



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2023

Ethiopia

21
/100

NOT FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	10 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	11 /60

LAST YEAR’S SCORE & STATUS

23 /100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. See the methodology.



TOP

Overview

The appointment of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came to power after Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned in the face of mass protests, set off a transitional period in Ethiopia. Abiy pledged to reform Ethiopia's authoritarian state and has held elections and implemented some liberalization policies. However, Ethiopia remains beset by civil war and intercommunal violence, abuses by security forces and violations of due process are still common, and many restrictive laws remain in force. Since late 2020 and until November 2022, fighting between the Federal Government and the Tigray Defense Force (TDF) has led to the displacement of millions and credible allegations of atrocity crimes, and violence has spilled over into neighboring regions.

Key Developments in 2022

- In March, the federal government and the Tigray regional government declared a humanitarian truce in the Tigray region, though fighting resumed again in August. In November, the federal government and Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, through peace talks mediated by the African Union. The conflict in Tigray over the course of two years caused the deaths of an estimated 600,000 people, and there remains a high risk of further mass atrocities being committed.
- In September, the UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) released their investigative report into the nature of the violence committed in the Tigray and Amhara regions by armed forces. They concluded that all of the warring parties had committed war crimes or crimes against humanity over the course of the conflict.
- Throughout the year in Oromia, Amhara militants were implicated in numerous killings of Oromo civilians and the displacement of tens of thousands of people in areas bordering the Amhara region, which Amhara authorities attempted to annex. The Amhara government did not comment on the attacks and at times tried to justify them. Oromo militants also targeted Amhara civilians in Oromia.
- In May, government forces arrested over 4,500 individuals, including journalists and activists, in what was a widespread crackdown in the Amhara region. The crackdown was allegedly intended to disarm and demilitarize the Amhara militia known as the Fano, which had been recruited by the federal government to fight in the Tigray conflict and had likely committed war crimes. The government

provided no justification for the arrests, and whether the people arrested in May remained in custody at the end of the year was unclear.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?	1 / 4
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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.

Following general elections in June and September 2021, Prime Minister Abiy’s Prosperity Party formed a new cabinet that included three opposition party members. In October, Abiy was sworn in for a new five-year mandate. Despite their landslide victory, the results were contested by political actors who were excluded or who did not participate in the process due to perceived unfairness.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?	1 / 4
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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 June and September 2021 parliamentary and regional elections were seen as an opportunity for the country to break from its past of undemocratic elections. Changes in electoral laws and reform of the NEBE improved the body’s operations and encouraged far more opposition parties to participate than ever before. A total of 46 political parties participated in the elections, fielding 9,505 candidates. An estimated 37 million people registered to vote, and some 90 percent of registered

voters cast a ballot. Final results from the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) confirmed a majority for the Prosperity Party, which won over 410 of 436 constituencies contested. Polls were indefinitely postponed in Tigray.

Despite improvements, the elections were fraught with insecurity, registration problems, and other challenges that limited widespread acceptance of the outcomes as free and fair. Numerous political parties raised concerns about the closure of their offices by security agents, harassment, imprisonment, and killings of their members. In this context, key opposition groups boycotted the election, resulting in many uncontested seats. While more competitive than previous elections, the 2021 polls still fell short of conferring broad-based legitimacy to the elected government among significant political factions in the country.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	2 / 4
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Several reforms to the electoral system and its oversight have taken shape under Prime Minister Abiy. Parliament unanimously passed the 2019 Ethiopian Election, Political Parties Registration, and Election Ethics law. The new legal framework reduced restrictions that had limited the participation of opposition groups and failed to recognize voting rights of marginalized sections of the population, such as international displaced persons (IDPs) and prisoners.

