstrations. The government is also known to shut down internet access and impose highly restrictive states of emergency in response to unrest, curtailing people's ability to organize. Since 2016, the government has twice imposed a state of emergency under which public meetings of any kind were subject to political approval. Restrictions have eased somewhat since the most recent state of emergency ended in June 2018; once-banned political movements such as Ginbot 7 and the Oromo Liberation Front held mass rallies later that year to mark the return of their leadership from exile. In October 2019, hundreds of thousands of people including vocal opposition leaders attended an Irreecha celebration (the Oromo thanksgiving) in Addis Ababa; it was the first time city authorities allowed the festivities in the country's capital.

However, freedom of assembly is still regularly restricted. In March 2019, a planned press conference by the Balderas Council was disrupted by local police after being prohibited by the government. In October, a planned demonstration by the same group was cancelled after being prohibited, and several organizers were arrested. Clashes between protestors and local security forces also took place in 2019, including in Bahir Dar, Gondar, and Hawassa.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? 2 / 4

The passage of a new civil society law in February 2019 dispensed with many restrictions that had been placed on NGOs by the draconian 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation, which prohibited work on political and human rights issues and had forced international NGOs working on human rights and democratic governance to leave the country. However, a number of questionable provisions remain, such as a ceiling on administrative expenses. The federal Civil Society Organizations Agency also retains broad powers.

While the new law had not yet been fully implemented at year's end, restrictions on NGOs working on human rights and governance eased noticeably after it was enacted. International funding for local advocacy organizations has resumed, too, resulting in a much more active and visible human rights community. In the first half of 2019, Human Rights Watch and the US-based National Endowment for Democracy both held official events in Addis Ababa for the first time in nearly a decade, convening a growing number of local rights and advocacy organizations. Several international NGOs have reopened offices in Addis Ababa or are in the process of doing so.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because a new law dispenses with many of the constraints NGOs had faced previously, allowing for more NGO activity during the year.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 1 / 4

The Ethiopian Constitution recognizes the right of workers to join trade unions, and more than 500,000 of them are organized under the umbrella of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). However, CETU has refrained from openly challenging the government, and independent unions have faced harassment in the past. There has not been a legal strike in Ethiopia since 1993. Workers at Ethiopia's Hawassa industrial park, many of whom earn wages below the national poverty line, were prevented from unionizing and staged an unsanctioned strike in March 2019.

Despite this, a large number of chambers of commerce and business associations exist for different industries and locations. The largest and oldest among them, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, is a regular critic of government policy, while the federally-organized Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, of which the Addis Chamber is a member, has been more aligned with official policy.

Score Change: The score improved from 0 to 1 because some labor unions, professional organizations, and workers' groups have demonstrated autonomy from the government.

F RULE OF LAW

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?1 / 4

The judiciary is officially independent, but in practice it is subject to political interference, and judgments rarely deviate from government policy. The November 2018 appointment of lawyer and civil society leader Meaza Ashenafi as president of the Supreme Court raised hopes for judicial reform, though no major improvements were registered in 2019.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?0 / 4

Due process rights are generally not respected. While more than 10,000 people who had been arbitrarily detained were released after the change of political leadership in 2018, hundreds of new arrests have taken place since. Several hundred supporters of a regional opposition movement were arrested in the days following the assassination of the president of Amhara state in June 2019.

The right to a fair trial is often not respected, particularly for opponents of the government charged under the antiterrorism law. A draft for a revised, less draconian antiterrorism law was circulated for public discussion in February 2019, but remained pending at year's end. Prohibitive new regulations, such as a ban on motorbikes in the capital, are regularly introduced on short notice and with no legal recourse.

