

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

|                                    |                                           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bilagsnr.:</b>                  | <b>696</b>                                |
| Land:                              | Etiopien                                  |
| Kilde:                             | ICNL                                      |
| Titel:                             | Civic Freedom Monitor. Recent Development |
| Udgivet:                           | 7. januar 2026                            |
| Optaget på<br>baggrundsmaterialet: | 26. februar 2026                          |
|                                    |                                           |

# Civic Freedom Monitor: Ethiopia

Last updated: **January 7, 2026**

## Recent Developments

The Government of Ethiopia has prepared a draft amendment law, which would fundamentally alter the 2019 Organizations of Civil Societies Proclamation (Proclamation 1113/2019, or “CSO Proclamation”) and would represent a significant regression from the 2019 proclamation. CSOs have warned that the draft amendment law will systematically increase government control over CSOs, introduce vague and subjective criteria for punitive actions, limit operational freedom, and erode due process and judicial oversight. Feedback from civil society may have resulted in the most recent versions of the draft amendment law becoming more moderate, however. Please see the Pending Regulatory Initiatives and News sections below for additional details.

*While we aim to maintain information that is as current as possible, we realize that situations can rapidly change. If you are aware of any additional information or inaccuracies on this page, please keep us informed; write to ICNL at [ngomonitor@icnl.org](mailto:ngomonitor@icnl.org).*

## Introduction

Ethiopia has a long tradition of informal, community-based organizations such as *idir* and *iqub*—self-help associations that provide mutual socio-economic support at the local level. In contrast, formal civil society—organizations with legal personality—is a more recent development. The country’s first modern civil society organizations (CSOs) were faith-based groups established in the 1930s, while welfare organizations like the Red Cross began operating in Ethiopia in the 1950s. The famines of 1973-74 and 1984-1985 spurred the emergence of many more organizations focused on relief and humanitarian services. However, the number of CSOs grew significantly only after the downfall of the Derg regime in 1991.

In February 2009, the government enacted the Proclamation to Provide for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies (CSP), Ethiopia’s first comprehensive law governing CSOs. The 2009 law and its associated directives violated international standards relating to the freedom of association and imposed severe restrictions on civil society’s ability to operate independently. A decade later, the adoption of a new CSO Proclamation in 2019, under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, marked a shift toward a more enabling legal environment for civil society.

Despite these legal reforms, significant challenges persist for civic space in Ethiopia. While less restrictive than its predecessor, the 2019 CSO Proclamation still imposes barriers to the operations of CSOs, including intrusive supervisory powers and restrictive rules governing their routine functions. Similarly, although the Constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, these rights are often undermined in practice by restrictive laws, arbitrary enforcement, and excessive use of force against protesters. These constraints continue to limit the ability of CSOs and citizens to engage in advocacy, influence decision-making processes, and hold authorities to account.

***This Civic Freedom Monitor (CFM) country note was made possible through the research conducted by Yonas Birmeta, who has been a member of Transparency International Ethiopia***

*(TIE) General Assembly and was elected as a board chairman on July 3, 2022.*

## Civic Freedoms at a Glance

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Organizational Forms</b>   | Associations, board-led organizations, charitable endowments, charitable trusts, and charitable committees (see below for more details)                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Registration Body</b>      | Civil Society Organizations Agency (ACSO)                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Approximate Number</b>     | As of July 2021, there are a total of 2,953 CSOs registered by the Agency for Civil Society Organizations in Ethiopia. 2,460 of these CSOs are local organizations, while 422 are foreign-founded CSOs. There are 61 consortiums and ten committees.                 |
| <b>Barriers to Formation</b>  | CSO Proclamation Articles 2 & 57 indicate that registration is mandatory. Article 57 authorizes the government to refuse registration to CSOs whose aims or activities are contrary to public morals.                                                                |
| <b>Barriers to Operations</b> | The CSO Proclamation gives the government discretion to supervise CSOs and imposes rules that interfere with organizations' functioning.                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Barriers to Resources</b>  | Article 75(1) of the CSO Proclamation requires organizations to obtain written approval from the CSO Agency to open a bank account. Article 49 of the CSO Proclamation prohibits charitable committees from collecting funds without the approval of the CSO Agency. |
| <b>Barriers to Expression</b> | The restriction on NGOs from engaging in aims or activities that are contrary to public morals (Article 59(1)(b) of the CSO Proclamation) may impact the ability of some CSOs from freely discussing or advocating on certain issues.                                |
| <b>Barriers to Assembly</b>   | 48-hour advance notification requirement; wide government discretion to impose time, place, manner and content restrictions; and vague provisions on criminal penalties for violations.                                                                              |