Challenges that arose during the 2021 polls tested the impartiality and credibility of the NEBE and the broader electoral framework, including regarding the participation of imprisoned political candidates. One party, the Balderas for True Democracy, sought legal recourse to ensure imprisoned candidates were registered and succeeded when the Federal High Court directed the NEBE to allow the jailed candidates to participate. Electoral authorities initially resisted the court order, saying ballots had already been printed, but ultimately reprinted ballots to include the Balderas candidates. Similarly, several Oromo political parties filed their case to the court after being denied accreditation by the NEBE and the court ruled for them, though they did not participate in the election due to the lengthy court proceedings.

The lack of a complete census, which was scheduled to be completed in 2017 but was repeatedly delayed due to security concerns, remains a major impediment to the

demarcation of constituencies that ensure fair representation based on accurate population estimates. With the exception of the newly established Sidama regional state, the distribution of electoral constituencies has not changed from the original distribution established in 1995.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	1/4
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The transition beginning in 2018 initially brought progressive political reforms, but crackdowns in 2020—first after the assassination of Oromo musician Hachalu Hundessa and its aftermath in June, and then after the beginning of the conflict in Tigray in November of that year—harmed political pluralism. In May 2021, the House of Peoples’ Representatives designated the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and “OLF-Shene”—the government term for Oromo Liberation Army (OLA)—as terrorist organizations, accusing them (with credible evidence) of carrying out acts of politically motivated violence against government officials and civilian targets based on their ethnic identity. Consequently, thousands of Tigrayans and Oromos accused of being affiliated with the TPLF or OLA have faced arrest and other pressure. Oromo political leaders, including top officials of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) party, have also faced pressure and are subjected to abuses in prison, having been arrested after the assassination of Hundessa without due process.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?	1/4
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The Prosperity Party won a landslide victory in 2021 polls, taking almost 95 percent of the 436 constituency seats contested in June, and numerous opposition candidates

entered the new parliament. The party has accused opposition officials and government critics of having links with rebel groups and hindered their participation in the country's politics. Key opposition groups including the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and the OLF boycotted the 2021 elections, citing electoral mismanagement and harassment by the ruling party.

B3 0-4 pts

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

1/4

The designation in 2021 of the TPLF and the OLA as terrorist organizations has been detrimental to the political support bases of the parties. The TPLF had dominated national and regional politics in Tigray for the past three decades. The military conflict against the OLA and the government's crackdown on opposition members and supporters following the 2020 Hundessa assassination further limited Oromo people's political rights.

Similarly, the government has used the 2021 designation of the OLA as a terrorist organization to crack down on nonviolent opposition supporters and members under the pretext of affiliation with terrorists.

The Tigray conflict with the TPLF also led Prime Minister Abiy to seek external military and political support from President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea. The presence within Tigray of the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF)—who have been accused of widespread atrocities and sexual violence—exacerbated the conflict and were an impediment to its resolution throughout 2022.

B4 0-4 pts

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

1/4

Women hold around 41 percent of seats in the House of People's Representatives and around 30 percent in the House of Federation, but the percentage of women

candidates for the lower house in the 2021 elections was just below 16 percent. Women remain significantly underrepresented across both elected and appointed positions. Currently, only 8 of the 22 cabinet members are women. Ethiopia criminalizes LGBT+ activity, and LGBT+ people do not identify themselves openly.

Since 1991, political parties in Ethiopia have primarily been based on ethnicity. However, upon coming to office, Prime Minister Abiy has advocated a message of national unity and expressed disagreement with the enduring legacies of ethnic politics. In recent years, political alliances between major political factions within the country have realigned, with Tigrayan and Oromo parties urging for more decentralized power to ethnically defined regions, and other political parties generally in favor of nonethnically defined federalism and a greater unifying role played by the central government. Ethnic groups like the Gurage and Wolaita have been denied their demand for regional statehood, despite the constitution allowing for such a designation.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	1 / 4
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The shortcomings of the 2021 elections, including a climate of insecurity and growing repression of some opposition groups, suggest that gains in political reform have stalled and, in the absence of stability, may eventually be reversed.

