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Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Ethiopia: Background information, including internal relocation

Version 2.0

September 2020

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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

Country of origin information

The country information 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 \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

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

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. 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, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 02 September 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this note

- 1.1.1 This note considers general, background information on Ethiopia and also whether in general, those with a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from state, 'rogue' state or non-state actors can internally relocate within Ethiopia.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 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](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses applies. If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Internal relocation

- 2.3.1 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. Where the person's fear is of persecution or serious harm at the hands of rogue-state actors, decision makers must consider whether the person will be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.3.2 The Court of Appeal in [SC \(Jamaica\) v Home Secretary \[2017\] EWCA Civ 2112](#) held that 'the evaluative exercise is intended to be holistic and ... no burden or standard of proof arises in relation to the overall issue of whether it is reasonable to internally relocate' (para 36).
- 2.3.3 Ethiopia is the 10th largest country in Africa approximately 4 times the size of the UK. Ethiopia is a diverse society with an estimated total population of

over 108 million and is divided into 9 ethnically based regional states. The largest city is the capital, Addis Ababa with an estimated population of over 4.7 million. There are no other cities with populations this large, the next being Dire Dawa about 500km east of Addis Ababa and with a population estimated to be over 250,000 (see [Geography and demography](#)).

- 2.3.4 The constitution recognises the right to property however land belongs not to the individual, but to the Ethiopian people and the state. There is a shortage of urban housing, which is subject to high rent making access to affordable housing limited. More than 70% of the population is employed in agriculture, unemployment is higher in urban areas at 19% and amongst the youth. Women face high levels of societal discrimination, particularly in rural areas. There have been recent improvements to the education system, especially at primary level however, access to education varies between regions and urban and rural areas (see [Housing and Property](#), [Economy and employment](#) and [Education](#).)
- 2.3.5 There is no comprehensive public social welfare system. Public hospitals and health centres are often poorly funded, and lacking in equipment, staff and medical supplies. Hospitals tend to be in urban areas and cities, with most being in Addis Ababa. Access to healthcare in rural areas is generally very limited (see [Social welfare](#) and [Healthcare](#)).
- 2.3.6 The law provides for freedom of movement, and this is generally permitted although it is sometimes restricted by local conflict including civilian roadblocks, or the presence of authorities and / or armed groups in some national and regional state border areas. The border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, despite being reopened in 2018, is open only informally for people to cross on foot (as at May 2020) (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.3.7 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.3.8 In general, a person fearing 'rogue' state actors and non-state actors is likely to be able to internally relocate to another area of Ethiopia, such as, but not restricted to, Addis Ababa. Whether this would be reasonable and not unduly harsh will depend on the nature and origin of the threat as well as the person's individual circumstances.
- 2.3.9 For information on internal relocation for Oromos and the political opposition, see the relevant [Ethiopia Country Policy and Information Notes](#)
- 2.3.10 For information on protection see Country Policy and Information Note [Ethiopia: Actors of protection](#)
- 2.3.11 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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Country information

Section 3 updated: 10 August 2020

3. Geography and demography

3.1 Key facts

Key geographical and demographic facts	
Full country name:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia ¹
Area:	Total area: 1,104,300 sq km land: 1,096,570 sq km water: 7,730 sq km ² Ethiopia is roughly 4 times the total area of the UK ³ and the 10 th largest country in Africa ⁴ .
Border countries:	Ethiopia is a landlocked country with no coastline. Its borders (5,925 km) are with Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan ⁵ .
Flag:	 ⁶
Population:	108,113,150 (July 2020 estimate) ⁷ . The last official population census was carried out in 2007 and the population then was recorded as 73.7 million ⁸ . It is the second most populous country in Africa ⁹ and has one of the world's fastest growing populations. ¹⁰ See also Population distribution, and density and birth/death rate

¹ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

² CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

³ CIA, '[World Factbook, United Kingdom](#)', 5 May 2020

⁴ CIA, '[World Factbook, Country Comparison](#)', 8 June 2020

⁵ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

⁶ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

⁷ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020.

⁸ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)', n.d.

⁹ BBC, 'Ethiopia profile – Timeline', 24 June 2019, [url](#).

¹⁰ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)', n.d.

Capital city:	Addis Ababa ¹¹
Languages:	See Languages
Administrative divisions:	10 ethnically-based regional states (kililoch, singular - kilil) (astedadero, singular - astedader): Afar, Amara (Amhara), Binshangul Gumuz, Gambela Hizboch (Gambela Peoples), Hareri Hizb (Harari People), Oromiya (Oromia), Sumale (Somali), Tigray, Ye Debub Biheroch Bihereseboch na Hizboch (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples SNNPR) and 2 self-governing administrations Adis Abeba (Addis Ababa) and Dire Dawa¹² The 10th regional state is Sidama (formally a zone within SNNPR) which after a referendum on 20 November 2019¹³ was declared a regional state on 18 June 2020¹⁴

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3.2 Population distribution and density

- 3.2.1 According to the CIA World Factbook in May 2020, the highest population density is in the highlands of the north and middle areas of the country, particularly around the centrally located capital city of Addis Ababa. The far-east and southeast of the country are sparsely populated¹⁵.
- 3.2.2 21.7% of the Ethiopian population live in urban areas of the country in 2020¹⁶.
- 3.2.3 UN Habitat noted in 2020 'Ethiopia is rapidly becoming urbanized. Population expansion is one of the key challenges to sustainable urban development in Ethiopia. In 2015, 20 percent of the total Ethiopian population, or nearly 18 million, lived in urban settlements. This figure is expected to reach 30-35 million by 2025.'¹⁷
- 3.2.4 Addis Ababa's 2020 population is estimated at 4,793,699, the most populated city in the country. It is 527 square kilometres and the population density is estimated to be near 5,165 individuals per square kilometre available¹⁸.
- 3.2.5 According to the World Population Review 2020, after Addis Ababa the next largest cities by population are:

City	Population 2020 estimate
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¹¹ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

¹² CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

¹³ Borkena, '[Sidama referendum...](#)' 20 November 2019

¹⁴ Borkena, '[Council ratify Ethiopia's new ethnic-Sidama statehood](#)' 18 June 2020

¹⁵ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

¹⁶ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

¹⁷ UN Habitat, '[Un-Habitat Sub-Saharan Africa Atlas](#)' (p.46), 2020,

¹⁸ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)' (Addis Ababa), n.d

Dire Dawa	252,279
Mek'ele	215,546
Nazret	213,995
Bahir Dar	168,899
Gondar	153,914 ¹⁹

- 3.2.6 For population figures for all cities in Ethiopia see [World Population Review](#)
See also [Socio-economic indicators](#)

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3.3 Birth/death rate

- 3.3.1 According to 2020 estimates, there are 31.6 births per 1,000 people and the death rate is 5.9 deaths per 1,000 people. The average fertility rate is around 4 children born per woman. Around 40% of the population is below the age of 15²⁰.

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3.4 Languages

- 3.4.1 The 2007 census showed that 29.3% of the country's population spoke Amharic as a first language²¹ and it is the official language in which all federal laws are published²². Amharic is also spoken by an additional 20% of the population as a second language. Tigrinya is spoken by 12% to 15% of the total population. English is the most widely spoken foreign language and is taught in all secondary schools. Although Amharic is Ethiopia's official language and was the language of primary school instruction it has been replaced in many areas by local languages, such as Oromifa and Tigrinya²³.
- 3.4.2 The CIA World Factbook stated the following about Ethiopia's languages: 'Oromo (official working language in the State of Oromiya) 33.8%, Amharic (official national language) 29.3%, Somali (official working language of the State of Sumale) 6.2%, Tigrigna (Tigrinya) (official working language of the State of Tigray) 5.9%, Sidamo 4%, Wolaytta 2.2%, Gurage 2%, Afar (official working language of the State of Afar) 1.7%, Hadiyya 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, Opuuo 1.2%, Kafa 1.1%, other 8.1%, English (major foreign language taught in schools), Arabic (2007 est.).'²⁴
- 3.4.3 In Addis Ababa, 71% of the population speak Amharic and 10% use Oromo.²⁵

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¹⁹ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)' (All cities), n.d

²⁰ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

²¹ World Atlas, '[What Languages Are Spoken In Ethiopia?](#)' 1 August 2017

²² World Atlas, '[What Languages Are Spoken In Ethiopia?](#)' 1 August 2017

²³ Global Security, '[Ethiopia – Ethnic Groups](#)', 9 August 2016

²⁴ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

²⁵ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)' (Addis Ababa), n.d

3.5 Map

3.5.1 Map of Ethiopia showing international borders, main roads and cities²⁶.



3.5.2 See also map of [Ethiopia's regions](#).

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3.6 Transport links

3.6.1 According to the Ethiopian Roads Authority, the country's road network increased from 26,550 km in 1997 to 126,773 km in 2018²⁷.

3.6.2 A Global Construction Review (GCR) article, 'Ethiopia to double road network to 200,000km by 2020', dated 30 May 2018, stated that a quarter of the federal government's annual infrastructure spending is on road construction²⁸.

3.6.3 The American export.gov website provided the following information, dated July 2020: 'The Ethiopian Railways Corporation (ERC) under the Ministry of Transport is mandated to create a modern nationwide railway network, replacing the Franco-Ethiopian railway that is no longer in service. ERC

²⁶ Nations online, '[Political Map of Ethiopia](#)'

²⁷ UN, '[Stakeholders validate report on Ethiopia's road safety...](#)', 14 January 2019

²⁸ GCR, '[Ethiopia to double road network to 200,000km by 2020](#)', 30 May 2018

completed a 656 kilometer railway network construction project that links the capital city Addis Ababa to the port of Djibouti.’²⁹

- 3.6.4 The American export.gov website explained: ‘Many international major airlines use Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport including Lufthansa, Ethiopian Airlines, Turkish Airways, Egypt Air, Kenyan Airways and Emirates. Ethiopian Airlines, which is a member of the Star Alliance, operates domestically with services to major cities within the country. Private charter plane services are also available for domestic travel.’³⁰
- 3.6.5 Ethiopia's main airport is Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. It is the main hub of Ethiopian Airlines and has flight connections to Europe, Asia, North and South America and Eritrea. It is one of the busiest airports in Africa. It has two terminals – one for domestic and regional flights, and one for international flights³¹.

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3.7 Ethnic groups

- 3.7.1 Ethiopia's population, based on the 2007 census, is made up of more than 90 distinct ethnic groups in the country. The largest ethnic community is the Oromo. The population is made up of the following ethnic groups: Oromo, 34.4%, Amhara 27%, Somali 6.2%, Sidama 4%, Gurage 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Afar 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, Siite 1.3%, Kefficho 1.2%, and others 8.8%³².
- 3.7.2 The Ethiopian Gazette provided information in September 2018 regarding the 10 largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia³³:

Rank	Ethnic group	Population
1	Oromo	40,000,000
2	Amhara	32,000,000
3	Somali	6,186,774
4	Tigrayan	6,047,522
5	Sidama	3,978,633
6	Gurage	2,506,539
7	Welayta	2,257,874
8	Afar	1,720,759
9	Hadiya	1,710,812
10	Gamo	1,482,041

²⁹ Export.gov, '[Ethiopia – Road and Railways](#)', 20 July 2020

³⁰ Export.gov, '[Ethiopia – Business Travel](#)', 20 July 2020

³¹ [Addis Ababa Airport \(AAD\)](#), n.d

³² MRGI, '[World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples](#)' (Ethiopia), January 2018

³³ Ethiopian Gazette, '[The Ten Largest Ethnic Groups in Ethiopia 2018](#)', 19 September 2018

- 3.7.3 For data on ethnic groups and the numbers present in each regional state see the [2007 Census](#) ³⁴.
- 3.7.4 Addis Ababa's population comprises of a mixture of ethnic groups. Almost half of the population are Amhara and the rest are from the groups Oromo, Gurage and Tigray³⁵.
- 3.7.5 For further information about the Oromos, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ethiopia: Oromos](#)

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3.8 Religious demography

- 3.8.1 The USSD in the 'International Religious Freedom Report for 2019', published 10 June 2020 noted that according to the 2007 census, around 44% of the population adheres to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 34% are Sunni Muslim, and 19% belong to Christian evangelical and Pentecostal groups³⁶. However, the report noted that 'The overall population... has since changed significantly [since the 2007 census], and observers in and outside the government state those numbers are not necessarily representative of the present composition. Most observers believe the evangelical and Pentecostal proportion of the population has increased.'³⁷
- 3.8.2 There are a number of smaller groups that constitute less than 5 % of the population including: Eastern Rite and Roman Catholics, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, and practitioners of indigenous religions³⁸.
- 3.8.3 The Ethiopian Orthodox Church dominates in the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara, while Islam is most prevalent in the Afar, Oromia, and Somali Regions. Established Protestant churches are strongest in the southern regions of Ethiopia, Gambela and parts of Oromia³⁹.
- 3.8.4 There is a Rastafarian community of approximately 1,000, whose members primarily reside in Addis Ababa and in Shashemene town in the Oromia Region⁴⁰.
- 3.8.5 According to the 2007 census, approximately 82% of the population the capital city, Addis Ababa is of the Orthodox Christian religion. 12.7% of residents are Muslim, 3.9% Protestant, less than 1% Catholic, and a smaller percentage follow other faiths⁴¹.

Section 4 updated: 10 August 2020

4. Socio-economic indicators

4.1 Economy and employment

4.1.1 Key facts

³⁴ FDRE Population Census Commission, '[Summary ... Report...](#)' (p.84- 110), December 2008

³⁵ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)' (Addis Ababa), n.d

³⁶ USSD, '[2019 International Religious Freedom Report, Ethiopia](#)', (section 1), 10 June 2020

³⁷ USSD, '[2019 International Religious Freedom Report, Ethiopia](#)', (section 1), 10 June 2020

³⁸ USSD, '[2019 International Religious Freedom Report, Ethiopia](#)', (section 1), 10 June 2020.

³⁹ USSD, '[2019 International Religious Freedom Report, Ethiopia](#)', (section 1), 10 June 2020

⁴⁰ USSD, '[2019 International Religious Freedom Report, Ethiopia](#)', (section 1), 10 June 2020

⁴¹ World Population Review, '[Ethiopia Population 2020](#)' (Addis Ababa), n.d

Currency:	Ethiopian Birr (ETB). The Ethiopian Birr is subdivided into santim (100 santim = 1 ETB). Br is the symbol used for the Birr ⁴² .
Exchange rate:	1 GBP = 48.12 Birr ⁴³ (2 September 2020)
GDP growth:	7.7% in 2017/18 ⁴⁴
GDP per capita:	US\$2,200 ⁴⁵ (2017 estimate). This figure shows GDP on a purchasing power parity basis.

4.1.2 Additionally:

- Ethiopia ranked 173 out of 189 countries in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index Ranking 2019⁴⁶. The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index measuring average achievement in 3 basic areas of human development - a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living⁴⁷.
- The proportion of the Ethiopian population living in poverty has reduced from 44% in 2000 to 23% in 2018⁴⁸.
- The labour force is divided into the following sectors: agriculture – 72.7%, industry – 7.4%, services – 19.9% (2013 estimate)⁴⁹.
- The World Bank estimated in 2019 the total % of the labour force unemployed in Ethiopia was just over 2%⁵⁰.

4.1.3 The CIA World Factbook noted:

‘Ethiopia - the second most populous country in Africa - is a one-party state with a planned economy. For more than a decade before 2016, GDP grew at a rate between 8% and 11% annually – one of the fastest growing states among the 188 IMF member countries. This growth was driven by government investment in infrastructure, as well as sustained progress in the agricultural and service sectors. More than 70% of Ethiopia’s population is still employed in the agricultural sector, but services have surpassed agriculture as the principal source of GDP.

‘Ethiopia has the lowest level of income-inequality in Africa and one of the lowest in the world... Yet despite progress toward eliminating extreme poverty, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, due both to rapid population growth and a low starting base. Changes in rainfall associated with world-wide weather patterns resulted in the worst drought in 30 years in 2015-16, creating food insecurity for millions of Ethiopians.

⁴² Oanda.com, ‘[Ethiopian Birr – Overview](#)’, n.d

⁴³ [XE currency converter](#), n.d

⁴⁴ World Bank, ‘[The World Bank in Ethiopia – overview](#)’, updated: 26 September 2019

⁴⁵ CIA, ‘[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)’, 10 August 2020

⁴⁶ UNDP, ‘[2019 Human Development Index Ranking](#)’, 2019

⁴⁷ UNDP, [HDI](#), (n.d), [url](#)

⁴⁸ Department for International Development, ‘[DFID Ethiopia](#)’, n.d

⁴⁹ CIA, ‘[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)’, 10 August 2020

⁵⁰ The World Bank, ‘[Unemployment, Ethiopia](#)’, 21 June 2020

'The state is heavily engaged in the economy. Ongoing infrastructure projects include power production and distribution, roads, rails, airports and industrial parks. Key sectors are state-owned, including telecommunications, banking and insurance, and power distribution...

'Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings are led by the services sector - primarily the state-run Ethiopian Airlines - followed by exports of several commodities. While coffee remains the largest foreign exchange earner, Ethiopia is diversifying exports, and commodities such as gold, sesame, khat, livestock and horticulture products are becoming increasingly important. Manufacturing represented less than 8% of total exports in 2016, but manufacturing exports should increase in future years due to a growing international presence.'⁵¹

- 4.1.4 The World Bank in 'A Stepping Stone to Job Creation', 11 December 2017 noted: 'Unemployment in Ethiopia is still, by and large, an urban phenomenon. In urban Ethiopia, 15 percent of households say they contain one unemployed adult, as opposed to fewer than 5 percent in rural areas, and the number is as high as 23.5 percent in Addis Ababa, the capital city.'⁵²
- 4.1.5 Ethiopia Insight noted on 4 May 2020 'According to a Central Statistical Agency report in October 2018, nearly 19 million people comprised the urban population. Out of the total, 9.7 million were economically active, with 7.5 million of those people employed, many in the informal sector. That leaves 1.8 million unemployed and an urban unemployment rate of 19 percent, with youth unemployment higher.'⁵³ For more detail see the [Central Statistical Agency report 2018](#).
- 4.1.6 UN Habitat noted in 2020 'To accommodate the urban population explosion, the government estimates, an additional 6 million urban jobs need to be created by 2025.'⁵⁴
- 4.1.7 The BTI 'Ethiopia Country Report 2020' noted: 'Discrimination in the labor market, based on politics and ethnicity, is widespread, when it comes to jobs in central government institutions. In the various regions, there is discrimination between majority and minority ethnic groups or "nations," due to a scarcity of resources.'⁵⁵
- 4.1.8 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) 'Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia ' for the Universal Periodic Review, 4 March 2019 in joint submissions from multiple organisations noted:

'JS10⁵⁶ stated that unemployment and underemployment had been widespread; and that there was a lack of decent employment. Unemployment must be reduced through targeted measures to increase urban employment, introduce minimum wage in the private sector,

⁵¹ CIA, '[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)', 10 August 2020

⁵² The World Bank, '[A Stepping Stone to Job Creation](#)', 11 December 2017

⁵³ Ethiopia Insight, '[Amid lockdown fears, COVID-19 threatens Ethiopia's urban poor](#)', 4 May 2020

⁵⁴ UN Habitat, '[Un-Habitat Sub-Saharan Africa Atlas](#)' (p.46), 2020

⁵⁵ BTI, '[Ethiopia Country Report 2020](#)' (Welfare regime), 2020

⁵⁶ Ethiopian Lawyers Association, Ethiopian Young Lawyers Association, and Consortium of Ethiopian Rights Organizations

accelerate and expand the proper implementation of the urban and rural safety net, and accelerate the utilization of the Youth Revolving Fund to create employment opportunities for the youth. In addition, Ethiopians should be free to pursue a livelihood of their choice anywhere within the national territory and the constraints that restricted individuals from working outside of their designated region should be addressed.’⁵⁷

4.1.9 In August 2020 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reported that:

‘...the Commissioner of the Jobs Creation Dr. Ephraim Teklu stated that within four months, 330,000 jobs were affected/lost by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Commissioner, only 62 percent out of the three million jobs were found to be sustainable while the remaining, being temporary jobs, will likely terminate in less than a year. The Government has introduced a US\$42 billion emergency and stimulation package to help affected individuals and businesses sustain the impact of the pandemic.’⁵⁸

4.1.10 For more information, see:

- [The World Bank in Ethiopia](#)
- CIA World Factbook - [Ethiopia: The economy](#)
- World Finance [Ethiopia continues its economic ascent](#).

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4.2 Housing and Property

4.2.1 The BTI Ethiopia Country Report 2020 noted:

‘The Ethiopian constitution recognizes private property but the right to acquire, use and transfer property can be limited for public use... The constitution declares land to be the “inalienable common property of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.” Land and any property on the land can be taken by the government for public use, which includes leasing the land for private investment, on the payment of compensation deemed appropriate by the state. The compensation is only for the value of the property on the land or investment made on the land and not the overall value of the investment.

‘In conjunction with the authoritarian tendencies of the government and the absence of the rule of law, the constitutionally guaranteed right to private property can easily be abused and violated.

‘While private property rights, with the exception of land, are protected, there is no credible and strong legal framework that ensures the effective exercise of these rights.’⁵⁹

4.2.2 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) ‘Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia ’ for the

⁵⁷ UN OHCHR, ‘[Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...](#)’ (para 47), 4 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁸ UN OCHA, ‘[ETHIOPIA: COVID-19..](#)’, 8 August 2020

⁵⁹ BTI, ‘[Ethiopia Country Report 2020](#)’ (Private Property), 2020

Universal Periodic Review, 4 March 2019 in joint submissions from multiple organisations noted:

‘JS12 stated that there had been an acute shortage of housing in urban areas and with high increases in rental access to affordable housing had been limited. JS7 stated that the housing crisis had arose because of the absence of legislation promoting housing cooperatives, protecting buyers and guaranteeing access to affordable rental houses. Ongoing housing projects had been plagued by corruption and relied on the private sector, who had not always [sic] efficient. Although some of the housing units intended for people with low incomes had been subsidised by the State, those units had been sold at prices unfordable to those people.

‘JS7 stated that the development plan for Addis Ababa had envisaged the demolition of all the slums and relocation of residents to new places. However, residents had been relocated to unsuitable locations with underdeveloped infrastructures and facilities. In addition, the accommodation provided had no water and electricity services.’⁶⁰

For a list of the stakeholders cited see the [‘Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia’](#) pages 11-12.

- 4.2.3 UN Habitat noted in 2020 ‘To accommodate the urban population explosion, ...[t]he existing housing stock has to... expand by about 5 million new household units.’⁶¹
- 4.2.4 The CIA World Factbook noted: ‘Under Ethiopia's constitution, the state owns all land and provides long-term leases to tenants. Title rights in urban areas, particularly Addis Ababa, are poorly regulated, and subject to corruption.’⁶²

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4.3 Social welfare

- 4.3.1 The BTI ‘Ethiopia Country Report 2020’ noted:

‘Ethiopia is a poor country that does not provide a comprehensive, state-funded welfare system for its citizens (besides a small pension system for state employees and occasional safety net arrangements that are put in place to prevent food shortages caused by drought and unexpected weather conditions from escalating into famine). The majority of the population is at risk of poverty. An estimated 7.9 million people in Ethiopia require emergency food assistance, according to the UN. Informal social safety nets are also provided by the Orthodox Church, protestant churches and mosques, as well as the traditional family, clan or village structures.’⁶³

- 4.3.2 For more detailed information on social protection in Ethiopia see [OECD Financing Social Protection In Ethiopia: A Long-Term Perspective](#)

See also [Healthcare](#)

⁶⁰ UN OHCHR, ‘[Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...](#)’ (para 50-51), 4 March 2019

⁶¹ UN Habitat, ‘[Un-Habitat Sub-Saharan Africa Atlas](#)’ (p.46), 2020, [url](#)

⁶² CIA, ‘[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)’, 10 August 2020

⁶³ BTI, ‘[Ethiopia Country Report 2020](#)’ (Welfare regime), 2020

5. Political system

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The Freedom House report, 'Freedom in the World 2020 Ethiopia' (Freedom House report 2020), published 4 March 2020 covering events of 2019 noted:

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

'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.'⁶⁴

- 5.1.2 The USSD report 2019 noted: 'Ethiopia is a federal republic. A coalition of ethnically based parties known as the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) controlled the government until its successor, the Prosperity Party, was formed in December. In the 2015 general elections, the EPRDF and affiliated parties won all 547 seats in the House of People's Representatives (parliament) to remain in power for a fifth consecutive five-year term.'⁶⁵
- 5.1.3 The Ethiopian elections were due to be held in August 2020 but were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, no new date had been announced⁶⁶.
- 5.1.4 For information on the ruling party, the Prosperity Party (PP) (formerly the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)), the political landscape and political opposition groups and their treatment, see Country Policy and Information Note: [Ethiopia: opposition to the government](#).

6. History

- 6.1.1 For a history of Ethiopia and a timeline of events see [BBC, Ethiopia profile – Timeline](#).

⁶⁴ Freedom House, '[Freedom House report 2020](#)', 4 March 2020

⁶⁵ USSD, '[USSD report 2019](#)' (Executive summary), 11 March 2020

⁶⁶ Bloomberg, '[Ethiopia Postpones General Elections Because of Coronavirus](#)', 31 March 2020

- 6.1.2 See also the Ethiopia section of [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#).
- 6.1.3 For more information on recent political history see Country Policy and Information Note: [Ethiopia: opposition to the government](#).

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Section 7 updated: 06 May 2020

7. Media and telecommunications

7.1.1 The American export.gov website stated:

'There is only one telecommunication service provider in the country--the state-owned Ethio Telecom (ET) that operates all fixed, mobile, and internet services. Phone and internet services are poor due to the lack of sufficient infrastructure, lack of competition, and frequent power outages, although this capacity has improved with Ethiopia's connection to the undersea/ground fiber optic cable built by Seacom via Djibouti. SIM cards and phone cards (for minutes) are available for sale through retail outlets, supermarkets, and hotels. There are pay phones available both inside the airport and in parts of the city. Internet service is available at major hotels (Although fees can be high) and at numerous internet cafes throughout the capital and in some larger regional cities.' ⁶⁷

7.1.2 Key facts:

International dialling code:	+ 251 ⁶⁸
Time in Ethiopia:	see World Clock
Internet domain:	.et ⁶⁹
Main press:	Addis Zemen - state-owned daily Ethiopian Herald – state-owned, (English) The Daily Monitor – private, (English) Addis Admass – private, (Amharic) weekly The Reporter – private, (English) webpages Capital – (English), business weekly Addis Fortune – (English) business weekly ⁷⁰
Television stations:	Ethiopian Television (ETV) Fana TV Walta TV ESAT ⁷¹
Radio stations:	Radio Ethiopia - state-owned, operates national service and regional stations Voice of Tigray Revolution - Tigray Regional State government radio Radio Fana - founded in 1994 by ruling party

⁶⁷ Export.gov, '[Ethiopia – Business Travel](#)', 30 October 2019

⁶⁸ Country Code, '[Ethiopia](#)', n.d

⁶⁹ 101domain.com, '[Ethiopia](#)', n.d

⁷⁰ BBC, '[Ethiopia profile – Media](#)', 23 September 2018

⁷¹ BBC, '[Ethiopia profile – Media](#)', 23 September 2018

	Sheger FM - private, Addis Ababa Zami Radio - private, Addis Ababa ⁷²
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7.1.3 Other notable points:

- 1.181 million subscribers have access to the landline telephone network.
- 15.7 million people have access to the internet (July 2016 estimate, approximate).
- 62.6 million subscribers have access to the mobile telephone network⁷³.

See also [Media freedom](#)

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Section 8 updated: 29 May 2019

8. Citizenship and nationality

- 8.1.1 The Ethiopian Nationality Law Proclamation No. 378/2003 states how Ethiopian nationality can be obtained, namely – naturalisation, descent (at least one parent has to be Ethiopian) and marriage. Dual nationality is not recognised by the nationality law⁷⁴.
- 8.1.2 The Ethiopian constitution confirms that: ‘any person of either sex shall be an Ethiopian national where both or either parent is Ethiopian,’ and, ‘foreign nationals may acquire Ethiopian nationality.’⁷⁵ The constitution also states that: ‘No Ethiopian national shall be deprived of his or her Ethiopian nationality against his or her will’, and Ethiopians have the right to change their nationality⁷⁶.

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Section 9 updated: 4 June 2019

9. Official documents

9.1 Registration of births, marriages and deaths

- 9.1.1 On 4 August 2016, Ethiopia introduced a permanent, compulsory and universal registration and certification of births, deaths, marriages and divorces. Apart from divorce decrees, all certificates are available in the local language or English⁷⁷.
- 9.1.2 UNICEF noted in 2016 that 90% of the population under 18 years old were unregistered⁷⁸.
- 9.1.3 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths in Ethiopia is relatively new and largely confined to urban areas⁷⁹.

⁷² BBC, ‘[Ethiopia profile – Media](#)’, 23 September 2018

⁷³ CIA, ‘[World Factbook, Ethiopia](#)’, 10 August 2020

⁷⁴ Chilot.me, ‘[Ethiopian Nationality Law Proclamation No. 378/2003](#)’

⁷⁵ [Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia](#), (Article 6) , 21 August 1995

⁷⁶ [Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia](#), (Article 33), 21 August 1995

⁷⁷ UNICEF Ethiopia, ‘[Ethiopia: Vital events registration launched](#)’, 25 August 2016

⁷⁸ UNICEF Ethiopia, ‘[Ethiopia: Vital events registration launched](#)’, 25 August 2016

⁷⁹ USSD, ‘[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

9.2 Birth and death certificates

- 9.2.1 Birth certificates are only available to those born in Ethiopia and are issued by the Vital Events Statics Registration Agency [VERA]. Parents of children up to 18 years old can register their children's birth in the local district by presenting a hospital birth certificate, baptismal certificate, or school document to obtain a birth certificate. Any of the above documents and an identity card are required for the issuance of birth certificates for persons over the age of 18⁸⁰.
- 9.2.2 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that VERA is the issuing authority for death certificates. If the death occurred at home, an acknowledgement of dwellers association (Eder) or three witnesses, and a certificate from the church indicating where the body is buried, are required for the issuance of a death certificate from the local district authority. If the death occurred in a hospital, a death certificate issued by the hospital and a church or burial site certificate is required for the issuance of a death certificate from the local district authority. Certified copies are available⁸¹.
- 9.2.3 The Australian DFAT 'Country Information Report Ethiopia' (The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report), published 12 August 2020 stated:
- 'The format of birth and death certificates is not uniform, and varies by state. All legitimate birth and death certificates contain a photograph of the applicant and wet seals of the issuing authority. Birth and death certificates are issued in two languages: (1) English; and (2) either Amharic or the local language of the state of issuance.
- 'In December 2018, there were approximately 18,600 kebeles across Ethiopia, 90 per cent of which were providing civil registration services to the public through VERA. VERA was established in 2016 to improve civil registration and serve as a central repository, at the national level, of births, deaths, adoptions and other vital events like marriages and divorces. Around 92 per cent of kebeles are situated in rural areas. Kebeles are accessible by foot for the majority of the population.'⁸²

For more information on birth and death certificates see:

[US Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs](#), and [DFAT Country Information Report Ethiopia 2020](#)

9.3 Marriage certificates

- 9.3.1 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that the issuing authority for marriage certificates is the Vital Events Statics Registration Agency. The physical presence of the bride and groom at their local district authority office with their IDs and 2 witnesses for each is required. The marriage will be registered in a log book. If a couple are married in a traditional or religious ceremony, the bride and groom may register and

⁸⁰ USSD, '[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)', Ethiopia, n.d.

⁸¹ USSD, '[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)', Ethiopia, n.d.

⁸² DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 49), 12 August 2020

obtain a civil marriage certificate at their local district authority. Certified copies of marriage certificates are available⁸³.

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9.4 Divorce certificates

- 9.4.1 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that the issuing authority for divorce certificates is the Vital Events Statics Registration Agency. A court divorce decree has to be produced before a divorce certificate can be issued. Certified copies are available. Most marriages in Ethiopia are religious in nature and sometimes customary. Nevertheless, a civil divorce procedure is mandatory for all divorces to be valid⁸⁴.

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9.5 National identity cards

- 9.5.1 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that national identity cards are issued by districts to persons eighteen years old and older. The issuing authority is the Vital Events Statistics Registration Agency. There is no uniform identification document. Certified copies are not available⁸⁵.
- 9.5.2 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:
- ‘Ethiopians use national identity cards (also known as kebele cards) as their primary identification document. National identity cards are issued by VERA via the kebele in which one is resident. National identity cards are required to obtain a passport or driver’s license and at any other time when an ID is required. National identity cards are normally issued at 18 years of age. They require renewal every two years at a cost of ETB50-100 (AUD 2.50-5).
- ‘National identity cards do not take a uniform format, and vary between states. They all contain a photograph of the cardholder; their name and address; and the date of issue. Since late 2019, new cards no longer list the cardholder’s ethnicity. New-style identification cards issued in Addis Ababa since the fourth quarter of 2019 are computer-generated, and are similar in appearance to a credit card. National identity cards issued in rural areas may be handwritten, and may appear as a small booklet or cardboard identification card.’⁸⁶

For information on identity cards and relocation see [DFAT Country Information Report Ethiopia 2020](#) (National Identity Cards)

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9.6 Prison release documents

- 9.6.1 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that prison release documents are issued by local district authorities to persons over the age of 18. There is no uniform identification document. Certified copies are available⁸⁷.