## Legal Overview

This section provides a brief overview of Ethiopia's legal framework for the promotion and protection of civic freedoms. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

## RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

| <b>Key International Agreements</b>                                      | <b>Ratification*</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)             | 1993                 |
| Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1)                                   | No                   |
| International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) | 1993                 |

| Key International Agreements                                                                                          | Ratification* |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Optional Protocol to ICESCR (Op-ICESCR)                                                                               | No            |
| International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)                             | 1976          |
| Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)                                    | 1981          |
| Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (OP-CEDAW)                     | No            |
| Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)                                                                           | 1991          |
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) | No            |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)                                                          | 2010          |

| Key Regional Agreements                                                                                                   | Ratification |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)                                                                      | 1998         |
| African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child                                                                    | 2002         |
| Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community                                                                        | 1992         |
| The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa                          | 2018         |
| African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) | 2020         |

\* Category includes ratification, accession, or succession to the treaty

## CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was adopted in 1994. Ethiopia is divided into eleven Regional States and two chartered cities run by the federal government. Regional States have legislative, executive and judicial powers. The Constitution provides the Regional States with residual power. Thus, all powers not expressly given to the Federal Government alone or concurrently with the States are reserved for the States. (Article 52)

Relevant constitutional provisions include:

### Article 31 Right to Association

Everyone shall have the right to form associations for whatever purpose. Associations formed in violation of the appropriate laws or associations formed with the objective of overthrowing the constitutional order or associations carrying out these activities shall be prohibited.

### Article 29 Right to Hold Opinions, Thoughts and Free Expression

(1) Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without any interference. (2) Everyone shall have the

right to freedom of expression without interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.

### **Article 30 Freedom of Assembly, Public demonstration and the Right to Petition**

Everyone shall have the freedom, in association with others, to peaceably assemble without arms, engage in public demonstration and the right to petition. Appropriate procedure may be enacted to ensure that public meetings and demonstrations do not disrupt public activities, or that such meetings and demonstrations do not violate public morals, peace and democratic rights.

## **NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS**

Relevant national-level laws and regulations affecting civil society include:

- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution
- [Organization of Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113/2019](#)
- Charities and Societies Council of Ministers Regulation (CSR) No.168/2009
- Labor Proclamation 1156/2019
- Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Association Establishment Proclamation No. 341/2003
- Ethiopian Electoral and Political Parties Proclamation
- Proclamation to Establish the National Electoral Board
- Federal Income Tax Proclamation No. 979/2016
- Computer Crime Proclamation 2016
- Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes 1176/2020
- Service Fee Schedule for Various Services Provided by the Authority for Civil Societies Organizations, Council of Ministers Regulation No. 514/2022, Federal Negarit Gazette, Year 23, no 36

Directives issued by the Charities and Societies Authority:

- [Directive for the Administration of Civil Society Fund No. 848/2021](#)
- CSOs' Administrative Expense Implementation Directive No. 847/2021
- [Directive on Liquidators Procurement, Sale and Disposal of the Assets of CSOs No. 850/2021](#)

## **PENDING REGULATORY INITIATIVES**

The Government of Ethiopia has prepared a draft amendment law, which would fundamentally alter the 2019 Organizations of Civil Societies Proclamation (Proclamation 1113/2019, or "CSO Proclamation"). For example, the proposed amendments, which the Ministry of Justice developed, omit judicial review for administrative decisions of the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) to suspend CSOs from operating. Consequently, CSOs whose operations have been suspended by ACSO would no longer be able to appeal decisions of ACSO to suspend their operations. In addition, the proposed amendments introduce

highly intrusive measures, particularly regarding financial control. However, in October 2025, there were indications that the draft amendment law may have been revised to be more moderate compared to previous version as a result of feedback from civil society.