The escalation of violence in Tigray, which was further worsened by the deployment of Eritrean troops, prevented the 2021 elections from occurring in the region, leaving people there without elected representatives. In November 2022, the federal government and the TPLF signed a peace treaty through talks mediated by the African Union, following a humanitarian truce that was signed in March but had broken down in August.

Some areas plagued by insecurity remain out of the control of the government—such as parts of Oromia—while others have been under prolonged states of emergency,

with heightened military presence and control, including parts of Oromia, Amhara, and Benishangul Gumuz.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

2/4

Corruption and unequal resource distribution are significant problems that have contributed to the recent civil unrest throughout Ethiopia. However, the ruling party has accused public servants or opposition politicians of corruption as a political weapon to punish dissent. Petty bribery and corruption, often involving local officials and police, are widespread. Corruption within the justice system remains a significant challenge, and judges caught accepting bribes are rarely punished.

In July 2022, federal police arrested the commissioner of the National Disaster Risk Management Commission, Mitiku Kassa, on suspicion of corruption. Kassa was accused of colluding with the leader of a humanitarian organization called the Elshadai Relief and Development Association, embezzling money by selling food and clothing that were ostensibly designated for internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps. The camps that the supplies were allegedly intended for do not exist.

The government established a national committee to coordinate an anticorruption campaign in November 2022. The committee announced it had received over 250 tips within a week of its creation and testified to the widespread presence of corruption, labeling it as a major threat to national security. Several current officials were implicated in land embezzlement cases. In December, several officials suspected of corruption were arrested, including Tewodros Bekele, director general of the Ethiopian Financial Security Services (EFSS).

Despite these seemingly positive steps, the 2022 anticorruption campaign only focuses on malfeasance within institutions at the federal level. Whether the government intends to carry out new anticorruption investigations with integrity, without using it to repress political opposition members, is unclear.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

1/4

At the start of the war in Tigray internet and telephone lines were cut and journalists were denied access to the region. The involvement of Eritrean soldiers, the status of refugee camps, and the humanitarian situation in Tigray all remain shrouded in uncertainty.

Very little information is available about counter-insurgency operations and ethnic conflicts in Oromia, Benishangul Gumuz, and Amhara. The extent of the human rights abuses and war crimes committed in these areas remain difficult to verify. While state media and the government’s official communications throughout 2022 emphasized the limited nature of what it has termed a “law enforcement operation,” media and other reports of alleged atrocities, sexual violence, and the expanding conflict have contradicted the government’s narrative.

Amid widespread impunity for security forces, the government’s efforts to ensure accountability for the human rights abuses committed by its forces lacks transparency.

Add Q

Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?	-2
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Since the war in northern Ethiopia began in late 2020, Amhara regional forces have taken control of and attempted to annex areas in Western Tigray, with the support of Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and the EDF. Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International also reported in April 2022 that newly-appointed officials in Western Tigray and Amhara security forces, with the acquiescence and possible involvement of Ethiopian federal forces, had ordered the removal of hundreds of thousands of Tigrayans from their homes “using threats, unlawful killings, sexual violence, mass arbitrary detention, pillage, forcible transfer, and the denial of humanitarian assistance.” Amhara forces were implicated in assaulting ethnic Tigrayans in a campaign of ethnic cleansing, with the intent of changing the ethnic composition of the region.

Authorities been complicit in the frequent ethnic-based attacks on civilians by militants. In Oromia, Amhara militants were implicated in numerous 2022 killings of Oromo civilians and displacement of tens of thousands of people in areas bordering the Amhara region, which Amhara authorities attempted to annex. The Amhara government did not comment on the attacks and at times tried to justify them. Oromo militants have also targeted Amhara civilians in Oromia.

Several credible reports, including from the ICHREE, have implicated Ethiopian and Eritrean forces in the mass arrest, forced disappearance, and killings of ethnic Tigrayans in western and southeastern parts of Tigray.