⁸³ USSD, ‘[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

⁸⁴ USSD, ‘[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

⁸⁵ USSD, ‘[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

⁸⁶ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 49), 12 August 2020

⁸⁷ USSD, ‘[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

9.7 Military discharge documents

- 9.7.1 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated military discharge documents are available in principal to any person who has served in the military. Military records are generally available. The discharge document is called a letter of discharge and the issuing authority is the Military Personnel Department. Certified copies are not available⁸⁸.

9.8 Passports

- 9.8.1 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that passport documents are issued by the Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs for a 5-year period. There are 3 types of passport - regular, diplomatic, and official. To obtain a passport, an ID card and birth certificate are required. In emergency cases and for one-way travel only, Ethiopian embassies or consulates may issue a 'laissez passer' document, which are valid for six months⁸⁹.
- 9.8.2 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:
- 'All Ethiopian citizens are legally entitled to obtain an Ethiopian passport. To obtain a passport, an applicant must present: a completed passport application form; an application fee; a national identification card or government employee card (for applicants over the age of 18); a birth certificate (for applicants between six months and 18 years of age); a clinic card or letter from the institution of birth (for applicants under six months of age); passport photographs; and a recently issued police clearance certificate. Fingerprints are also taken at the time of application. Passports can be obtained countrywide, through local branches of the Immigration Office.'⁹⁰

See also [Fraudulent documents](#)

9.9 Fraudulent documents

- 9.9.1 A response to an information request published by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC), dated July 2016, stated that fraudulent identity documents were not prevalent in Ethiopia. According to sources, Ethiopia does not have a universal format for their national identity card and there is no national or regional Ethiopian identity card. Each kebele (local authority) has its own identity card. There have been instances when false identity documentation have been used⁹¹.
- 9.9.2 The USSD Bureau of Consular Affairs website stated that, '...even genuinely-issued documents can be obtained with false information due to the lack of a centralized database. A church-issued document, an acknowledgment from one's district, and affidavits from three witnesses, all

⁸⁸ USSD, '[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)', Ethiopia, n.d.

⁸⁹ USSD, '[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)', Ethiopia, n.d.

⁹⁰ DAFT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 50), 12 August 2020

⁹¹ IRBC, '[Ethiopia: Availability of fraudulent identity documents...](#)', 28 July 2016

of which can be obtained for a price, are sufficient evidence for issuance of certificates. Relationships are rarely investigated for veracity.’⁹²

9.9.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

‘The NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] controls travel documentation. Fraudulent passports are rare and expensive to produce because of their security features. Local sources told DFAT that Ethiopian passports are typically genuine and reliable, but sometimes contain falsified visas to build up a fake travel history. Genuine passports based on fraudulent supporting documents are common.

‘Ethiopian civil documents such as birth and death certificates are issued on the basis of statements made by the applicant and supporting witnesses — limited supporting documentation is required....Documents considered to be higher-risk in terms of fraud include birth certificates, death certificates and national identification cards...

‘The introduction of some technical features means legal documents are increasingly more difficult to replicate. According to the Danish Immigration Service, it is possible to pay bribes to facilitate the introduction of inaccurate information into genuine documents, including national identification cards. Genuine documents containing inaccurate information about the document holder (e.g. relating to their age) are reportedly common.

‘Possession of a fraudulent legal document is punishable by three years’ imprisonment.’⁹³

For information on security features on Ethiopian passports see [DFAT Country Information Report Ethiopia 2020](#) (passports).

See also [National Intelligence and Security Service \(NISS\)](#)

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Section 10 updated: 21 July 2020

10. Healthcare

10.1 Organisation and capability

10.1.1 The Pacific Prime website provided the following information:

‘Ethiopia currently has about 1 doctor per 100,000 people, 119 hospitals, and 412 health facilities. These public centers are usually in urban areas and can only provide basic health services and generally have insufficient medical staff, supplies, and medicine. With a large patient base, waiting times can also be extremely long. Facilities in rural areas are extremely rare. These facilities only provide the most basic health services and almost none have anything beyond basic medical supplies. The only private facilities are ones established by NGOs and other charities. Most of these provide free healthcare or services at a very low rate. However, even these facilities are not well equipped and medical supplies will vary.’⁹⁴

⁹² USSD, ‘[Bureau of Consular Affairs, visa reciprocity and civil documents](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

⁹³ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report – Ethiopia](#)’ (page 51-52), 12 August 2020

⁹⁴ Pacific Prime, ‘[Ethiopia Medical Insurance](#)’, n.d

- 10.1.2 The same source provided the following information: ‘Ethiopia’s healthcare system is inadequate and its country’s health indicators rank as one of the lowest in the world...Not only does Ethiopia have insufficient facilities, they also lack equipment, staff, and supplies. In rural areas, it is even harder to find a healthcare center or medical personnel.’⁹⁵
- 10.1.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated: ‘Ethiopia’s health system has undergone a significant transformation over the last two decades, including an expansion of health facilities and an increase in the number of health professionals working across the country.’⁹⁶
- 10.1.4 The same report considered that:
- ‘Under-five child mortality has been reduced by two-thirds and AIDS-related deaths have fallen fivefold since 2003. Stunting is down by one-third since 2000. Average life expectancy has increased from 56.3 years in 2005 to 66.2 years today. These gains have been achieved from a low base, and Ethiopia still lags on a number of health indicators...
- ‘...Access to health care is an ongoing challenge, particularly in rural areas. To help improve availability, the federal government has deployed 38,000 health extension workers across the country. These workers provide door-to-door services, with a focus on the needs of women and children in rural areas. Around 3 million female community volunteers have also been trained and deployed countrywide, to encourage facility-based birth delivery. While the availability of health facilities and health professionals has improved, it remains insufficient overall. According to the UNDP, Ethiopia has one physician and three hospital beds for every 10,000 people. Availability is particularly pronounced in rural areas, which lack hospitals (people in remote areas must often travel to their state capital to access a hospital). Public health facilities in the major cities, including Addis Ababa, are basic. Private clinics and hospitals exist but are financially prohibitive for the average person.’⁹⁷
- See also [Infant mortality](#)
- 10.1.5 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) ‘Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia’ for the Universal Periodic Review, 4 March 2019 in joint submissions from multiple organisations noted: ‘JS9⁹⁸ stated that hospitals had a shortage of physicians in some specialities such as orthopaedics and dermatology. JS12 noted that there were significant gaps in the quality of midwifery education in areas such as obstetric complications, gynaecology, public health and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.’⁹⁹
- 10.1.6 Encyclopaedia Britannica noted:
- ‘Ethiopia’s health care system includes primary health centres, clinics, and hospitals. Only major cities have hospitals with full-time physicians, and most

⁹⁵ Pacific Prime, ‘[Ethiopia Medical Insurance](#)’, n.d

⁹⁶ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 13), 12 August 2020

⁹⁷ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 13), 12 August 2020

⁹⁸ Ethiopian National Association for the Blind, Consortium of Ethiopian Rights Organizations, and Advocates Ethiopia.

⁹⁹ UN OHCHR, ‘[Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...](#)’ (para 55), 4 March 2019

of the hospitals are in Addis Ababa. Access to modern health care is very limited, and in many rural areas it is virtually non-existent...

Most health facilities are government owned...Medical schools in the country continue to produce general practitioners and a few specialists, but the scale of output does not match the rising demand. Shortages of equipment and drugs are persistent problems in the country. Widespread use of traditional healing, including such specialized occupations as bonesetting, midwifery, and minor surgery (including circumcision), continues to be important.¹⁰⁰

- 10.1.7 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) 'Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia ' for the Universal Periodic Review, 4 March 2019 in joint submissions from multiple organisations noted:

'JS7 stated that the neglect of the public healthcare sector was clearly visible and the low levels of public spending on health had compromised the quality of services in most health institutions. Additionally, there had been an imbalance in the distribution of health services between urban and rural areas. Although 80 percent of the population lived in rural areas, only a small portion of the health institutions were located in those areas.'¹⁰¹

- 10.1.8 The United States Department of State Overseas Security Advisory Council, 'Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report', (OASC report 2020) published 10 April 2020 noted:

'Health facilities are very limited and are considered adequate only for stabilization and emergency care. Hospitals in Addis Ababa suffer from inadequate facilities, outdated equipment, and shortages of supplies/medications. There is a shortage of physicians and other qualified medical personnel. Emergency assistance is limited. Some hospitals have ambulance services, but these are limited, unreliable, and require an on-scene cash payment.'¹⁰²

- 10.1.9 For information on the government hospitals that have an ambulance service see the [US Embassy website](#)

- 10.1.10 At the time of writing, the Covid-19 pandemic was occurring. The DFAT report 2020 noted 'The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to increase the risks of morbidity from other conditions. As at 5 July 2020, Ethiopia had recorded over 6,500 cases of COVID-19 and 118 deaths. At the time of writing, it was too early to judge the pandemic's eventual impact.'¹⁰³

- 10.1.11 For up to date information on the situation in Ethiopia including the response to Covid-19 see the [World Health Organisation](#) website pages on Ethiopia.

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10.2 Mental healthcare

- 10.2.1 An Ethiopian Psychiatric Association (EPA) article about mental health services in Ethiopia, dated 19 July 2018, stated:

¹⁰⁰ Encyclopedia Britannica, '[Ethiopia](#)' (Health and welfare), (n.d)

¹⁰¹ UN OHCHR, '[Summary of Stakeholders' submissions...](#)' (para 54), 4 March 2019

¹⁰² OASC, '[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)' (Medical emergencies), 10 April 2020

¹⁰³ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 13), 12 August 2020

‘It is estimated that about 25 million Ethiopians s [sic] suffer some form of mental disorder, while less than 10 percent receives any form of treatment, and less than 1 percent receive specialist care.

‘Psychiatrists are an extremely scarce resource in Ethiopia; in the population of over 101 million, there are only 63 psychiatrists, yielding a ratio of 0.65 psychiatrists to 1 million people. Most of the psychiatrists are concentrated in the large cities and consequently, treatment gap[s] exists as a high proportion of Ethiopians live in rural areas (more than 80 percent of the populations of the country live in rural areas) and therefore have no access to mental health services.’ ¹⁰⁴

10.2.2 The same EPA report noted the difficulties with the community model of mental health care in Ethiopia, including:

‘...the uneven distribution of mental health resources, problems of accessing services in remote locations, affordability, and social acceptability in relation to ignorance and belief systems. Families often have to make out-of-pocket payments for these services due to non availability of social support systems. Specifically, on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), there is limited coverage for mental health care.

‘The resultant effect...is the rising number of people with mental health disorders living on the streets.

‘In order to overcome problems of low coverage of mental health service[s] in Ethiopia, [the] ministry of health is practicing community based mental health services including integration of mental health service at primary health care (PHC) level.’ ¹⁰⁵

10.2.3 The OASC report 2020 noted: ‘Psychiatric services and medications are very limited; there is only one psychiatric hospital, St. Yared, which requires payment prior to admission.’ ¹⁰⁶

10.2.4 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report noted:

‘The federal government has devoted greater resources to mental health and psychosocial support since 2010. In 2012, Ethiopia adopted a National Mental Health Strategy to promote accessible and affordable mental health care. The Strategy mandates that mental health be integrated into Ethiopia’s primary health care system. Psychiatric services are offered in most public hospitals, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also active in this field... Mental health services are available, particularly in Addis Ababa and other major urban areas, but local sources told DFAT the average person is often unaware of their existence. Mental health services are scarce in rural areas, where most of the population lives but where health infrastructure is limited. Private mental health clinics operate in Addis Ababa (including the Sitota Center for Mental Health Care), although these are financially prohibitive for the average person. There is one dedicated psychiatric hospital in Addis Ababa (St. Amanuel Mental Specialized Hospital).

¹⁰⁴ Ethiopian Psychiatric Association, ‘[Mental Health Services in Ethiopia](#)’, 19 July 2018

¹⁰⁵ Ethiopian Psychiatric Association, ‘[Mental Health Services in Ethiopia](#)’, 19 July 2018

¹⁰⁶ OASC, ‘[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)’ (Medical emergencies), 10 April 2020

Sources told DFAT that most Ethiopians eschew the notion of seeking professional services to treat mental illness, preferring traditional treatment methods (e.g. use of holy water) instead.¹⁰⁷

- 10.2.5 See also the World Health Organisation, [Ethiopia country data and statistics](#), the [Ethiopian Ministry of Health](#) website, and the World Health Organisation [Mental Health Atlas 2017](#).

Official – Sensitive**Do not print or disclose the contents of this section**

For information on the treatment of various medical conditions and availability of medicines, see CPIT's country of origin information (COI) [medical responses for Ethiopia](#).

End of non-disclosable section

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¹⁰⁷ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 14), 12 August 2020

Key issues relating to protection claims

Section 11 updated: 11 May 2020

11. Children

11.1 Infant mortality

- 11.1.1 The UNICEF report, Maternal and Newborn Health Disparities – Ethiopia, undated, stated that Ethiopia's neonatal mortality rate (NMR) is 28 deaths per 1,000 live births. The NMR in rural areas is 43 deaths per 1,000 live births and 41 deaths per 1,000 live births in urban areas. The NMR among the poorest households is 50 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to 37 deaths per 1,000 live births among the richest households¹⁰⁸.

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11.2 Education

- 11.2.1 The Scholaro website stated:

'Primary Education

'The academic year runs from September to July and education is free at the primary level. Students enter school at age 7 and compulsory (primary) education lasts for six years and ends at age 12...Education in Ethiopia remains less than satisfactory. In rural areas where facilities are often thinly spread and there are wide disparities between the poorest and richest children, especially at the primary level.

'Middle Education

'Middle school, or lower secondary school, lasts for four years. Lower secondary school covers the first four years of the six year complete secondary education program. Students are generally ages 13 - 16. Lower secondary education culminates in the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate, which grants access to upper secondary education.

'Secondary Education

'Upper secondary education begins at age 17 and lasts for two years. Two concentrations, science or social science, are offered and upon completion of study the students sit for the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate and more recently the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination...

'Vocational Education

'A vocational stream is also offered and lasts 2 or 3 years in the fields of teacher training, commerce, technology, agriculture, and military training. Upon completion of the vocational track, students receive the Technical and Vocational Education Diploma or Training or Teacher Training College Diploma...

'Tertiary Education

¹⁰⁸ UNICEF, '[Maternal and Newborn Health Disparities – Ethiopia](#)', n.d

'Tertiary education options range from the Teacher's Certificate (one year of study at a teacher training college), to Diploma/Advanced Diploma (Diploma/Advanced Diploma - 2 or 3 years of study offered by engineering and technological institutes, health and commercial institutions, agricultural colleges), to the three year Diploma from teacher training colleges.

'The first university degree, or bachelor's degree, ranges from four years for arts/science/education, to five years for pharmacy /engineering /architecture / law, to six years for medical/veterinary medicine programs. The second university degree offers master's degrees, which last for two years after the bachelor's degree, along with certificates of specialization / specialization diplomas, which are three years beyond medical programs. The doctoral degree requires three to five years of study post-master.

'According to the Ministry of Education, undergraduate enrollment at public universities...[in] 2007/2008 [was] 125,000 and women make up almost 30% of undergraduate and 10% of graduate populations.¹⁰⁹

11.2.2 The National Report submitted by the Federal Attorney General for Ethiopia to The Human Rights Council's working group for the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), during the May 2019 meeting stated that:

'The Government has given high priority to education for which it is allocating ever increasing resources to the sector with the view to realizing the right to education. The primary strategic direction of the education sector is to ensure equitable access to quality education at all levels. Primary education is free to all citizens, and all children of school age are strongly encouraged to attend school. In 2017/18, primary education was provided in more than 51 mother tongue languages compared to 49 in 2014/2015.