Please help keep us informed; if you are aware of pending initiatives, write to ICNL at [ngomonitor@icnl.org](mailto:ngomonitor@icnl.org)

## Legal Analysis

This section provides an in-depth assessment of Ethiopia's legal environment for civic freedoms, including the barriers to the exercise of the freedoms of association (formation, operations, resources), expression, and peaceful assembly. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

## ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS

According to the 2019 CSO Proclamation, a CSO is a non-governmental, non-partisan entity established by two or more persons on a voluntary basis and registered to carry out any lawful purpose (Article 2(1)). The CSO Proclamation applies to several types of organizations:

- organizations operating in two or more regional states;
- foreign organizations;
- organizations established in Ethiopia to work on international, regional, or sub-regional issues or to operate abroad;
- organizations operating in the city administration of Addis Ababa or Dire Dawa; and
- charitable organizations established by religious institutions (Article 3(1)).

It does not apply to religious institutions themselves; traditional community-based structures such as *edir*, *equb*, and similar entities; or organizations established under other laws (Article 3(3)).

Under the Proclamation, a CSO may take one of two broad forms: a local organization, formed under Ethiopian law by Ethiopians, resident foreigners, or both; or a foreign organization, formed under the laws of another country and registered to operate in Ethiopia (Article 2(2)-(3)).

Article 18 of the Proclamation outlines five types of registered local organizations:

- Associations—organizations formed by five or more members and governed by a General Assembly (Article 19),
- Board-led organizations—groups founded by two or more people and governed by a board (Article 20),
- Charitable endowments—organizations in which certain property is permanently and irrevocably designated by donation, monetary contribution, or will for an exclusively charitable purpose. (Article 21),
- Charitable trusts—entities created through a legal instrument that dedicates specific property solely to a charitable purpose, administered by trustees (Article 31).
- Charitable committees—groups of at least five individuals who come together to solicit money or other property from the public for charitable purposes (Article 48).

## **PUBLIC BENEFIT STATUS**

All CSOs are able to engage in public benefit activities.

While income from grants, donations, and membership fees is exempt from taxation, the Income Tax Proclamation considers donations to CSOs by business organizations or individuals as non-deductible expenditures.

CSOs carrying out humanitarian activities are exempt from paying custom duties on imported items. In addition, CSOs working with international organizations that have agreements with the Ethiopian government are exempt from paying value-added tax (VAT) in some circumstances.

CSOs that engage in income-generating activities must pay taxes on earned revenue in accordance with laws governing organizations involved in trade, investment, or other profit-making activities.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

While the legal framework in Ethiopia provides for public participation in lawmaking and administrative processes, these mechanisms often fall short of ensuring meaningful engagement in practice.

Article 29(3) of the Constitution guarantees access to information of public interest. Guideline 32 of the Legislative Process and Drafting Manual of the House of Peoples' Representatives, adopted in March 2021, requires the government to invite public comments on draft legislation. Similarly, Guideline 4 of the Manual mandates public participation when proposed legislation is likely to affect the public. While state councils at the regional level hold similar powers, state legislatures have made limited efforts to solicit public input on draft laws.

Article 15 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Proclamation (Proclamation No. 299/2002) obliges the Environmental Protection Authority to ensure public participation by making EIA reports accessible and inviting public comments.

In practice, however, public consultations are often criticized for being pro forma, serving more as one-way information sharing on decisions that have already been made rather than genuine opportunities for dialogue. Public consultations seldom provide affected communities with the opportunity to shape or reject legislation or projects that may adversely affect them.

Administrative agencies are legally required to invite public input before adopting directives. Article 8 of the Administrative Procedure Proclamation (Proclamation No. 1183/2020) obliges agencies to notify stakeholders and the public of their intent to issue directives via widely circulated newspapers, websites, and other media. Such notices must provide details on where, when, and how the public can submit comments and access relevant agency records.

Despite these legal provisions, advocacy and human rights groups allege that they have not been given adequate opportunity to participate in consultations or public debates prior to the issuance of directives by the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO). On August 27, 2021, the Centre for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD), a board-led CSO, hosted a consultative meeting to highlight irregularities in the adoption of ACSO directives and criticize the lack of transparency and engagement with affected CSOs and stakeholders.