In civil matters, due process is hampered by the limited capacity of the Ethiopian courts system, especially in the peripheral regions where access to government services is weak. As a result, routine matters regularly take years to be resolved.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?0 / 4

Ethnic violence and unrest continued in numerous regions of Ethiopia in 2019, as infighting between the constituent parties of the EPRDF coalition and the emergence of new ethnonationalist challengers in several regions accentuated conflicts over Ethiopia's federal system. In the south, clashes over plans for a separate regional state for the Sidama claimed dozens of lives, as did territorial disputes between Amhara and Tigray regional states in northern Ethiopia. Ethnic rivalries along the border of Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz as well as Afar and Somali regional states also resulted in bloodshed. At times, unrest was apparently exacerbated by hate speech on social media. In June, amid mounting political uncertainty and communal violence, Parliament voted to postpone the national census, which is a key milestone on the road to the elections scheduled for 2020. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, close to 2.9 million Ethiopians were displaced by violent conflict in 2018 alone, with an additional 522,000 in the first half of 2019.

Security forces frequently commit human rights violations including torture and extrajudicial killings, often with impunity.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?1 / 4

There are major regional discrepancies between Ethiopia's "highland" regional states—Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)—and the "lowland" states of Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul Gumuz. Populations in the latter four states have had less access to government services. Plans to replace EPRDF with a single national party prior to the 2020 elections could change this situation, but have not been confirmed.

Same-sex sexual activity is prohibited by law and punishable by up to 15 years' imprisonment. Women face discrimination in education. A gender gap persists in many aspects of economic life including land ownership, level of pay, and access to finance.

G PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 1 / 4

While the constitution establishes freedom of movement, local conflicts impede people's ability to travel freely. In 2019, blockades and temporary road closures were reported from the border of Amhara and Tigray, several parts of Oromia, as well as SNNPR and Somali regional states. In October, roads were also blocked in and out of Addis Ababa due to growing tensions between youth groups aligned with activist Jawar Mohammed and those supporting Prime Minister Abiy.

In April 2019, officials in Eritrea closed the border with Ethiopia, after the peace process between the two began to stall; it had been opened for the first time in 20 years the previous September. Nevertheless, in October, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was announced as winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in reducing tensions with neighboring Eritrea.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 1 / 4

Private business opportunities are limited by heavy government regulation of key industries and the dominance of state-owned enterprises in many sectors. State monopolies persist in the telecommunication, shipping, and aviation industries, while the financial sector is closed to foreign competition and effectively controlled by state-owned banks. The Abiy government has announced plans for significant economic reforms including the partial privatization of state monopolies, the licensing of private telecoms, the creation of bond and stock markets, and the promotion of private entrepreneurship. Initial steps realized in 2019 include the licensing of private capital goods leasing firms, and the opening of the banking sector to the Ethiopian diaspora.

All land must be leased from the state. The government has evicted indigenous groups from various areas to make way for infrastructure projects, such as the Gibe III dam in the Lower Omo Valley. Urban development projects in Addis Ababa and other cities have also repeatedly led to the forced resettlement of local tenants.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 1 / 4

Legislation protects women's rights, but these rights are routinely violated in practice. Enforcement of laws against rape and domestic abuse is inconsistent, and cases routinely stall in the courts. In 2018, a joint research project conducted by academics at Debre Markos University in Ethiopia and the University of Queensland in Australia concluded that almost half of Ethiopian women become victims of gender-based violence in their lifetimes.

Forced child marriage is illegal but common in Ethiopia, and prosecutions for the crime are rare. According to UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) statistics for 2018, 40 percent of women are married before the age of 18. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also illegal, but the law is inconsistently enforced, and the 2016 Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey found that 65 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 had undergone the practice. However, reports suggest that FGM rates have reduced in recent years due to efforts by both NGOs and the government to combat the practice.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 1 / 4

Despite near-universal primary school enrollment, access to quality education and other social services varies widely across regions and is particularly weak in the "emerging" lowland states. Child labor is prevalent in many agricultural households. Trafficking convictions have increased in recent years, though the US government continues to urge its Ethiopian counterparts to more aggressively pursue trafficking cases.