'The number of primary schools (Grades 1-8) increased from 30,495 in 2012/13 to 36,466 in 2017/18. In other words, almost 6000 primary schools were either constructed or opened during the last four years. The net enrolment rate increased from 85.9 percent in 2012/13 to 100.05% in 2017/18 (the net enrollment ratio for primary level has been exceeded but figures suggest inaccuracies in population calculations and recorded child age at the point of enrollment). The number of students in primary schools increased from 17.4 million in 2012/13 to 20,783,078 in 2016/17. Currently the national pupil section ratio (PSR) has reached 56 and all regions have achieved a primary pupil teacher ratio of below 50 with the exception of Somali and Oromia regional states; in 2017/18 this figure stood at 43. The Gross Enrolment Rate in primary schools was 96.4% by 2010/11. The figure rose to 109.3% in 2017/18. This trend however is not followed through to secondary level with the gap becoming higher at tertiary level.'¹¹⁰

11.2.3 The USSD report 2019 stated:

'Primary education is universal and tuition free, but there were not enough schools to accommodate the country's children, particularly in rural areas. The cost of school supplies was prohibitive for many families. The most

¹⁰⁹ Sclaro.com, '[Education System in Ethiopia](#)', n.d

¹¹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, '[National report](#)' (para 92-93), 25 February 2019

recent data showed the net primary school enrollment rate was 90 percent for boys and 84 percent for girls.’¹¹¹

11.2.4 The same report noted:

‘School enrollment was low, particularly in rural areas. To reinforce the importance of attending school, joint NGO, government, and community-based awareness efforts targeted communities where children were heavily engaged in agricultural work.’¹¹²

11.2.5 The Freedom House report 2020 noted: ‘With few exceptions, institutions of higher education are funded and administered by the federal government, which also sets admission standards and student quotas.’¹¹³

11.2.6 The same report noted: ‘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 [Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul Gumuz] states.’¹¹⁴

11.2.7 The BTI Ethiopia Country Report 2020 noted: ‘The northern people, mainly Tigranian and Amhara people, enjoy much better education facilities than the poorer and less educated people in the south and southeast.’¹¹⁵

11.2.8 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

‘... Ethiopia’s economic expansion has facilitated greater public spending on education ... Education outcomes are improving, albeit from a low base. ... Education services are more accessible, and of a higher quality, in urban areas.

‘Primary education (typically from seven to 15 years of age) is free, although the cost of school supplies can be prohibitive for some families, particularly in rural areas. Primary education instruction is provided in over 50 languages. Primary school enrolment tripled between 2000 and 2016. In 2017, 89 per cent of males and 83 per cent of females of primary school age were enrolled in primary school. Despite the relatively high enrolment rates, a large proportion of children do not complete primary school — according to UNICEF, fewer than six out of 10 children complete their primary school education. Primary school dropout rates are higher in rural areas.

‘Secondary school enrolments remain well below those for primary school — only 31 per cent of males and 30 per cent of females of secondary school age were enrolled in secondary school in 2017.’¹¹⁶

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11.3 Child labour

11.3.1 The United States Department of Labor’s (USDOL) annual report on child labor noted that in 2018:

¹¹¹ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

¹¹² USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 7.c), 11 March 2020

¹¹³ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section D3), 4 March 2020

¹¹⁴ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section G4), 4 March 2020

¹¹⁵ BTI, ‘[Ethiopia Country Report 2020](#)’ (Welfare regime), 2020

¹¹⁶ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 14), 12 August 2020

'In 2018, Ethiopia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor...children in Ethiopia continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. The law in Ethiopia does not include free basic education or a compulsory age for education, leaving children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Social programs to combat child labor have also not sufficiently targeted sectors with high incidences of child labor.'¹¹⁷

11.3.2 The USSD report 2019 stated:

'The law prohibits the worst forms of child labor. The government did not effectively enforce the applicable laws, and penalties were not sufficient to deter violations.

'By law the minimum age for wage or salaried employment is 14. The minimum age provisions, however, apply only to contractual labor and do not apply to self-employed children or children who perform unpaid work, who constituted the vast majority of employed children. The law prohibits hazardous or night work for children between the ages of 14 and 18. The law defines hazardous work as any work that could jeopardize a child's health. Prohibited work sectors include passenger transport, work in electric generation plants, factory work, underground work, street cleaning, and many other sectors. Hazardous work restrictions, however, do not cover traditional weaving, a form of work in which there is use of dangerous machinery, equipment, or tools. The law expressly excludes children younger than 16 attending vocational schools from the prohibition on hazardous work. The law does not permit children between the ages of 14 and 18 to work more than seven hours per day, between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., or on public holidays or rest days.

'Child labor remained a serious problem...'

'In both rural and urban areas, children often began working at young ages. Child labor was particularly pervasive in subsistence agricultural production, traditional weaving, fishing, and domestic work...'¹¹⁸

11.3.3 The Freedom House report 2020 noted: 'Child labor is prevalent in many agricultural households.'¹¹⁹

11.3.4 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

'Ethiopia has ratified all major international conventions on child labour. The minimum legal age for paid employment is 14 years. Children between the ages of 14 and 18 are banned from hazardous or night work ('hazardous work' being defined as work that could jeopardise the health of a child). In practice, these laws are rarely enforced, and child labour is common across the country, particularly in the agricultural sector but also in construction and manufacturing. Girls engaged in paid domestic work are vulnerable to mistreatment and sexual abuse. According to Save The Children, 27.4 per cent of children between the ages of five and 17 were engaged in child

¹¹⁷ USDL, '[2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Ethiopia](#)', 27 September 2019

¹¹⁸ USSD, '[USSD report 2019](#)' (section 7.c), 11 March 2020

¹¹⁹ Freedom House, '[Freedom House report 2020](#)' (section G4), 4 March 2020

labour in the period 2013-18. DFAT is not aware of any reports of child recruitment by Ethiopia's armed forces.' ¹²⁰

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11.4 Child and early marriage

11.4.1 The USSD report 2019 stated: 'The law sets the legal age of marriage for girls and boys at 18. Authorities did not enforce this law uniformly, and rural families sometimes were unaware of this provision. The government strategy to address underage marriage focused on education and mediation rather than punishment of offenders.' ¹²¹

11.4.2 The Freedom House report 2020 noted: '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.' ¹²²

11.4.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

'Ethiopia has committed to eliminating child marriage by 2025. The Family Code sets the minimum legal age for marriage at 18 years, although special dispensation may be granted for children to marry at 16 years, upon application by the child concerned and their parent/s or guardian/s. While the authorities and NGOs have sought to combat early marriage, and the median age for marriage has increased since 2000, the practice remains widespread (the UN has described it as 'rampant'). According to a study by the international charity Girls Not Brides, using UNICEF data, Ethiopia has the 15th highest rate of child marriages in the world (with 40 per cent of girls married by 18 years of age and 14 per cent by 15 years of age) and the 5th highest total number of child brides (about 2.1 million). Afar and Amhara states have the lowest median ages for marriage in the country.

'The abduction of young girls for marriage has historically occurred across Ethiopia; however, according to UNICEF and the Overseas Development Institute, the incidence of marriage by abduction has declined significantly in recent years. Abduction for marriage is illegal. In practice, perpetrators generally avoid punishment if the victim agrees to marriage.' ¹²³

11.4.4 In the same report DFAT assessed '...that girls face a high risk of ...early marriage' ¹²⁴

11.4.5 In July 2020 research from Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence considered that 'adolescent girls in rural areas and some adolescent boys are at heightened risk of child marriage even in the early phases of the covid-19 pandemic.' ¹²⁵

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¹²⁰ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 36), 12 August 2020

¹²¹ USSD, '[USSD report 2019](#)' (section 6.), 11 March 2020

¹²² Freedom House, '[Freedom House report 2020](#)' (section G3), 4 March 2020

¹²³ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 35-36), 12 August 2020

¹²⁴ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 35-36), 12 August 2020

¹²⁵ Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence, '[Child marriage risks...](#)' July 2020

11.5 Children's social care and support organisations

- 11.5.1 The National Report submitted by the Federal Attorney General for Ethiopia to The Human Rights Council's working group for the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), during the May 2019 meeting stated that:

'Ethiopia recognizes the need to take special measures to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

'To reduce the impact of the wrong perceptions of society about persons with disability, especially after the accession to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Government has worked to develop public awareness and delivered successive trainings on its implementation. Moreover, the Convention has been translated into five local languages and distributed to the public.

'Government institutions and private organizations give due emphasis to address the problems of children with disabilities at different levels and scales of interventions within their respective mandates. The Ministry of Education, for instance, has been providing inclusive support and attention to children with disabilities starting from their pre-school education. Nonetheless, despite all the efforts, accessibility of social services to persons with disabilities remains a major challenge.'¹²⁶

- 11.5.2 A number of [NGOs](#) are active in Ethiopia, which provide food, medication, shelter, clean water, education services, support for orphans and vulnerable children¹²⁷, including children with physical disabilities¹²⁸.
- 11.5.3 See also section 36 of the [Ethiopian constitution](#) about the rights of children.

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Section 12 updated: 11 May 2020

12. Female genital mutilation (FGM)

12.1 Legal rights

- 12.1.1 The 28 Too Many report of July 2018, 'Ethiopia: The law and FGM', stated:

'The main law governing FGM in Ethiopia is Proclamation No. 414/2004, also known as The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2004 (the Criminal Code). This is a federal act that makes it a criminal offence to perform or procure FGM in Ethiopia.

'In addition, as well as being a criminal offence, performing any action that causes bodily harm is a civil offence under the Ethiopian Civil Code (1960).

'What The Law Covers

'Articles 561–570 of Chapter III of the Criminal Code deal with 'Crimes Committed Against Life, Person and Health through Harmful Traditional Practices'. They criminalise the performance and procurement of FGM in Ethiopia, but do not provide a clear definition of the practice.

¹²⁶ UN Human Rights Council, '[National report](#)' (para 98-100), 25 February 2019

¹²⁷ Global Giving, '[Explore Projects in Ethiopia](#)', n.d

¹²⁸ Cheshire Ethiopia, '[History of Cheshire Ethiopia](#)', n.d.

‘Specifically, the Criminal Code sets out the following offences:

- Articles 561 and 562 refer to endangering life or causing bodily injury or mental impairment of a pregnant woman or new-born child as a result of the application of harmful traditional practices known by the medical profession to be harmful.
- Articles 565 and 566 respectively set out punishments for the performance of FGM on ‘a woman of any age’ and infibulation of ‘the genitalia of a woman’.
- Article 568 states that the transmission of communicable disease through harmful traditional practices is subject to penalties.
- Articles 569 and 570 cover the procurement of, and aiding and abetting, FGM by making it a criminal offence for ‘a parent or any other person’ to commission the practice or encourage someone to disregard the legislation prohibiting harmful traditional practices. They also criminalise organising or taking part in any movement that promotes FGM.

‘The Criminal Code does not specifically criminalise the failure to report FGM, whether it is planned or has taken place. However, more generally, Article 443 sets out the punishments for failing to report certain crimes... The Criminal Code also fails to protect uncut women (and their families) from verbal abuse or exclusion from society, which is included in the laws of some other countries in East Africa (such as Kenya and Uganda).

‘Regarding the liability of traditional practitioners, Article 2067(1) of the Civil Code may be applied to FGM performed on women and girls. It states the principle, ‘A person shall be liable where by his act he inflicts bodily harm on another’. As such, under Ethiopian law, victims of FGM could bring about actions that seek compensation from practitioners.’ ¹²⁹

12.1.2 The 28 Too Many report, ‘Ethiopia: The law and FGM’, also stated:

‘The Criminal Code establishes the following penalties for its violation:

- Article 565: Performing FGM on a woman of any age is punishable by imprisonment (where performance of this sentence can be suspended by the courts) for not less than three months or a fine of not less than 500 Birr (US\$188).
- Article 566(1): Infibulating the genitalia of a woman carries a punishment of imprisonment (which cannot be suspended) for a period of three to five years.
- Article 566(2): Where FGM results in injury to body or health, the punishment is imprisonment (which cannot be suspended) for a period of five to ten years.
- Article 569: A parent or any other person who participates in the commission of FGM is punishable by imprisonment (which can be suspended) for a period not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding 500 Birr (US\$18).

¹²⁹ 28 Too Many, [‘Ethiopia: The law and FGM’](#), July 2018

- Article 570: Encouraging another to disregard the law prohibiting FGM or organising or taking part in any movement that promotes FGM is punishable by imprisonment (which can be suspended) for a period of not less than three months or a fine of not less than 500 Birr (US\$ 18), or both.’¹³⁰

12.1.3 The USSD report 2019 stated: ‘The law criminalizes the practice of clitoridectomy and provides for three months’ imprisonment or a fine of at least 500 birr (\$17) for perpetrators. Infibulation of the genitals (the most extreme and dangerous form of FGM/C) is punishable by five to 10 years’ imprisonment.’¹³¹

12.1.4 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated ‘Article 35 of the constitution prohibits laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women. The Criminal Code explicitly outlaws Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is punishable by up to 10 years’ imprisonment.’¹³²

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12.2 Prevalence and practice

12.2.1 The 28 Too Many website stated:

‘FGM is practised across all regions, religions and ethnic groups in Ethiopia. FGM among women aged 15-49 is more prevalent in the east of the country, and the region with the highest prevalence is Somali, at 98.5%. The lowest prevalence is in Tigray, at 24.2%. It should be noted that small sample sizes were used in many of the regions and figures therefore may not be accurate. Women who live in rural areas are more likely to be cut (68.4% of women aged 15-49) than women who live in urban areas (53.9%).

‘The Somali are the ethnic group with the highest prevalence of FGM among women aged 15-49, at 98.5%, followed by the Afar, at 98.4% (however, once again, the small sample size makes this figure potentially unreliable). The ethnic group with the lowest prevalence is the Tigray, at 23%.

‘82.2% of Muslim women aged 15-49 have undergone FGM, compared to 54.2% of Orthodox women and 65.8% of Protestant women.

‘Between 2005 and 2016, the overall prevalence for women aged 15-49 fell from 74.3% to 65.2%. Due to the large age-range of women included, however, the overall prevalence alone may not fully reflect the progress that has been made in recent years. Breaking down the most recent data by age group shows that the prevalence for women aged 45-49 is 75.3%, while for the youngest age group this has fallen to 47.1%. Despite the fact that a small proportion of women may be cut after the age of 15, the lower prevalences among younger women suggest that the practice is declining.’¹³³

12.2.2 The OASC report 2020 noted: ‘Many women and girls have undergone FGM/C, though it is much less common in urban areas.’¹³⁴

¹³⁰ 28 Too Many, ‘[Ethiopia: The law and FGM](#)’, July 2018.

¹³¹ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

¹³² DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 34), 12 August 2020

¹³³ 28 Too Many, ‘[Ethiopia](#)’, n.d

¹³⁴ OASC, ‘[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)’ (Personal Identity Concerns), 10 April 2020

12.2.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report noted:

‘While the incidence of FGM has declined, it remains widespread, particularly in rural areas... According to the UNDP, 65.2 per cent of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone FGM. Local sources told DFAT that the incidence of FGM is highest in Muslim-majority Afar and Somali states, where rates are near universal. While the practice of FGM is most common among Muslims, it is not exclusive to them — FGM occurs in Amhara and Tigray states, for example, although the practice has declined in these areas since 2014 (FGM is least prevalent in Tigray State, at 23 per cent). FGM is performed predominantly in the home, usually by an older woman with mid-wife experience. Only a small percentage of FGM procedures are performed by health professionals.’¹³⁵

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12.3 Enforcement of the law

12.3.1 The 28 Too Many report, ‘Ethiopia: The law and FGM’, stated:

‘There have been intermittent reports regarding law enforcement and FGM in Ethiopia over recent years, but detailed information on cases is not widely available. In 2012, for instance, a cutter and the parents of six girls were arrested and charged. The cutter received a six-month sentence and the parents were fined 500 Birr (equivalent to US\$27 at the time). Isolated cases were also reported in 2011 and 2010.

‘It appears that, although the number of arrests may have increased, law enforcement is weak and very few cases proceed to court in Ethiopia. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation (UNJP) report for 2015 noted that, although 279 arrests had been recorded in Ethiopia that year, there was only one conviction. In 2016, again, only one conviction was recorded.’¹³⁶

12.3.2 The 28 Too Many report, Ethiopia: The law and FGM, also stated:

‘Despite national legislation being in place, those working in communities to end FGM report continuing challenges around knowledge and enforcement of the law. Awareness of the law and its content is very poor, even among those in law-enforcement agencies, and there is a reluctance by local officials to fully enforce the law. Some local community leaders still support traditional practitioners who cut girls, even though FGM is illegal. It is also reported that in many rural communities, it is not the police or courts that people naturally turn to: disputes are more likely to be settled through traditional or informal justice systems such as those run by elders.

‘Reports suggest, too, that rural families have increasingly carried out FGM in secret to avoid the law and that this can put girls at even greater risk (for example, because the practice often takes place at night with poor lighting and using less-experienced practitioners). Women and girls are further disadvantaged in respect of awareness of the law and their rights by the low level of literacy in Ethiopia (estimated to be 41.1% for women in 2015).

¹³⁵ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (pages 34-35), 12 August 2020

¹³⁶ 28 Too Many, ‘[Ethiopia: The law and FGM](#)’, July 2018

‘The media continues to report limited application of the law in Ethiopia; however, regulations on press freedom and civil-society activity around human rights, including work to promote gender equality, remain in place. These restrict access to and exchanges of information, which in turn reduce the ability to gather data and share knowledge in the work to end FGM.