The low levels of literacy and education in Ethiopia also significantly constrain meaningful public participation.

## **BARRIERS TO FORMATION**

CSOs that were already registered had to re-register within one year of the new CSO Proclamation coming into force in accordance with the requirements laid out in Articles 57 – 70.

At least five people are required to form an association (Article 19(1)).

Registration shall be refused on various grounds including:

- The document furnished for registration by the organization is fraudulently obtained or forged (Article 59(1)(d)).
- The application does not comply with the necessary conditions and the applicant's representative fails to meet such conditions after being requested to do so (Article 59(1)(a));
- The aim of the organization or the activities description under the organization's rules are contrary to law or public morals (Article 59(1)(a));
- The name or symbol under which the proposed organization is to be registered resembles the name of another organization or any other institution or is contrary to public morals or is illegal (Article 59(1)(c)); and
- The document furnished for registration by the organization is fraudulently obtained or forged (Article 59(1)(d)).

## **BARRIERS TO OPERATION**

The CSO Proclamation imposes several barriers to the operational activities of CSOs, including intrusive supervisory powers and restrictive rules governing their routine functions.

The CSO Proclamation grants the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) broad supervisory authority over CSOs. Article 77 permits ACSO to investigate a CSO's activities based on information obtained from government bodies, donors, the public, or through its own oversight work. It also holds the power to order the suspension or dissolution of an organization, although the CSO Proclamation provides some procedural safeguards (Articles 77 – 78). Additionally, ACSO may disclose a CSO's annual activity report or other documents in its custody upon request from "any concerned body or members of the organization" (Article 74).

Operational constraints extend to financial management and staffing. CSOs require written approval from ACSO to open a bank account, and banks must provide an organization's account statement to ACSO upon request (Article 75). Hiring is similarly limited: except for country representatives of a foreign organization, foreign nationals may only be employed if the work cannot be performed by Ethiopian citizens (Article 76).

Charitable committees face additional limitations, as they are prohibited from undertaking any activities beyond those necessary for their formation without prior ACSO approval (Article 49). Moreover, international organizations and local organizations established by non-resident foreign nationals are barred from lobbying political parties, conducting voter education, or engaging in election observation (Article 62(5)).

The CSO Proclamation also regulates how organizations may use their funds. Article 63 caps administrative costs at 20 percent of an organization's total income. Administrative costs are defined broadly to include "salaries and benefits of administrative employees; purchase of consumables and fixed assets and repair and maintenance expenses related to administrative matters; office rent, parking fees, audit fees, advertisement expenses, bank service fees, fees for electricity, fax, water and internet services; postal and printing expenses; tax, purchase and repair of vehicles for administrative purposes, and procurement of oil and lubricants for the same; insurance costs, penalties and attorney fees."

Organizations with an annual flow of funds exceeding Birr 200,000 (approximately USD 4,232) are required to undergo an annual audit, the costs of which count towards the 20 percent administrative cap (Article 72). Although ACSO may grant exemptions from the audit requirement, the Proclamation does not specify the criteria or process for obtaining such exemptions (Article 72(3)).

## **Barriers to International Contact**

Aside from the restrictions on employing foreign nationals, the CSO Proclamation does not impose restrictions on international communication or contact.

## **BARRIERS TO RESOURCES**

The CSO Proclamation imposes several restrictions on CSOs' ability to access resources:

- Charitable committees are prohibited from collecting funds without prior approval from ACSO (Article 49).
- Organizations engaging in income-generating activities must notify ACSO within 15 days (Article 64(7)).
- CSOs are required to obtain written approval from ACSO before opening a bank account (Article 75).

## **BARRIERS TO EXPRESSION**

The government's power to deny registration to organizations whose aims or activities are deemed contrary to "public morals" may hinder advocacy on sensitive or controversial topics.