Score Change: The score declined from 0 to -2 because state and nonstate actors, including regional officials, security forces, and militias, have targeted ethnic Tigrayans and Oromo people in Oromia, Tigray, and other parts of Ethiopia.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?	1/4
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Independent journalists remain constrained by security imperatives that limit their ability to work and travel. While a 2021 media law adopted by the Abiy government seemed to offer a more liberal framework and protective legal environment for journalists, in practice this has not been the case. In April 2022, the parliament broke the terms of the media law and approved the appointment of members of the Prosperity Party to the board of the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA). Under the law, EMA board members were supposed to be chosen in an open and transparent process.

International and Ethiopian journalists and media networks repeatedly come under government pressure over their coverage of the internal conflicts in Tigray and

Oromo, as well as other political dynamics. In 2022, journalists in some cases were detained, expelled from the country, or had their licenses revoked. The EMA and security institutions warned and threatened media outlets reporting on the violent conflicts and pressured them to adhere to the government narrative. Journalists also faced pressure, arrests, threats, and harassment—both online and offline—from the government to disclose the identities of their sources.

Numerous Ethiopian journalists have been imprisoned without charges. In August 2022, the federal police announced that charges had been filed against 111 owners of “illegal” digital media outlets, accusing them of working to incite violence. Many self-censor or use pseudonyms to attempt to avoid persecution.

Most private media outlets are established with a goal of satisfying distinct political or ethnic group’s interests. Reports from state media agencies must follow the narrative of the ruling party; content that is contrary to the government’s narrative is removed.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	1 / 4
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The Ethiopian constitution guarantees religious freedom, and different faith groups have coexisted in the country for centuries. However, religion has increasingly become a divisive factor in Ethiopian politics, and local conflicts have featured violence along religious lines. In April 2022, Muslim individuals were attacked in Gondar in the Amhara region by heavily armed assailants, resulting in the death of at least 20 civilians, over 150 people were injured, Muslim-owned properties were looted, and religious buildings were destroyed. In what was deemed a retaliatory attack, two Christians were killed and five Orthodox churches were burned in the Silte zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Regions (SNNPR).

In November 2022, Amharic speaking militants raided a protestant church in a village in the East Wollega Zone of Oromia and killed 15 participants of the church service, including church leaders.

D3 0-4 pts

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

Academic freedom remains restricted in Ethiopia, though academics have become more vocal on political and economic matters in lectures, at conferences, in media columns, and online since the lifting of the state of emergency in 2018. However, self-censorship remains common in the context of ongoing conflicts and political tensions.

With few exceptions, institutions of higher education are funded and administered by the federal government, which also sets admission standards and student quotas. The Ministry of Education still monitors and regulates official curriculums. According to a September 2022 report from the Ethiopian Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, corruption is a widespread issue throughout higher education institutions.

University leadership has spread hate speech about ethnic Tigrayans and Oromo people. In June 2022, police attacked students at Addis Ababa University protesting ongoing ethnic violence against Amhara communities in the Wollega region. In August, Bonga University dismissed 54 Oromo students, following students' demands for an investigation into the killing of an Oromo student on campus.

D4 0-4 pts

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

1/4

The government silences critical voices and the voices of its political opponents to control the narratives around the civil war in Tigray and conflicts in other regions, especially Oromia. Its crackdown on individuals and political institutions with opposing views has pushed individuals to refrain from commenting on sensitive topics, including political issues.

Nationwide sweeps, raids, and arrests, as well as a rising tolerance for hate speech and incitement to violence by authorities and other public figures—particularly against Tigrayans and Oromo people—have intensified a climate of fear around expressing personal views. Government forces arrested over 4,500 individuals, including journalists and activists, during a May 2022 crackdown in the Amhara region. The crackdown was allegedly intended to disarm and demilitarize the Amhara militia known as the Fano, which had been recruited by the federal government to fight in

the Tigray conflict and had likely committed war crimes. In August, authorities in the SNNPR arrested several Gurage Zone officials accusing them of favoring the Gurage regional government's statehood demand.