‘As well as low awareness of the law in remote rural communities, further concerns raised by civil society during the course of this research include the fear women and girls have of reporting FGM and that the whole mechanism and structure around the law makes it inaccessible. It is not felt that education around the law has yet had a lasting impact on behaviour, and the challenges of adherence to Sharia law and the practice of sunna 19 as a form of FGM remain a barrier to law enforcement.’¹³⁷

- 12.3.3 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) ‘Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia ’ for the Universal Periodic Review, 4 March 2019 in joint submissions from multiple organisations noted:

‘JS8¹³⁸ stated that the Ministry of Health had issued a circular banning medicalization of female genital mutilation in all facilities. It added that according to Government reports, between 2016 and 2018, tens of millions of people have been reached through awareness and mobilization campaigns, but that it had been difficult to assess the impact of such measures. There was also underreporting of cases of female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices.’¹³⁹

- 12.3.4 The Freedom House report 2020 noted: ‘Female genital mutilation (FGM) is... 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.’¹⁴⁰

- 12.3.5 The USSD report 2019 noted ‘FGM/C is illegal, with punishment including imprisonment and a fine, depending on the crime. The government did not actively enforce this prohibition... According to government sources, there had never been a criminal charge regarding FGM/C, but media reported limited application of the law.’¹⁴¹

- 12.3.6 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report noted:

‘Ethiopia has committed to eliminating FGM by 2025 and launched a national roadmap to this end in August 2019, led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (a National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children, including FGM, was previously adopted in 2013). In 2017, the Ministry of Health banned the medicalisation of FGM in all public and private medical facilities in the country... The law

¹³⁷ 28 Too Many, ‘[Ethiopia: The law and FGM](#)’, July 2018

¹³⁸ Ethiopian Women’s Lawyers Association, Network of Ethiopian Women’s Associations, Ethiopian Human Rights Council and Sara Justice from all Women Association

¹³⁹ UN OHCHR, ‘[Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...](#)’ (para 22), 4 March 2019

¹⁴⁰ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section G3), 4 March 2020

¹⁴¹ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

against FGM is rarely enforced — DFAT is not aware of recent prosecutions.’¹⁴²

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Section 13 updated: 12 August 2020

13. Freedom of movement

13.1.1 Article 32 of the Ethiopian constitution of 1995 stated: ‘Any Ethiopian or foreign national lawfully in Ethiopia has, within the national territory, the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence, as well as the freedom to leave the country at any time he wishes to’, and also stated: ‘Any Ethiopian national has the right to return to his country.’¹⁴³

13.1.2 The USSD report 2019 stated:

‘The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation...At times authorities or armed groups limited the ability of humanitarian organizations to operate in areas of insecurity, such as on the country’s borders.

‘Throughout the year local media reported various Amhara Tigray roadblocks operated by civilians, some of which were still in place as of September [2019]. While the roadblocks are not state sanctioned, both regional and federal authorities were unable to open the roads for free movement.’¹⁴⁴

13.1.3 The Freedom House report 2020 noted:

‘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 [Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region] 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.’¹⁴⁵

13.1.4 The BBC noted that the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia opened in 2018 after closing in 1998. However, as at 4 May 2020, only informal foot travel between the two countries was allowed¹⁴⁶.

13.1.5 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

‘The right to freedom of movement is largely respected in practice (including during the 2016-18 State of Emergency), and Ethiopians can and do relocate internally. Many do so in pursuit of greater economic opportunities. Food insecurity and water shortages are also major drivers of internal relocation.

¹⁴² DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 34), 12 August 2020

¹⁴³ [Ethiopian constitution 1995](#), 1995

¹⁴⁴ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 1.f), 11 March 2020

¹⁴⁵ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section G1), 4 March 2020

¹⁴⁶ BBC, ‘[The Ethiopia-Eritrea border dividing families](#)’, 4 May 2020

As Ethiopia's commercial capital and with a history of inter-ethnic coexistence, Addis Ababa attracts significant migration from the regions. Inter-ethnic clashes – and associated blockades and road closures – in some parts of the country are an impediment to freedom of movement and internal relocation...

'A lack of family connections and financial resources, particularly for vulnerable groups like divorced women, young mothers and victims of domestic violence, can limit internal relocation options. Ethnicity and language differences – and associated perceptions of discrimination – can also be barriers to internal movement and relocation. Amharas have more freedom to move around Ethiopia given the presence of these groups in many different states and the status of Amharic as the official national language.'¹⁴⁷

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Section 14 updated: 11 May 2020

14. Human rights activists and civil society

14.1.1 The International Center for Not For-Profit Law (ICNL) in 'Civic Freedom Monitor, Ethiopia' noted 'There were 3,181 CSOs as of December 2014 (in 2014, 174 new CSOs were registered, 158 CSOs were closed, including 133 involuntarily for failing project implementation due to lack of funds)'.¹⁴⁸ Amongst sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) no more recent numbers on the number of CSOs operating in Ethiopia could be found).

14.1.2 The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) report 'The 2018 Sustainability Index for Ethiopia', published in November 2019 noted:

'CSO service provision was relatively stable in 2018. CSOs work mostly in collaboration with the government to provide services in areas such as education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and health care, including reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Many organizations would like to diversify the scope of their services, but limited financial resources and sporadic conflicts in most parts of the country prevent them from significantly expanding their reach.

'Some strong, well-established, mostly international CSOs seek to tailor their interventions by using empirical means such as needs assessments, baseline surveys, and stakeholder consultations, which help them identify the needs and priorities of their beneficiaries. However, most CSOs refrain from these approaches, since their costs are considered administrative in nature [under the CSA's 30/70 Directive, 'administrative' expenses such as staff salaries, research, training, and transportation may not exceed 30 % of an organisation's overall budget¹⁴⁹].'¹⁵⁰

14.1.3 The UN Human Rights Council noted:

¹⁴⁷ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 46), 12 August 2020

¹⁴⁸ ICNL, '[Civic Freedom Monitor, Ethiopia](#)', last updated 29 April 2020

¹⁴⁹ USAID, '[The 2018 Sustainability Index for Ethiopia](#)' (p64), November 2019

¹⁵⁰ USAID, '[The 2018 Sustainability Index for Ethiopia](#)' (p68), November 2019

‘The Committee [on the Rights of the Child in 2015] deeply regretted information on the interference of the Government in the work of the Charities and Societies Agency, the heavy restrictions imposed on non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations in accessing conflict-affected regions, detention centres and alternative care institutions, and the cases of harassment, arrest and prosecution of human rights activists.

‘The United Nations country team expressed concern that the Charities and Societies Proclamation had a negative impact on the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and association.’¹⁵¹

- 14.1.4 The National Report submitted by the Federal Attorney General for Ethiopia to The Human Rights Council’s working group for the UN’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR), during the May 2019 meeting stated that:

‘The Government believes engagement with civil society is vital to better the promotion and protection of human rights. To widen the civic space, the Federal Attorney General assisted by its Justice and Legal Affairs Advisory Council composed of renowned independent legal professionals have completed a new draft legislation to replace the existing Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, which placed restrictions on the participation of CSOs in human rights work. The Government also works in close collaboration with grass-roots, member-based and members-driven CSOs such as youth and women’s associations. Moreover, CSOs are also active in efforts to amend the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation 652/2009 and the Freedom of Information and Mass Media Proclamation No. 590/2008...’¹⁵²

- 14.1.5 The same report, in relation to human rights defenders noted: ‘The Government is committed to protecting human rights defenders. All human rights defenders that had been detained or imprisoned in Ethiopia have been released. Ethiopian human rights defenders who had been based abroad have also returned in large numbers to Ethiopia and resumed their activities.’¹⁵³

- 14.1.6 The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, in their briefing note dated April 2019 stated:

‘The 2009 CSO Proclamation on Charities and Societies was the first text comprehensively regulating CSOs in the country, and amended the Civil Code provisions on the matter.

‘The 2009 law imposed serious restrictions on the principle of freedom of association in the country, by extending the definition of “foreign NGOs” and imposing further limitations on this category; as well as by giving extensive and abusive powers to the Charities and Societies Agency in charge of the registration, functioning and dissolution of NGOs.’¹⁵⁴

- 14.1.7 An Amnesty International article, ‘Make Justice a Priority in Ethiopia’s Transition’, dated 26 April 2019, stated ‘Human rights defenders were

¹⁵¹ UN Human Rights Council, ‘[Compilation on Ethiopia](#)’ (paras 31-32), 1 March 2019

¹⁵² UN Human Rights Council, ‘[National report](#)’ (para 30-31), 25 February 2019

¹⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, ‘[National report](#)’ (para 133), 25 February 2019

¹⁵⁴ The Observatory, ‘[The 2019 CSO Law...](#)’ (section 3), April 2019,

particularly encouraged by the rewriting of the problematic Charities and Societies Proclamation, a law that had been used to restrict the work of civil society organizations and to nearly eradicate forms of traditional groups in Ethiopia, and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation that abused the definition of terrorism as a justification to shut down opposition to government.¹⁵⁵

14.1.8 The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders noted:

‘February 5, 2019 marked a very important and historical day for civil society organisations in Ethiopia, which cheered the adoption of the revised Civil Society Proclamation 1113/2019, repealing the repressive 2009 legislation.

‘The new text, which was gazetted on March 7, 2019, was adopted by the House of Peoples Representatives after an inclusive process of consultation which took into consideration CSOs’ inputs on the previous versions. Overall, the new CSO Proclamation was positively welcomed by the local and international community, as it offers greater freedom to CSOs that wish to freely associate and freely express themselves. Nonetheless, some challenges still remain.’¹⁵⁶

14.1.9 The UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UN OHCHR), in the publication ‘Ethiopia: UN experts commend civil society law reforms, but concerns remain’ dated 4 April 2019, noted:

“We acknowledge the positive steps which the Government has taken in order to reform its laws on civil society organisations...”

‘The new Civil Societies Proclamation introduces a number of positive changes, including clear recognition of the right to operational freedom, the lifting of restrictions on finances considered “foreign”, particularly for those working on human rights, and expansion of fund-raising capabilities.

‘It also encourages civil society groups to play a more active part in policy and law, improving the living conditions of women, children, people with disabilities, the elderly and others at risk.

“However, a number of worrying provisions were added to the text during its revision by Ethiopia’s Council of Ministers, including changes to the Civil Society Agency Board, compromising its independence and granting it additional powers to dissolve organisations. ...The investigative powers of the Civil Society Agency are also too broad, permitting invasive Governmental supervision of civil society organisations and the Proclamation includes restrictive provisions requiring mandatory registration and burdensome auditing obligations.”¹⁵⁷

14.1.10 In the HO FFM report, Garoma B. Wakessa, Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa (HRLHA) confirmed the HRLHA was formally registered as a local NGO in July 2019 and had also been registered to monitor the forthcoming election. The source stated the organisation had been able to open offices in regional places in order to obtain first-hand information. They

¹⁵⁵ Amnesty International, ‘[Make Justice a Priority in Ethiopia’s Transition](#)’, 26 April 2019

¹⁵⁶ The Observatory, ‘[The 2019 CSO Law...](#)’ (section 4), April 2019,

¹⁵⁷ UN OHCHR, ‘[UN human rights experts welcome legal reforms...](#)’, 4 April 2019

had not opened offices in Addis Ababa due to funding issues but anticipated more state interest in the organisation when they do¹⁵⁸.

- 14.1.11 In the FMM report, the head of an international NGO detailed their organisation's remit and responsibilities and stated they had been active in relation to advocacy, which had been illegal until May 2019. The source believed, however, there was no substantial change to the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) law. The same source noted that advocacy could be difficult and provided the example of 25 NGOs which had written to the Ministry of Peace, Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs and the President of Gambella after the killing of aid workers in Gambella. The government's response had been that their actions were not acceptable or legal. The source did note, however, that they were not arrested for their actions, which was a risk in September 2018¹⁵⁹.
- 14.1.12 In the FFM report, the Horn of Africa researcher questioned the impartiality of some of civil society and noted it was too early to say whether the organisations such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission were going to be effective. The same source noted that Human Rights Watch had been able to go into Ethiopia twice in 2019, the first time since 2011. The organisation had not faced official restriction¹⁶⁰.
- 14.1.13 The HRW report 2020 noted: 'In February, the government approved the Organization of Civil Societies Proclamation and repealed the notorious 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation, which had decimated independent human rights reporting. The new law lifts its predecessor's 10 percent foreign funding limit. Concerns with the law remain, including limitations on foreign lobbying.'¹⁶¹
- 14.1.14 The Freedom House report 2020 noted:
- '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

¹⁵⁸ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Garoma B. Wakessa, HRLHA

¹⁵⁹ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Head of International NGO

¹⁶⁰ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Horn of Africa Researcher

¹⁶¹ HRW, '[World Report 2020 – Ethiopia](#)', 13 January 2020

NGOs have reopened offices in Addis Ababa or are in the process of doing so.’¹⁶²

See [Civil Society Proclamation 1113/2019](#) dated 12 March 2019

- 14.1.15 For more information on civil society and NGOs see [Home Office fact-finding mission Ethiopia report: The political situation](#)

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Section 15 updated: 20 August 2020

15. Media freedom

For information on media and telecommunications see [Media and telecommunications](#) above.

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15.1 Freedom to operate

- 15.1.1 The USSD report 2019 noted: ‘The constitution and law provide for freedom of expression, including speech and for the press. With the encouragement of Prime Minister Abiy, a number of new and returned diaspora media outlets were able to register and begin operations in the country.’¹⁶³
- 15.1.2 The same report noted: ‘Many private newspapers reported informal editorial control by the government. Examples of government interference included requests regarding specific stories and calls from government officials concerning articles perceived as critical of the government. Private-sector and government journalists routinely practiced self-censorship.’¹⁶⁴
- 15.1.3 The DIS report 2018 noted:
‘Following the lifting of the State of Emergency in June 2018, the Government decided to unblock a number of websites, blogs and radio and TV-stations, which were previously unavailable to the population, at least through legal channels. According to the national researcher, this included the two diaspora based TV stations ESAT and OMN41. This decision was seen as important. Both researchers found that the political space in Ethiopia had been widened as a consequence of this decision.’¹⁶⁵
- 15.1.4 In a contribution to the UN Human Rights Council’s Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Ethiopia dated 4 March 2019 a consortium of organisations (see report for details of contributors) noted ‘...the Government had continued to use restrictive legislation to impede the work of human rights defenders and journalists.’¹⁶⁶
- 15.1.5 An opinion piece for ‘AlJazeera, Abiy’s year one: Ethiopia’s best hope for stability’, published 2 April 2019 noted ‘He [Abiy Ahmed] has significantly expanded political space. Today there are more private newspapers than at any time over the past 15 years.... Freedom of speech and the press have blossomed in ways never seen before - so much that many are now openly

¹⁶² Freedom House, [‘Freedom House report 2020’](#) (section E2), 4 March 2020

¹⁶³ USSD, [‘USSD report 2019’](#) (section 2.a.), 11 March 2020

¹⁶⁴ USSD, [‘USSD report 2019’](#) (section 2.a.), 11 March 2020

¹⁶⁵ DIS, [‘DIS report 2018’](#) (para 3.3.1), September 2018

¹⁶⁶ UN Human Rights Council, [‘Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions...’](#)(para 37), 4 March 2019

calling for placing some limits, including regulation on hate or inciting speech.’¹⁶⁷

- 15.1.6 Reporters Without Borders in the article ‘New era for Ethiopia’s journalists’, published 2 April 2019, noted:

‘By releasing imprisoned journalists, unblocking access to news websites and lifting bans on media outlets that had been imposed by the previous regime, Abiy’s government has moved in a swift and spectacular manner in the 12 months since it took office on 2 April 2018.

‘... A total of 264 previously banned websites and blogs have been given permission to operate. Leading Ethiopian TV channels that had been forced to operate from bases outside the country, such as OMN and ESAT, can now operate in Ethiopia. In all, 23 publications and six TV channels have been approved in recent months.’¹⁶⁸

- 15.1.7 Amnesty, in their news report dated 3 May 2019 stated:

‘...there has been marked progress in press freedom because of the authorities’ decision to loosen their stranglehold on media operations. In July 2018, the Open Observatory of Network Interference confirmed 264 previously blocked websites had become accessible, including diaspora media outlets.

‘Since April 2018, at least eight new privately-owned newspapers and magazines have been established, compared to only four before then. There has also been a radical and bold shift in coverage of previously off-limit topics like politics and human rights.’¹⁶⁹

- 15.1.8 VOA, in its article ‘Internet Restored in Ethiopia 10 days after Assassinations’ dated 2 July 2019, noted

‘Ethiopia has begun restoring internet access Tuesday, 10 days after it was cut following the assassinations of six top government officials [on 22 June 2019]... The internet shutdown affected the entire country but in recent days a few locations were able to function... Ethio Telecom, the country’s state-owned monopoly of telecommunications services, also cut internet access two weeks ago during national school exams.’¹⁷⁰

- 15.1.9 In the HO FFM report, the Ambo University lecturers noted journalists and the media had relative freedom and that formerly banned media like OMN (Oromia Media Network), ESAT (Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio) and ONN (Oromia News Network) were allowed to broadcast from within the country¹⁷¹. Wondemagegn Goshu, Addis Ababa University, noted there were several papers and TV satellite programmes discussing a wide range of topics¹⁷².