In June 2016, after human rights violations during protests in Oromia were exposed on social media, Ethiopia's parliament swiftly adopted the Cybercrimes Law, known as the Computer Crime Proclamation. The Law imposes severe penalties for a wide range of online activities and grants authorities greater surveillance and censorship powers that limit access to information on digital platforms. Its adoption followed a government-ordered shutdown of Facebook, Viber, and WhatsApp in parts of the Oromia region. Authorities also cited social media posts—such as images, videos, and audio recordings documenting excessive force against peaceful demonstrators—as evidence in criminal cases against digital activists.

On April 11, 2020, the Attorney General issued regulations to further define and implement the state of emergency declared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Article 93(3) of the Constitution provides a six-month time limit for emergency rule once approved by the House of Peoples' Representatives. These regulations prohibited the dissemination of information likely to cause public confusion or alarm and required media professionals to report COVID-19-related news in a manner that was neither exaggerated nor understated, and was unlikely to create confusion or alarm. They also imposed a legal duty to report anyone suspected of having contracted the virus to the police or Ministry of Health. Violations were punishable by up to three years in prison and fines of up to Birr 200,000 (approximately USD 4,232).

## **BARRIERS TO ASSEMBLY**

Article 30 of the Ethiopian Constitution guarantees the freedom of peaceful assembly, but permits "appropriate procedures" to ensure that public meetings and demonstrations do not disrupt public activities or violate public morals, peace and democratic rights.

### **Advance Notification / Permission**

The Peaceful Demonstration and Public Political Meeting Procedure Proclamation No. 3/1991 (hereafter "the Proclamation") requires organizers of peaceful demonstrations and public political meetings to provide advance notification to authorities. There is no minimum threshold for the number of participants to trigger the notification requirement. Applications must be submitted at least 48 hours before the event and must include details such as the objective, location, date, time, expected duration, estimated number and type of participants, any required government assistance, and the names and addresses of organizers.

The relevant government office has 12 hours to respond with any reservations regarding the proposed time or location. If it declines to accept the proposal, the office must provide a written explanation. If no response is given within the timeframe, the demonstration is deemed approved. The Proclamation does not provide for an appeal process in the event of a refusal.

### **Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions**

Article 6(2) of the Proclamation provides authorities broad discretion to refuse to permit a peaceful demonstration or political meeting at particular times or locations if they are “of the opinion” that it is preferable for the event to be held at some other time or place “in order to maintain peace and security.”

Article 7 of the Proclamation prohibits demonstrations and public political meetings within:

- 100 meters of offices and residence of embassies and international organizations; churches, mosques and similar prayer houses; hospitals and graveyards; electric power sources, dams, and other dangerous places; and marketplaces during market days; and
- 500 meters of military bases and security offices.

### **Content Restrictions**

Since the 2005 national elections and until the present, the right to freedom of assembly has effectively been restricted to the ruling party. Opposition political parties report systemic denial of permits for peaceful demonstrations, often under pretexts related to time and place restrictions. Additionally, hotels and conference centers frequently refuse to host opposition meetings due to fear of government reprisal, with reservations often cancelled at the last minute.

### **Criminal Penalties**

Article 487 of Ethiopia’s Criminal Code criminalizes making, uttering, distributing, or displaying any remarks, images, or drawings deemed seditious or threatening. Offenders face imprisonment of up to six months or fines not exceeding Birr 500. The vague language of this provision invites arbitrary enforcement against peaceful expression.

### **Excessive Force**

Ethiopian authorities have repeatedly used excessive force to suppress assemblies. For example:

- In June 2012, the leaders of a protest organized by the Muslim community before the African Union meeting in Addis Ababa were arrested and charged under the anti-terrorism law.
- In the wake of large-scale protests in the Oromia region in 2015-2016, security forces arrested thousands of students, social media activists, and opposition party leaders and supporters. Ethiopia’s Human Rights Commission said at least 669 people were killed in the protests. Despite widespread condemnation, the government claimed security forces used “proportionate measures” to counter the unrest.
- On January 23, 2018, seven people were killed when security forces opened fire on festival-goers during the Ethiopian Orthodox Church’s Epiphany celebrations after participants chanted anti-government slogans. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the Amhara regional state government to ensure its promised investigation was “prompt, independent, impartial, and effective.”

## Additional Resources

This section contains links to external reports and news reports relevant to civic freedoms. The Historical Notes section contains links to past developments which ICNL has reported on. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

## GLOBAL INDEX RANKINGS

| Ranking Body                                            | Rank                                                                  | Ranking Scale<br>(best - worst possible)      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">UN Human Development Index</a>              | 180 (2025)                                                            | 1 - 193                                       |
| <a href="#">World Justice Project Rule of Law Index</a> | 132 (2025)                                                            | 1 - 142                                       |
| <a href="#">Transparency International</a>              | 99 (2024)                                                             | 1 - 180                                       |
| <a href="#">Fund for Peace Fragile States Index</a>     | 12 (2024)                                                             | 179 - 1                                       |
| <a href="#">Freedom House: Freedom in the World</a>     | Status: Not Free<br>Political Rights: 8<br>Civil Liberties: 10 (2025) | Free/Partly Free/Not Free<br>40 - 0<br>60 - 0 |

## REPORTS

|                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UN Universal Periodic Review Reports             | <a href="#">Ethiopia UPR page</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Human Rights Watch                               | <a href="#">World Report: Ethiopia (2025)</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| UN Human Rights Reports                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">SR on the adverse effects of toxic waste and dangerous products and human rights. Report E/CN.4/1998/10/Add.</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Ethiopia OHCHR page</a></li></ul>                                                                                                                              |
| U.S. State Department                            | <a href="#">2024 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Fund for Peace Fragile States Index              | <a href="#">Ethiopia</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| IMF Country Reports                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Selected Issues: Country Report No. 08/259</a></li><li>• <a href="#">The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Ex Post Assessment of Long-Term Fund Engagement, Country Report No. 05/26</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Ethiopia and the IMF</a></li></ul> |
| ICNL Online Library                              | <a href="#">Ethiopia</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) | <a href="#">Human Rights Situation in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: 46th Session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## NEWS

### [Proposed CSO law amendment raises fears of Ethiopia's repressive backslide](#) (July 2025)

The Ministry of Justice has prepared a draft amendment to the current Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Proclamation, introducing sweeping changes that have raised concern among rights advocates and legal experts. The draft grants the the Ethiopian Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) new powers to issue suspension orders when there is "suspicion of a serious legal violation by a civil society organization" and when the agency "believes irreparable harm will occur if the organization is not suspended." Under the current proclamation, enacted as part of the post-2018 reforms, only the Director-General could issue such orders and only after a confirmed legal violation was found during an investigation, limited to a three-month suspension.

### [Civil Society Concerns in Achieving Transitional Justice and Accountability for Atrocities in Ethiopia](#) (October 2024)

In this document the signatory organizations outline our deep concerns with the current transitional justice policy accepted by the Ethiopian Council of Ministers on 17 April 2024. We believe the ongoing conflicts in the Oromia and Amhara regions, the slow progress in implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Tigray – alongside reports of ongoing abuses – and the fundamental flaws with the accepted transitional justice policy fail to provide holistic, survivor and victim-centered pathways to peace and justice for all those impacted by the conflict in northern Ethiopia, as well as for victims and survivors of abuses across the country.

### [US raises alarm over Ethiopian rights abuses vefore IMF visit](#) (March 2024)

The US expressed alarm about continuing human rights abuses in Ethiopia that may impact its ability to secure funding from multilateral lenders, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) prepares a mission to the country to discuss a crucial bailout. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration has faced growing censure over tactics used by federal army forces to quell violent insurgencies across the country, with alleged extrajudicial killings and drone strikes leaving dozens of civilians dead.

### [Civil society groups call for peace, reform and accountability in joint new year appeal](#) (October 2023)

A coalition of 35 local CSOs has issued a joint appeal calling for concerted efforts to build sustainable peace, protect human rights, and promote democratic reforms across Ethiopia during the upcoming Ethiopian new year. The groups highlighted both progress and persistent challenges over the past year. They praised recent peace talks resulting in ceasefire deals in Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella, while lamenting ongoing conflicts, restrictions on rights, and abuses targeting vulnerable groups.