¹⁶⁷ Al Jazeera, ‘[Abiy’s year one: Ethiopia’s best hope for stability](#)’, 2 April 2019

¹⁶⁸ Reporters Without Borders, ‘[New era for Ethiopia’s journalists](#)’, 2 April 2019

¹⁶⁹ Amnesty International, ‘[OPED Ethiopia: Fragile new-found press freedom...](#)’, 3 May 2019

¹⁷⁰ VOA, ‘[Internet Restored in Ethiopia 10 days after Assassinations](#)’, 2 July 2019

¹⁷¹ Home Office, ‘[HO FFM report](#)’, February 2020, Annex D – Ambo University lecturers

¹⁷² Home Office, ‘[HO FFM report](#)’, February 2020, Annex D - Wondemagegn Goshu

- 15.1.10 Also in the HO FFM report E-ZEMA noted the prevalence of media output directed by the government¹⁷³. Since the changes brought under Abiy, the Horn of Africa researcher noted with the return of activists and diaspora, there had not been a proliferation of more independent media outlets as hoped¹⁷⁴.
- 15.1.11 And in the same report, E-ZEMA noted the ability to report depended on the topic discussed. For example, there had been an opening up in relation to the discussion of broader issues (for example climate change), but the ability to criticise the government was lagging behind¹⁷⁵. Similarly, the Horn of Africa researcher noted state media's reluctance to criticise the government¹⁷⁶.
- 15.1.12 The HRW 'World Report 2020 – Ethiopia Events of 2019' (HRW report 2020), published 13 January 2020 noted: 'The government continued the practice of shutting down the internet. Following the alleged June 22 coup attempt, the prime minister sought to justify a countrywide internet shutdown, which was only completely restored on July 2, by telling media that the internet was "neither air nor water." Earlier in June, the government shut down the internet for a week without explanation.'¹⁷⁷
- 15.1.13 The USSD report 2019 noted:
- 'The government periodically restricted and disrupted access to the internet and blocked various social media sites. Beginning on June 10, the government partially and then totally shut down the internet for a week for undisclosed reasons. Many speculated that it related to the administration of national school leaving examinations. Ethiopians continued to be able to access blogs and opposition websites the government unblocked in 2018. The government shut down the internet following the June 22 killings in Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa. On June 27, the government partially restored connectivity while continuing to block social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter.'¹⁷⁸
- 15.1.14 The Freedom House report 2020 noted:
- '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...

¹⁷³ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Senior representatives of E-ZEMA

¹⁷⁴ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Horn of Africa Researcher

¹⁷⁵ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Senior representatives of E-ZEMA

¹⁷⁶ Home Office, '[HO FFM report](#)', February 2020, Annex D – Horn of Africa Researcher

¹⁷⁷ HRW, '[World Report 2020 – Ethiopia](#)', 13 January 2020

¹⁷⁸ USSD, '[USSD report 2019](#)' (section 2.a), 11 March 2020

'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.'¹⁷⁹

- 15.1.15 Al Jazeera in the article 'Ethiopia passes controversial law curbing 'hate speech' published February 2020 noted:

'Ethiopia's parliament has passed a law punishing "hate speech" and "disinformation" with hefty fines and long jail terms, despite rights groups saying it undermines free speech months before a major election.

'The new law defines hate speech as rhetoric that fuels discrimination "against individuals or groups based on their nationality, ethnic and religious affiliation, sex or disabilities".

'The new law permits fines of up to 100,000 Ethiopian birr (\$3,100) and imprisonment for up to five years for anyone who shares or creates social media posts that are deemed to result in violence or disturbance of public order. The law, however, says "dissemination" does not include liking or tagging such content on social media.

'Legislators said the law is needed because existing legal provisions did not address hate speech and disinformation, and said it will not affect citizens' rights... Several legislators who opposed the bill said it violates a constitutional guarantee of free speech.'¹⁸⁰

- 15.1.16 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Ethiopian government declared a state of emergency on 8 April 2020 which can last for six months and be extended every four months after that¹⁸¹. The International Center for Not For-Profit Law (ICNL) noted in their 'Covid-19 Civic Freedom Tracker' that on 11 April 2020 Regulation No. 3 of 2020 On The Implementation Of The State Of Emergency Declaration was issued. The declaration required '...all media professionals to report Covid-19 related news in a way that is neither exaggerated nor understated, and is not likely to create confusion or alarm... violations of these provisions are subject to penalty of up to three years in prison a fine of up to 200,000 Ethiopian Birr (\$6,000)'.¹⁸²

- 15.1.17 Reporters Without Borders, published the '2020 World Press Freedom Index' in April 2020. The Index ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists. It is a snapshot of the media freedom situation based on an evaluation of pluralism, independence of the media, quality of legislative framework and safety of journalists in each country and region¹⁸³. It placed Ethiopia at 99 up from 110 in 2019¹⁸⁴ up from 150 in 2018 (1 being the most free)¹⁸⁵.

¹⁷⁹ Freedom House, '[Freedom House report 2020](#)' (section D1), 4 March 2020

¹⁸⁰ Al Jazeera, '[Ethiopia passes controversial law curbing 'hate speech'](#)', February 2020

¹⁸¹ Al Jazeera, '[Ethiopia declares state of emergency to fight coronavirus](#)', 8 April 2020

¹⁸² ICNL, '[Covid-19 Civic Freedom Tracker](#)' (Ethiopia), n.d

¹⁸³ Reporters Without Borders, '[The World Press Freedom Index](#)', April 2020

¹⁸⁴ Reporters Without Borders, '[The World Press Freedom Index](#)', April 2019

¹⁸⁵ Reporters Without Borders, '[The World Press Freedom Index](#)' (Ethiopia), 19 April 2020

- 15.1.18 Ethiopia Insight reported on 12 August 2020: 'Two days after Hachalu's [Oromo artist and rights activist Hachalu Hundessa] killing, security forces raided and effectively shut down the OMN operation in the capital, Finfinne, the indigenous Oromo name for Addis Ababa. The premises were illegally searched, staff members detained, the organisation's bank accounts blocked, and computers and broadcast equipment seized.'¹⁸⁶

See also [Treatment of journalists and bloggers](#) and [Media and telecommunications](#)

For more information on the media including the law and reform, media freedom and the role of social media see [Home Office fact-finding mission Ethiopia report: The political situation](#)

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15.2 Treatment of journalists and bloggers

- 15.2.1 CNN in the article 'Ethiopians abroad eye return as reforms kick in back home', published 3 August 2018, stated:

'Eskinder Nega is a renowned journalist and activist who was sentenced to 18 years in prison in 2012. After being among the roughly 6,000 prisoners freed at the start of 2018 to quell unrest, Nega flew to the US to see his wife and child for the first time in over four years. But the new hope prompted by Abiy's election drew him back to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

"I opened an office on Friday. Incredibly, I actually found landlords who were not frightened to rent me office space," Nega told CNN. But he too acknowledges that the country has a long way to go.'¹⁸⁷

- 15.2.2 The Guardian, in an article published 8 July 2018 noted 'Befeqadu Hailu, a 37-year-old blogger jailed repeatedly for his pro-democracy writings [said]... "I have always lived in fear but I feel less threatened when I write than I did before... It's not only his word ... the moment he [Abiy Ahmed] spoke those words the security personnel down to the local levels have changed."¹⁸⁸
- 15.2.3 An opinion piece for AlJazeera, Abiy's year one: Ethiopia's best hope for stability, published 2 April 2019 noted 'For the first time in more than two decades, no journalist is behind bars in Ethiopia'¹⁸⁹

- 15.2.4 Reporters Without Borders in the article 'New era for Ethiopia's journalists', published 2 April 2019, noted 'For the first time in more than 15 years, no journalists are being held in connection with their work.'¹⁹⁰

- 15.2.5 Amnesty provided their opinion on progress made in a news report dated 3 May 2019: 'The current gains in press freedom and the right to freedom of expression are outcomes of years of resistance against repression... While 2018 was generally a good year for journalists in Ethiopia, their work is not yet entirely free from harassment and intimidation.'¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Ethiopia Insight, '[OMN: An 'alien' star in Ethiopia's...](#)', 12 August 2020

¹⁸⁷ CNN, '[Ethiopians abroad eye return as reforms kick in back home](#)', 3 August 2018

¹⁸⁸ The Guardian, '[These changes are unprecedented...](#)', 8 July 2018

¹⁸⁹ Al Jazeera, '[Abiy's year one: Ethiopia's best hope for stability](#)', 2 April 2019

¹⁹⁰ Reporters Without Borders, '[New era for Ethiopia's journalists](#)', 2 April 2019

¹⁹¹ Amnesty International, '[OPED Ethiopia: Fragile new-found press freedom...](#)', 3 May 2019

15.2.6 The same organisation in July 2019 noted:

‘The Ethiopian government risks rolling back the great progress it made on media freedom last year...after the government announced plans to charge journalists and media outlets for their reporting on the armed forces...

...following a wave of arrests of journalists in the past weeks, the Ministry of Defence on 8 July announced plans to charge journalists and media houses for “publishing defamatory information about the Ethiopia National Defence Forces”.

‘Berihun Adane, Editor-in-Chief of the privately-owned Asrat TV and the weekly Berera newspaper, was arrested on 26 June, while Elias Gebru, editor of the Enqu magazine, defunct since 2014, was arrested on 6 July. Both journalists have since been charged under the Anti- Terrorism Proclamation (2009), which was used by previous governments to bring trumped-up charges against its critics.’¹⁹²

15.2.7 HRW report 2019 noted:

‘Ethiopia released journalists who had been wrongfully detained or convicted on politically motivated charges, including prominent writers such as Eskinder Nega and Woubshet Taye, after more than six years in jail. The federal Attorney General’s Office dropped all pending charges against bloggers, journalists and diaspora-based media organizations, including the Zone 9 bloggers, Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT), and Oromia Media Network (OMN), which had previously faced charges of violence inciting for criticizing the government.’¹⁹³

15.2.8 In the HO FFM report the legal expert noted the arrest of a colleague and journalist after the assassination in June 2019 who was released on his ID card. The source noted mass arrests in Addis Ababa at this time included those working for newspapers and television stations¹⁹⁴.

15.2.9 In the same report, senior representatives of E-ZEMA noted there were still some cases of arrests of journalists, for example one who was arrested at his office in Oromia and subsequently released. There were journalists still detained (as at 17 September 2019) due to what they reported during the assassination period¹⁹⁵. One of the National Movement of Amhara (NaMA) leaders noted the imprisonment of an Amhara Satellite Radio and Television (ASRAT) journalist and those from ‘Ethiopis’ newspaper¹⁹⁶. However, DFID Ethiopia staff stated that there were no recent reports of journalists being arrested¹⁹⁷.

15.2.10 The HRW report 2020 covering events in 2019 noted:

‘On February 23, 2019, Oromia regional police temporarily detained two journalists working for the private Mereja TV on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, while reporting on the government’s demolition of homes and allegations of

¹⁹² Amnesty, ‘[Ethiopia: New journalist arrests put press freedom gains at risk](#)’, 9 July 2019

¹⁹³ HRW, ‘[HRW report 2019](#)’ (Freedom of Expression), 17 January 2019

¹⁹⁴ Home Office, ‘[HO FFM report](#)’, February 2020, Annex D- Legal expert and active critic

¹⁹⁵ Home Office, ‘[HO FFM report](#)’, February 2020, Annex D – Senior representatives of E-ZEMA

¹⁹⁶ Home Office, ‘[HO FFM report](#)’, February 2020, Annex D – One of the NaMA leaders

¹⁹⁷ Home Office, ‘[HO FFM report](#)’, February 2020, Annex D – DFID Ethiopia staff

forced displacement. Upon release, they were attacked by a group of young men, and one was beaten with sticks in plain view of police. No one was arrested in relation to the assault.

‘On July 18, security forces arrested employees and board members of the Sidama Media Network (SMN) and shut down the station in Awassa following protests over the government’s failure to organize a referendum, according to media reports. Workers were allowed back into the office on July 23, but those arrested were detained for weeks without charge.’¹⁹⁸

15.2.11 The USSD report 2019 noted:

‘The government’s arrest, harassment, and prosecution of journalists sharply declined, and imprisoned journalists were released.

‘On February 23 [2019], Oromia regional police detained two journalists from the privately owned online news outlet Mereja Television. Reporter Fasil Aregay and cameraman Habtamu Oda were interviewing individuals displaced by home demolitions when they were detained. Following the detentions, a mob attacked the two journalists in front of the police station in Legetafo.

‘On July 18 [2019], security personnel in Hawassa, the capital of the SNNP Region, arrested Getahun Deguye and Tariku Lemma, managers of the Sidama Media Network, and two board members. Police released one of the board members unconditionally after a few hours while the rest remained detained under allegations they were involved in the July 18 violence in Sidama Zone.’¹⁹⁹

15.2.12 The Freedom House report 2020 noted:

‘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.’²⁰⁰

15.2.13 Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index noted in April 2020 that:

‘...the existing repressive legislative arsenal has ...been reinforced by a law on hate speech and disinformation that was adopted in early 2020 during a wave of intercommunal violence. It provides for heavy fines and prison sentences and its vague wording allows a great deal of leeway for

¹⁹⁸ HRW, ‘[World Report 2020 – Ethiopia](#)’, 13 January 2020

¹⁹⁹ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 2.a.), 11 March 2020

²⁰⁰ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section D1), 4 March 2020

interpretation. Concern about a return to the past has been boosted by brief arrests of journalists, several Internet cuts and cases of intimidation. One general even threatened reprisals against any media outlets that “tarnish the reputation of the armed forces.”²⁰¹

15.2.14 HRW in ‘Ethiopia: Free Speech at Risk Amid Covid-19’, 6 May 2020 noted:

‘The Ethiopian government has been using Covid-19 restrictions and a recently declared state of emergency as a pretext to restrict free speech. In the last month, the authorities have ...charged a journalist, Yayesew Shimelis, for comments on social media about the government’s response to the coronavirus...

‘Addis Ababa police alleged that Yayesew spread “false news” but held him for nearly three weeks without bringing formal charges... Federal police finally released Yayesew on April 23. But, according to court documents Human Rights Watch reviewed, prosecutors have now formally charged him under the country’s new hate speech and disinformation law, citing as evidence postings and private messages obtained from Yayesew’s personal Facebook account by Ethiopia’s Information Network and Security Agency (INSA)...’²⁰²

15.2.15 Reporters Without Borders explained that ‘In Ethiopia, the definition of misinformation is so broad that it gives the authorities the discretionary power to declare any piece of information false.’²⁰³

15.2.16 In August 2020 Human Rights Watch reported that:

‘Ethiopian authorities have been detaining dozens of opposition members and journalists for prolonged periods and often without charge since late June 2020, raising serious rights concerns.

‘A month after one of the most violent spates of unrest in the country’s recent history, police and prosecutors need to publicly account for all detainees’ whereabouts, comply promptly and fully with court bail orders, and ensure easy and regular access to lawyers and relatives for those not released.

The arrests follow the June 29 killing of a popular Oromo artist and activist, Hachalu Hundessa, in Addis Ababa, the capital.’²⁰⁴

For more information on the media including the treatment of journalists and bloggers see the [Home Office fact-finding mission Ethiopia report: The political situation](#) and the [June 2020 Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression](#).

See also [Freedom to operate](#)

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Section 16 updated: 10 May 2020

²⁰¹ Reporters Without Borders, ‘[The World Press Freedom Index \(Ethiopia\)](#)’, 19 April 2020

²⁰² HRW, ‘Ethiopia: Free Speech at Risk Amid Covid-19’, 6 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³ Reporters Without Borders, ‘[Covid-19 emergency laws spell disaster ...](#)’, 12 June 2020

²⁰⁴ HRW, ‘[Ethiopia: Opposition Figures Held Without Charge](#)’, 15 August 2020

16. Oromos

- 16.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ethiopia: Oromos](#).

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Section 17 updated: 11 September 2019

17. People of mixed Eritrean/Ethiopian nationality

17.1 Existing UK caselaw

- 17.1.1 The Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber considered and made findings of risks faced by Ethiopians of Eritrean heritage in the country guidance case of [ST \(Ethnic Eritrean – nationality – return\) Ethiopia CG \[2011\] UKUT 00252\(IAC\)](#), heard 18-20 January 2011, and promulgated on 30 June 2011. This caselaw continues to be extant and should be considered alongside any relevant country information available since ST was promulgated in making a decision on an asylum application based on a person's mixed heritage/nationality.

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17.2 Border conflict 1998-2000

- 17.2.1 An article by Katherine Southwick published in the Forced Migration Review in April 2009 explained that tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which had built up over a number of years:

‘... erupted into armed conflict in May 1998. By the end of the fighting in December 2000, both sides had lost tens of thousands of soldiers and around one million people were displaced.

‘In 1998, an estimated 120,000 to over 500,000 persons of Eritrean origin were living in Ethiopia. During the course of the war the Ethiopian government sought to justify denationalising and deporting them on the basis that they had acquired Eritrean citizenship by voting in the referendum. Individuals had not been informed that participation in the referendum would amount to renunciation of their Ethiopian citizenship. Around 70,000 people were expelled, initially individuals deemed to be security threats (including those prominent in business, politics, international organisations – including the UN – and community organisations with links to Eritrea). In July 1999, the Ethiopian government declared that all those who had been expelled to Eritrea were Eritrean citizens, having acquired citizenship by voting in the 1993 referendum. In August 1999, all those who had voted in the referendum and remained in Ethiopia were ordered to register for alien residence permits, which had to be renewed every six months.

‘Those who were to be expelled were interrogated at police stations, where their identification documents were destroyed. Their assets were frozen and business licences revoked, and most of them were unable to dispose of their property before being deported. They were detained for days, weeks or months before they were bussed up to the Eritrean border or forced to flee through Djibouti. The EECC determined that loss of nationality and expulsion of individuals identified through Ethiopia's security review procedures were lawful “even if harsh for the individuals affected.” However, deprivation of nationality and expulsion for any other reasons were deemed illegal.

'Eritrea also deported around 70,000 Ethiopians during the conflict, although the nationality status of persons of Ethiopian origin in Eritrea was never in dispute. Most of them were resident aliens working in urban areas. They too suffered discrimination, violence and harsh conditions during deportation.'²⁰⁵

17.2.2 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

'During the course of the Ethiopia-Eritrea border war (1998-2000), the Ethiopian Government withdrew the citizenship of and deported over 70,000 people of Eritrean origin. It did so on the grounds that these people had renounced their Ethiopian citizenship in the process of voting in the 1993 referendum on Eritrean independence and/or posed a security risk. In August 1999, the Ethiopian Government ordered those people of Eritrean origin who had voted in the 1993 referendum and remained in Ethiopia to register for alien residence permits. Deportations reduced dramatically with the end of the war, and there is no credible evidence to suggest Ethiopians of Eritrean origin have faced deportation to Eritrea since the early 2000s.'²⁰⁶

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17.3 Treatment in Ethiopia

17.3.1 In January 2004, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a directive, entitled, '[Directive Issued to Determine the Residence Status of Eritrean Nationals Residing in Ethiopia](#)'. This was intended to address the status of persons of Eritrean origin who continued to live in Ethiopia following the independence of Eritrea.

17.3.2 An article by Katherine Southwick published in the Forced Migration Review stated:

'On the fate of people of Eritrean origin in Ethiopia, reports are mixed. Between 2000 and 2004, individuals of Eritrean origin or from mixed families were allegedly arrested, detained and sometimes beaten or raped by Ethiopian authorities on suspicion of collaborating with or spying for Eritrea. To its credit, the Ethiopian government quietly introduced a new nationality proclamation in 2003, which apparently enabled many Eritreans living in Ethiopia to re-acquire Ethiopian citizenship.'²⁰⁷

17.3.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated: 'The Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality, adopted in 2003, regularised the status of Ethiopians of Eritrean origin, and many Eritreans have reacquired Ethiopian citizenship under this law. People who left Ethiopia prior to the 2003 proclamation, and have not resided long-term in Ethiopia since, may face difficulties in providing sufficient documentation to establish their right to Ethiopian citizenship.'²⁰⁸

17.3.4 DFAT also considered '...There is no recent credible evidence to suggest Eritreans face a significantly greater risk of official or societal discrimination than other groups based on their ethnicity since the enactment of the Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality in 2003. DFAT assesses Ethiopians with Eritrean heritage do not face a significantly greater risk of official or

²⁰⁵ Forced Migration Review, '[Ethiopia-Eritrea: statelessness...](#)', Katherine Southwick, April 2009,

²⁰⁶ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 46), 12 August 2020

²⁰⁷ Forced Migration Review, '[Ethiopia-Eritrea: statelessness...](#)', Katherine Southwick, April 2009,

²⁰⁸ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 46), 12 August 2020

societal discrimination than other groups in Ethiopia based on their ethnicity.’
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- 17.3.5 See also [Languages](#), [Ethnic groups](#), and [Citizenship and nationality](#).

For information on Ethiopia / Eritrea relations and refugees in Ethiopia see [Home Office fact-finding mission Ethiopia report: The political situation](#)

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Section 18 updated: 20 May 2020

18. Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

18.1 Legal rights

- 18.1.1 The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World) report, ‘State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019’ (The ILGA report 2019), updated December 2019, noted the following regarding the Penal Code (Proclamation No. 414/2004):

‘Homosexual act Article 629. Homosexual and other Indecent Acts. Whoever performs with another person of the same sex a homosexual act, or any other indecent act, is punishable with simple imprisonment.

‘Aggravation Article 630(1). General Aggravation to the Crime. The punishment shall be simple imprisonment for not less than one year, or, in grave cases, rigorous imprisonment not exceeding ten years, where the criminal: [...] (b) makes a profession of such activities within the meaning of the law (article 92).’²¹⁰

- 18.1.2 The USSD report 2019 noted: ‘Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and punishable by three to 15 years’ imprisonment. No law prohibits discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals.’²¹¹

- 18.1.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated: ‘Same-sex sexual activity is illegal in Ethiopia and punishable by up to 15 years’ imprisonment. Laws against such activity are strictly enforced. The death penalty does not apply to same-sex sexual activity, although the idea has been considered in the past. No laws currently exist prohibiting discrimination or hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI) individuals.’²¹²

See also the Ethiopian [Criminal Code](#).

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18.2 State treatment

- 18.2.1 The ILGA report 2019 noted: ‘According to Ethiopian human rights lawyer Abebe Hailu, no one has been charged or convicted under the new criminal provisions since they were introduced in 2004. This is because the criminal

²⁰⁹ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 46), 12 August 2020

²¹⁰ ILGA World, ‘[State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019](#)’, (Ethiopia), December 2019

²¹¹ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²¹² DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 35), 12 August 2020

system is overloaded and there is little judicial appetite to prosecute homosexuality.’²¹³

- 18.2.2 The USSD report 2019 noted: ‘There are no hate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms to aid in the investigation of abuses against LGBTI individuals... Activists in the LGBTI community reported surveillance and feared for their safety. There were no reports of persons incarcerated or prosecuted for engaging in same-sex sexual activities.’²¹⁴
- 18.2.3 The OASC report 2020 noted: ‘Consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults is illegal and punishable by imprisonment under the law. There have been periodic detentions and interrogations of LGBTI+ persons, as well as alleged physical abuse.’²¹⁵
- 18.2.4 While there have been instances of people being jailed for allegedly engaging in homosexual acts, its underground nature means arrests and prosecutions are not common (DFAT is not aware of recent prosecutions). According to a local source, the current federal government is not actively seeking to punish LGBTI individuals but nor is it attempting to improve their situation either...

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18.3 Societal treatment and discrimination

- 18.3.1 The ILGA report 2019 noted information from a number of sources over a range of years from 2013 to 2016:

‘...the difficult legal and social situation of LGBT people in Ethiopia has been described in accounts given by individuals who have fled the country. For instance, a 2013 news report interviewed two individuals who explained that homosexuality is common viewed as a “Western disease”. Another news report in 2014 interviewed several gay men who have been harassed and attacked in public. A 2016 research report also featured interviews with LGBT individuals in the closet who dare not reveal their sexual identities due to fears of backlash and social ostracisation. There is no visible LGBT community, though there are some informal groups that have emerged online, particularly on social media.’²¹⁶

- 18.3.2 A BBC News report, dated 4 June 2019, stated:

‘Ethiopian church groups have called on the government to block a planned visit to the country by a US-based company that organises tours for gay people. The groups were particularly angry that the itinerary published by the Toto Tours company includes religious sites. Many Ethiopians are deeply religious and disapprove of homosexuality, which is also prohibited under the law.

‘The owner of Toto Tours told the BBC the company had received threats and hate messages on social media...

²¹³ ILGA World, ‘[State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019](#)’ (Ethiopia), December 2019.

²¹⁴ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²¹⁵ OASC, ‘[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)’ (Personal Identity Concerns), 10 April 2020

²¹⁶ ILGA World, ‘[State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019](#)’ (Ethiopia), December 2019.

‘The president [Dereje Negash], of Selestu Me’et a coalition of Ethiopian Orthodox church associations, told BBC Amharic that the government "should ban this group from entering the country and visiting the sacred sites. They should not be allowed to leave their mark. Our religion condemns this act, and it's disgraceful." He emphasised that homosexuality was illegal in Ethiopia, and said the tour company should not be allowed to "violate the law of the land". Mr Negash is also a deacon of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, and has been lobbying against homosexuality in the country.

‘The call for the government to ban the tour was reportedly echoed by the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, which includes Christian and Islamic denominations...

‘Bahiru Sheway, the co-founder of House of Guramayle, a London-based organisation that advocates for the recognition of LGBT rights in Ethiopia, told the BBC that homophobia had deep roots in the country. Most gay Ethiopians did not reveal their sexuality, he said, for fear of physical harm and ostracism. He added that the row over Toto Tours had triggered a social-media storm, with many Ethiopians expressing outrage at the prospect of gay tourists visiting the country - and even calling for attacks against them and their straight allies.’²¹⁷

18.3.3 The USSD report 2019 stated:

‘There were reports of violence against LGBTI individuals, but reporting was limited due to fear of retribution, discrimination, or stigmatization...

Individuals generally did not identify themselves as LGBTI persons due to severe societal stigma and the illegality of consensual same-sex sexual activity.

‘The AIDS Resource Center in Addis Ababa reported the majority of self-identified gay and lesbian callers, most of whom were men, requested assistance in changing their behavior to avoid discrimination. Many gay men reported anxiety, confusion, identity crises, depression, self-ostracism, religious conflict, and suicide attempts.’²¹⁸

18.3.4 The OASC report 2020 noted: ‘Ethiopians do not generally identify themselves as LGBTI+ due to severe societal stigma. There are some reports of violence against LGBTI+ individuals; reporting is limited due to fear of retribution, discrimination, or stigmatization. There is no law prohibiting discrimination against LGBTI+ persons and some LGBTI+ activists have reported being followed and at times fearing for their safety.’²¹⁹

18.3.5 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

‘Ethiopia is a conservative society, and LGBTI individuals face high levels of societal discrimination. Negative attitudes toward homosexuality are prevalent countrywide, including in Addis Ababa. LGBTI individuals risk discrimination in education and employment, physical violence and ostracism – including from family, friends and work colleagues – if their sexual orientation is revealed. The social stigma associated with

²¹⁷ BBC News, ‘[Ethiopia religious anger over US gay tour plan](#)’, 4 June 2019

²¹⁸ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²¹⁹ OASC, ‘[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)’ (Personal Identity Concerns), 10 April 2020

homosexuality and its illegal nature makes it extremely difficult for LGBTI individuals to be open about their sexual orientation. It also means instances of harassment or violence against LGBTI individuals are rarely reported. Against this background, there is no visible LGBTI community in Ethiopia... Given the sensitivities, local NGOs do not advocate for LGBTI rights. Another local source told DFAT that the conservative nature of the society means there is no scope for the public discussion of LGBTI issues.’²²⁰

- 18.3.6 DFAT also provided the following assessment ‘...LGBTI individuals in Ethiopia face high levels of official and societal discrimination, and have no recourse to state protection. DFAT further assesses that, given prevailing conditions, internal relocation is not a viable option for LGBTI individuals.’²²¹ This is the assessment provided by DFAT and does not necessarily reflect the assessment of the Home Office. Consideration of risk is on a case-by-case basis and CPIT can be contacted for further information.

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Section 19 updated: 11 May 2020

19. Women

19.1 Legal, social, political and economic rights

- 19.1.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 stated:

‘Regarding land, property and other non-land assets, the law provides married women with the same rights as married men to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral (Family Code, art. 57, 58 & 59), as well as unmarried women and men (Constitution, art. 35). Furthermore, women and men are granted the same rights after divorce or separation to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral land, property and other non-land assets (Family Code, art. 85 & 90). Women’s right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer of property and to use, transfer, administer and control land is specifically enshrined in the Constitution under article 35 (7). Moreover, regarding marital property, a married woman has the same rights as a married man to administer (Family Code, art. 66). Additionally, the law provides for joint land titling for land used or acquired by married couples and informal unions (Family Code, art. 62 & 102).’²²²

- 19.1.2 The Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 stated:

‘The law provides women with the same rights as men to initiate divorce (Family Code, art. 76). Additionally, the law stipulates that the causes and effects of dissolution of marriage shall be the same whichever the form of celebration of the marriage (civil, religious or customary) (Family Code, art. 74). Women and men have the same requirements to finalise a divorce or annulment (Family Code, art. 81)...’²²³

²²⁰ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 35), 12 August 2020

²²¹ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 35), 12 August 2020

²²² OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d

²²³ OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

19.1.3 The Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 stated:

‘There is no legal discrimination affecting women’s citizenship rights or legal rights to apply for identity cards or passports, and there are no discriminatory practices that may restrict those rights.

‘The law provides married/unmarried women with the same rights as married/unmarried men to acquire, change and retain their nationality (Nationality Proclamation, art. 4, 6, 16, 19 & 22). Additionally, the law provides married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality to their spouse (Nationality Proclamation, art. 6) and children (Nationality Proclamation, art. 3).

‘The law does not provide women with the same rights as men to register the birth of their children, as article 101 of the Civil Code stipulates that the birth of a child shall be declared by the father or in his default by the mother.’²²⁴

19.1.4 The National Report submitted by the Federal Attorney General for Ethiopia to The Human Rights Council’s working group for the UN’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR), during the May 2019 meeting stated that:

‘The Constitution guarantees women equal rights as men during and after marriage. The Family Code enacted by the Federal Government and family laws of the regional states provide for the equal rights of women to communal property during the dissolution of marriage. Special family benches have been designated in federal court structures to entertain all family matter cases. These courts are equipped with trained judges and social workers to ensure best interest of the family members throughout the litigation process. Moreover, free legal aid service on cases of family matters are offered by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, MOWCYA, the federal and regional offices of the Attorney General, Regional Justice Bureaus as well as CSOs.’²²⁵

19.1.5 The USSD report 2019 stated: ‘All federal and regional land laws empower women to access government land. Inheritance laws also enable widows to inherit joint property acquired during marriage; however, enforcement of both legal provisions was uneven...In July [2019] parliament revised the labor law to provide for four months of maternity leave.’²²⁶

19.1.6 The Freedom House report 2020 noted:

‘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.’²²⁷

19.1.7 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

²²⁴ OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

²²⁵ UN Human Rights Council, ‘[National report](#)’, 25 February 2019

²²⁶ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²²⁷ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section B4), 4 March 2020

‘Article 35 of the constitution enshrines a range of rights for women, including: equality with men in the enjoyment of constitutional rights and protections; equal rights in marriage; the entitlement to affirmative measures to remedy the historical legacy of inequality and discrimination against women and to enable women to participate in society equally with men; the right to maternity leave at full pay; equal rights with the respect to the use, transfer, administration and control of land and the inheritance of property; equal rights in employment, including in relation to pay and promotion; and the right of access to family planning education, information and capacity. Article 34 stipulates that marriage can be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. Gender equality is a priority for the current federal government.’²²⁸

See also [Citizenship and nationality](#) and [Official documents](#).