### [Ethiopian Civil Society Groups Issue Call for Peace](#) (September 2023)

CSOs in Ethiopia called for a peaceful resolution to conflicts in the country that have caused thousands of deaths over the past 12 months. Dan Yirga, executive director at the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, said this request was directed to all stakeholders in the country's peace-building process. He said that most of the conflicts were started or aggravated because of a long-standing culture of using force to settle tensions. To create a lasting solution for this problem, a nationwide peace convention that includes all members of society needs to create a road map for solving current conflicts and avoiding new ones.

## ARCHIVED NEWS

### [Fed. government vows to take punitive measures against CSOs, NGOs who step outside their mandates, threaten Ethiopia's sovereignty](#) (September 2021)

### [Fed government suspends operations of three humanitarian organizations](#) (August 2021)

### [Ethiopia passes controversial law curbing 'hate speech'](#) (February 2020)

### [UN experts commend civil society law reforms, but concerns remain](#) (April 2019)

### [New Bill to Reorganize Ethiopian News Agency, Create Civil Society and Education Centers](#) (December 2018)

2018)

[Joint Letter on Ethiopia's New Draft NGO Law](#) (November 2018)

[Ethiopia establishes Advisory Council to reform justice system](#) (July 2018)

[Unchaining Our Human Rights Record](#) (June 2018)

[Ethiopian parliament votes to end state of emergency](#) (May 2018)

[Ethiopia forces responded to anti-govt chants with bullets: U.N. backs probe](#) (January 2018)

[Ethiopia Should Release All Political Detainees](#) (January 2018)

[Ethiopia Needs to Open Up Civic Space](#) (May 2017)

[Ethiopia's Oromo leader, 2 others, finally charged with terrorism](#) (February 2017)

[Attack on Civil Society Escalates as Dissent Spreads](#) (August 2016)

[Ethiopia's New Cybercrime Law Allows for More Efficient and Systematic Prosecution of Online Speech](#) (June 2016)

[Civil society groups urge international community to address killing of Oromo protesters](#) (January 2016)

[Government lauds CSOs' development role](#) (March 2015)

[Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Desalegn Before Bilateral Meeting](#) (October 2014)

[Secretary of State Kerry Shares Concerns about Arrests of Ethiopian Bloggers and Closing Space for Civil Society](#) (May 2014)

[CSO Law Stumbling Block in Mining Transparency Application](#) (September 2013)

[Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn elected by African heads of state as chairman of the African Union](#) (February 2013)

[Cooperatives championed amid NGO restrictions](#) (November 2012)

[NGOs call for Ethiopian human rights reform](#) (November 2012)

[UN labour agency names five countries where 'serious and urgent' labour-rights cases need attention](#) (November 2012)

[German NGO pulls out of Ethiopia](#) (November 2012)

[Government continues to target peaceful Muslim protest movement](#) (November 2012)

[Joint Letter to Ethiopia on its Candidacy to the UN Human Rights Council](#) (November 2012)

[Joint letter to PM Desalegn requesting removal of arbitrary restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and association in Ethiopia](#) (October 2012)

[Why Europe should speak out about Ethiopia's human rights](#) (September 2012)

[Bahrain and UN Human Rights Council](#) (August 2012)

[EU praises Meles Zenawi](#) (August 2012)

[CSOs concerned about African Human Rights Council candidates](#) (July 2012)

[Amnesty International report highlights Charities and Societies Proclamation's stranglehold on NGOs](#) (March 2012)

[Future of last remaining human rights monitoring NGO in the balance](#) (February 2012)

[A decision by the Federal High Court undermines the survival of prominent national human rights organisation](#) (November 2011)

[Violence against women on the rise](#) (September 2011)

[Britain and EU increase aid to Ethiopia while ignoring human rights warnings](#) (August 2011)

[Terrorism law undercuts free speech](#) (July 2011)

[Ethiopian Charities & Societies Agency shuts down organizations](#) (February 2011)

[The Ethiopian Charities and Societies Agency board upholds revocation of NGOs' licenses, and the freezing of accounts](#) (February 2011)

[Four NGOs get government ban](#) (February 2011)

[Human Rights Watch: Ethiopia uses Aid to Bribe Voters](#) (October 2010)

## **HISTORICAL NOTES**

None available.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW

<https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/ethiopia>