For more information on political participation see the [2020 DFAT Ethiopia report](#) (women)

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19.2 Single women

11.4.3 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report considered:

‘DFAT heard anecdotally that divorce is not uncommon in urban areas and divorce rates are increasing overall. Women’s growing economic independence in urban areas and the availability of legal aid services and courts were cited as contributory factors. Being a single woman or seeking divorce from one’s husband is widely accepted in major urban areas and carries less social stigma compared to rural areas. According to local sources, single or divorced women may face greater economic challenges but not societal discrimination in urban areas.’²²⁹

See also [Legal, social, political and economic rights](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)

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19.3 Discrimination

19.3.1 The USSD report 2019 stated:

‘Discrimination against women was widespread. It was most acute in rural areas, where an estimated 80 percent of the population lived. Women’s access to gainful employment, credit, and the opportunity to own or manage a business was limited by their lower levels of educational attainment and by traditional attitudes...A number of initiatives aimed at increasing women’s access to these critical economic empowerment tools.’²³⁰

²²⁸ DFAT, [‘Country Information Report Ethiopia’](#), (page 32), 12 August 2020

²²⁹ DFAT, [‘Country Information Report Ethiopia’](#), (page 33), 12 August 2020

²³⁰ USSD, [‘USSD report 2019’](#) (section 6.), 11 March 2020

- 19.3.2 The Freedom House report 2020 noted: '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.'²³¹
- 19.3.3 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) 'Summary of Stakeholders Submissions on Ethiopia' for the Universal Periodic Review, 4 March 2019 in joint submissions from multiple organisations noted:
 'JS12²³² stated that discriminatory recruitment practices against women on grounds of pregnancy and marital status had been prevalent and hampered women's access to employment. Women had faced challenges in accessing and maintaining employment in the medium and large manufacturing sector.'²³³
- 19.3.4 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated
 'Local sources told DFAT that, while women's political participation has increased, the situation for the average Ethiopian woman remains challenging...Women typically have fewer employment opportunities than men, in both urban and rural areas, and their participation in the labour force (at 74.2 per cent) is significantly lower than that of men (86.5 per cent). This is influenced by a number of factors, including societal discrimination, traditional norms and attitudes regarding gender roles, and women's generally lower levels of educational attainment....Women often lack financial independence, particularly in rural areas. Ethiopia ranks 125th out of 153 countries for economic participation and 140th for educational attainment in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index^[234].'²³⁵

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19.4 Sexual harassment

- 19.4.1 Sexual harassment is covered in legislation under article 625 of the Criminal Code²³⁶. The penal code prescribes penalties for conviction of 18 to 24 months' imprisonment²³⁷. The definition of sexual harassment covers the workplace, educational establishments and public places (Criminal Code, art. 625 & 846)²³⁸.
- 19.4.2 The Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 stated:
 'Verbal harassment was found to be the most prevalent form of sexual harassment, but victims seldom report it to authorities due to feelings of shame and a lack of information on the procedures for reporting; sexual harassment through the use of technology is reportedly common in the university setting...

²³¹ Freedom House, '[Freedom House report 2020](#)' (section F4), 4 March 2020

²³² Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, The Network of Ethiopian Women's Association, Human Rights Council, and Sara Justice for All

²³³ UN OHCHR, '[Summary of Stakeholders' submissions...](#)' (para 49), 4 March 2019

²³⁴ World Economic Forum, '[The Global Gender Gap Index Ranking, 2020](#)', 16 December 2019

²³⁵ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 33), 12 August 2020

²³⁶ OECD, '[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)', 'Ethiopia', n.d.,

²³⁷ USSD, '[Human Rights Report for 2018, Ethiopia](#)', section 6, 13 March 2019

²³⁸ OECD, '[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)', 'Ethiopia', n.d.,

‘Sexual harassment in the workplace is reportedly common. However, it is difficult to assess its prevalence as women are reluctant to talk about such practices. It appears that sexual harassment is mostly perpetrated by male supervisors and co-workers and occur mostly in the service and agriculture sectors...’²³⁹

- 19.4.3 The USSD report 2019 noted: ‘Sexual Harassment: authorities generally did not enforce the law. Sexual harassment was widespread.’²⁴⁰

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19.5 Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

- 19.5.1 The Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (CSA) and ICF report, Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016 – Key Indicators, stated:

‘More than one-third of ever-married women (35 percent) report that they have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual violence from their husband or partner at some point in time. Twenty-four percent of women report that they experienced emotional violence, 25 percent experienced physical violence, and 11 percent experienced sexual violence. Experience of physical, emotional, or sexual violence from a husband or partner is higher among older women 40-49 (38 percent), formerly married women (45 percent), those living in rural areas (36 percent), and women in Oromia (39 percent), Harari (38 percent), and Amhara (37 percent). Experience of spousal violence decreases with increasing educational level and household wealth.’²⁴¹

- 19.5.2 The Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 stated: ‘... the CEDAW Committee (2011) notes that gender-based violence is underreported because of cultural taboos and victims’ lack of trust in the legal system and there is a lack of effective management, knowledge of laws and coordination between different actors.’²⁴²

- 19.5.3 The Freedom House report 2020 noted:

‘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.’²⁴³

- 19.5.4 The USSD report 2019 noted: ‘... Marriage by abduction is illegal, although it continued in some regions despite the government’s attempts to combat the practice. Forced sexual relationships accompanied most marriages by

²³⁹ OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, ‘Ethiopia’, n.d,

²⁴⁰ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²⁴¹ CSA/ICF, ‘[Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016 – Key Indicators](#)’ (p.45), 2016

²⁴² OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, ‘Ethiopia’, n.d,

²⁴³ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom House report 2020](#)’ (section G3), 4 March 2020

abduction, and women often experienced physical abuse during the abduction.’²⁴⁴

19.5.5 The OASC report 2020 noted: ‘Domestic violence, including spousal abuse, is pervasive.’²⁴⁵

19.5.6 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

‘Gender-based violence is a criminal offence punishable by up to 20 years’ imprisonment. In practice, the law is rarely enforced. Marital rape is not explicitly prohibited. A local source told DFAT the authorities largely consider events behind closed doors to be private matters. Gender-based violence is widespread in Ethiopia. Typically, gender-based violence is intimate partner based and occurs in domestic settings. Local sources told DFAT gender-based violence is a countrywide phenomenon that occurs across all ethnic groups and religions...DFAT heard anecdotally violence against women is DFAT Country Information Report ETHIOPIA (August 2020) 34 most prevalent in Afar and Somali states, where the vast majority of the population is Muslim and the family legislative framework is based on traditional practices and sharia law’²⁴⁶

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19.6 State response to SGBV

19.6.1 The National Report submitted by the Federal Attorney General for Ethiopia to The Human Rights Council’s working group for the UN’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR), during the May 2019 meeting stated that:

‘The Government recognizes gender based violence as violation of basic human rights. Accordingly, effective legal and policy frameworks are put in place to promote the rights of women and girls. These rights are enshrined in the Constitution as well as in International and regional agreements that promote and protect women’s rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol). Specific legal measures and actions are being taken to address violence, including the Revised Family Law of 2000 and the Revised Criminal Code in 2005. The Government has also put in place the requisite institutional mechanisms at federal and regional levels, including the establishment of Federal and Regional Women, Children and Youth Affairs Offices, Special Child and Women Protection Units within the police and prosecution offices and special benches for violence against women cases within the federal and numerous regional courts.’²⁴⁷

19.6.2 The UNHCR Ethiopia National Refugee Strategy for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender based Violence 2017-2019 stated:

‘Different national legal instruments are put in place to protect Ethiopian women from domestic violence and ensure equal protection of the law, equality in marital affairs, protection from harmful traditional practices, and

²⁴⁴ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²⁴⁵ OASC, ‘[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)’ (Personal Identity Concerns), 10 April 2020

²⁴⁶ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 33), 12 August 2020

²⁴⁷ UN Human Rights Council, ‘[National report](#)’ (para 119-120), 25 February 2019

access to family planning information and services, among others. To be more specific, article 7 of the Family Code prohibits marriages for both men and women under the age of 18, while article 50 emphasises on the equal rights between spouses. The Constitution of Ethiopia has recognised protection from domestic violence as one of the fundamental rights, and it has also confirmed that all ratified international instruments are integral parts of the law of the country, which includes African Charter on Human and People's Rights, CEDAW, ICCPR and ICESCR. In its article 35, the Constitution confirms equality between men and women and their rights to participate and compete in political, social and economic life on the basis of equality, among other fundamental rights. In light of the Constitution, more specific gender sensitive law such as family law and criminal panel code were issued. With the national Refugee Strategy to Prevent and Respond to SGBV, UNHCR and partners strive to ensure adherence to national laws of Ethiopia and be guided by the set goals which aim at protecting refugees from SGBV, and respond by facilitating the access of SGBV survivors to services including justice as per the country's laws....

'Unfortunately as exists in many other countries, the predominant impunity of perpetrators of SGBV places especially women and girls at continuous and compounded risk of SGBV, whereby human rights violations are deemed justified under certain cultural and traditional norms and accepted by the community.'²⁴⁸

19.6.3 The Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 stated:

'Domestic violence is a criminal offense under article 564 of the Criminal Code, which stipulates that the provisions on grave wilful injury (art. 555), common wilful injury (art. 556) and assault (art. 560) notably are applicable to a person who, by doing violence to a marriage partner or a person cohabitating in an irregular union, causes grave or common injury to his/her physical or mental health. Penalties range from three months to 15 years of imprisonment (Criminal Code, art. 555-560)...Additionally, the provision encompasses physical and psychological violence, but there is no mention of sexual or economic violence within the family in the legislation. Moreover, Dugasa Fite (2014) notes that there are no civil remedies available to victims of domestic violence in Ethiopian law, such as protection order, compensation, custody order, residence order, shelter or medical benefits.

'A Flagship Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, gathering the Government and UN Agencies, has developed centres providing shelters and services to victims such as medical and psychological treatment, for women victims of violence, including domestic violence (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2014).'

²⁴⁹

19.6.4 The Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2019 also stated:

'There is no law addressing violence against women, including a comprehensive approach to address violence against women with specific

²⁴⁸ UNHCR, '[Ethiopia National Refugee Strategy...](#)', n.d

²⁴⁹ OECD, '[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)', Ethiopia, n.d

provisions for investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrator and protection and support services for survivors.

‘Nonetheless, the Government has implemented several measures aiming at ensuring the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of violence against women, such as child and women protection units in police stations, the Violence against Women Investigation and Prosecution Team in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, as well as child and victim friendly benches within Federal and Regional courts (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2014). ...

‘However, women face several barriers in accessing justice, including pressure from their families or community elders to settle disputes through traditional justice systems or within the family (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2014). Additionally, it is reported that women are not allowed to participate within traditional justice systems (Africa for Women’s Rights, n.d.)’²⁵⁰

19.6.5 The USSD report 2019 noted:

‘The law criminalizes rape, and conviction provides for a penalty of five to 20 years’ imprisonment, depending on the severity of the case. The law does not expressly address spousal rape. The law generally covers violence against a marriage partner or a person cohabiting in an irregular union without specifically mentioning spousal rape. Some judges interpret this article to cover spousal rape cases, but others overlook such cases. The government did not fully enforce the law.

‘Domestic violence is illegal, but government enforcement of laws was inconsistent. Depending on the severity of injury inflicted, penalties for conviction range from small fines to 15 years’ imprisonment. Domestic violence, including spousal abuse, was a pervasive social problem.’²⁵¹

19.6.6 The OASC report 2020 noted: ‘Domestic violence and rape cases often are delayed significantly and given low priority.’²⁵²

19.6.7 In June 2020 UN Women reported that:

Due to COVID-19, people were not going to the police immediately after the incident, in time to collect medical evidence and press charges against the perpetrator. People thought there such services were not available during the pandemic. As a result, many rape cases went unreported and many women have had to endure repeated violence. This has made our work harder.’²⁵³

19.6.8 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

‘Societal norms and a lack of financial independence mean violence against women is underreported, and victims generally do not seek legal remedies, particularly in rural areas. ... The authorities have taken measures to combat gender-based violence. In 2010, the federal government developed a

²⁵⁰OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d.

²⁵¹ USSD, ‘[USSD report 2019](#)’ (section 6.), 11 March 2020

²⁵² OASC, ‘[Ethiopia 2020 Crime & Safety Report](#)’ (Personal Identity Concerns), 10 April 2020

²⁵³ UN Women, ‘[From where I stand: “Due to COVID-19 ...”](#)’, 1 June 2020

Strategic Plan for an Integrated and Multi-Sectoral Response to Violence against Women and Children and Child Justice in Ethiopia. Protection units for women and children operate in some police stations and prosecution offices, and there are special benches dealing specifically with violence against women in federal and regional courts. The government has committed to establishing a free hotline service for victims of gender-based violence.’²⁵⁴

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19.7 Access to support and services

19.7.1 The Social Institutions and Gender Index, based on source material released up to 2018, stated:

‘... the Women, Children and Youth Affairs offices at various levels (federal, regional and woreda) provide legal aid to women (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2014). Under a Flagship Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment developed by the Government in cooperation with UN Agencies, four safe houses and two one stop gender-based violence centres are providing women victims of violence with multi-sectoral assistance services, such as medical and psychological treatment, legal support, and shelter (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2014). The Government in cooperation with civil society organisations additionally leads educational and awareness-raising programmes on gender-based violence and gender equality (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2014).’²⁵⁵

19.7.2 An undated Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMFA) article, Ethiopia: Supporting women and girls survivors of violence, stated:

‘Since its opening in 2015, the women’s shelter in Adama has helped 680 women, girls and their children to rebuild their lives and move on from a past haunted by violence. The women and girls are provided with accommodation, medical treatment, psychological support and counselling, legal aid, education, vocational training, and lessons in self-defence. The shelter is helping the women to become self-sufficient and resilient in the world outside its walls...

‘The women’s shelter not only supports the survivors of gender-based violence escape from their difficult situation; it also supports efforts to restore their self-esteem and give them hope for a better future...

‘Since 2015, the women’s shelter in Adama has also provided training to police in handling cases of violence against women and girls. This training programme has helped 764 police officers and 1,115 police academy cadets to improve their ability to handle cases of gender-based violence and offer counselling to women survivors of violence, their families and the local community.

“We are seeing a major change in the local community. When the population is well-informed, they can change society. They have no interest

²⁵⁴ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)’, (page 34), 12 August 2020

²⁵⁵ OECD, ‘[Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019](#)’, Ethiopia, n.d

in being a society with rampant crime, but in the past, they didn't know how to respond to the violence. Now we get more help from the community, and this is what society must be built on," says Deputy Superintendent Ms. Sintayhew Botela, who heads the local police division for the protection of women and girls survivors of violence.

'The cooperation with the local police has improved their ability to investigate violent crimes, and thanks to coaching at the shelter, the women and girls are now more confident when testifying against the perpetrators in court.' ²⁵⁶

19.7.3 In June 2020 UN Women reported that:

'Since the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Ethiopia, one-stop crisis centres and shelters haven't been able to support survivors because of the lack of isolation rooms for newcomers and insufficient human resources and personal protective equipment. To fill this gap, a transitional shelter was opened to serve as a space where survivors could stay during the quarantine period. Once the survivors are tested for COVID-19 [and they are negative], they can be transferred to existing shelters.' ²⁵⁷

19.7.4 The 2020 DFAT Ethiopia report stated:

'According to local sources, there are 11 shelters countrywide for women escaping domestic violence. Shelters typically accommodate between 20 and 50 women. A woman can stay in a shelter for a maximum of 1.5 years. Shelters include counselling services and childcare centres, allowing women to bring their children and to pursue employment. Some shelters are government run, while some are administered by NGOs with UN support. Some local charities provide financial assistance to victims of physical and sexual abuse. One such charity, Agar, operates in Addis Ababa and Oromia and Amhara states. Local sources told DFAT that, while services for victims of gender-based violence exist, including shelters, they are insufficient. Demand for shelters is reportedly increasing, particularly among younger women, but they remain scarce — space constraints mean women are often turned away. Of the 11 shelters currently in operation, three are located in Addis Ababa, and only one in Oromia State (covering a population of over 30 million). There are no shelters in Afar, Gambela and Somali states. DFAT heard anecdotally that reporting of gender-based violence is increasing, but remains low overall, largely due to women's economic dependence on men. DFAT assesses women in Ethiopia face a high risk of domestic violence and sexual harassment. Sexual assault, including spousal rape, is common. DFAT assesses support services for women escaping from domestic violence have improved but are insufficient overall.' ²⁵⁸

See also [Human rights activists and civil society](#)

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²⁵⁶ DMFA, '[Ethiopia: Supporting women and girls survivors of violence](#)', n.d

²⁵⁷ UN Women, '[From where I stand: "Due to COVID-19 ..."](#)', 1 June 2020

²⁵⁸ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Ethiopia](#)', (page 34), 12 August 2020

Terms of reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned. For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Geography and demography
 - Key facts
 - Map
 - Population distribution, density and birth/death rate
 - Transport links
 - Languages
 - Ethnic groups
 - Religious demography
- Economy
- History
- Media and communications
- Citizenship and nationality
- Official documents
 - Registration of births, marriages and deaths
 - Birth certificates
 - Marriage certificates
 - Divorce certificates
 - Death certificates
 - National identity cards
 - Prison release documents
 - Military discharge documents
 - Passports
 - Fraudulent documents
- Healthcare
 - Overview
 - Organisation and personnel
 - Mental healthcare
 - Political system

- Key issues relating to protection claims
 - Criminal justice system
 - Freedom of movement
 - Children
 - Oromos
 - People of mixed Eritrean/Ethiopian nationality
 - Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
 - Women
 - Media and journalists
 - Human rights activists and civil society

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **21 September 2020**

Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI and addition of assessment.

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