Government security agencies surveil individuals and politicians through wire-tapping. Digital surveillance and the use of individual informants to spy on people is widespread. Ethiopian authorities purchased an Israeli surveillance system from the company Cellebrite, which they have used to hack into the mobile phones of detainees since 2021.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?

1/4

Free assembly is restricted by insecurity in several regions and associated declarations of states of emergency or martial law. The nationwide state of emergency enacted in November 2021 that lasted until February 2022 further curtailed freedom of assembly and other civil liberties throughout the country.

Government forces continued to violently disperse protests throughout 2022. In May, federal police used tear gas and gunfire to disperse rioters after clashes between police and Muslim worshippers occurred at Meskel Square in Addis Ababa during the Eid al-Fitr prayer.

E2 0-4 pts

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

1/4

Under a civil society law passed in 2019, the federal Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) retains broad powers. Moreover, while nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are more able to legally operate in the human rights and governance spheres, practically many of these organizations are unable to access

large parts of Ethiopia either due to security challenges or a lack of official approval, as was the case in Tigray. While the discourse around NGOs is more open, many of the practical realities for these groups have not improved.

Local civil society organizations (CSOs) face threats and warnings for advocating for issues contrary to the government’s position, especially in relation to internal conflicts. In September 2022, government security agents prevented a group of 35 CSOs from hosting a press event with media representatives, in which they were to call for warring parties in Ethiopia to end the violence and come to the negotiate a peace deal. The organizations instead independently issued a statement calling for the cessation of violence in Tigray. Days later, the government threatened to revoke the licenses of the organizations involved, claiming they had acted against the “sovereignty of the country and the public interest.”

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	1/4
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The Ethiopian Constitution recognizes the right of workers to join trade unions, and more than 500,000 workers are organized under the umbrella of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). However, independent unions have faced harassment in the past, and there has not been a legal strike in Ethiopia since 1993.

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

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?	1/4
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The judiciary is officially independent, but in practice it is subject to political interference, and judgments rarely deviate from government policy. Ethiopia's security forces have maintained significant influence over the judicial process, especially in cases against opposition leaders and other political adversaries. Judges who attempt to exercise independence have faced arrests by authorities. Courts remain complicit in ensuring impunity for security forces, especially in relation to the political prisoners.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

0/4

Due process rights are generally not respected. The right to a fair trial is often not respected, particularly for government critics. In civil matters, due process is hampered by the limited capacity of the Ethiopian courts system, especially in the peripheral regions where access to government services is weak. As a result, routine matters regularly take years to be resolved.

Human rights abuses and extrajudicial punishments by security forces occur widely throughout the country, and most security forces who commit the abuses go unpunished.

In May 2022, Ethiopian security forces arbitrarily arrested more than 4,500 people in the Amhara region, including journalists and activists, in an attempt to crack down on the Fano militia group that bases its operations there. The government provided no justification for the arrests, and whether the people arrested in May remained in custody at the end of the year was unclear.

F3 0-4 pts

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

0/4

Several conflicts have intensified in 2022—most notably in Oromia—but there has also been growing instability in Amhara, Afar, Tigray, and other regions. According to UN figures, as of July 2022, there were 2.72 million internally displaced people across Ethiopia, mostly due to the conflicts. Security forces have been accused of war

crimes, including the rape and massacring of civilians. Despite the November peace deal ending the Tigray conflict, which had caused the deaths of an estimated 600,000 people, high risk of mass atrocities in the region remains.

Extrajudicial executions and human rights abuses by security forces remain widespread. A report released in September 2022 by the ICHREE implicated the government and its allied forces in crimes against humanity, and claimed the other warring parties in the Tigray conflict had committed war crimes.

An ongoing government campaign to suppress armed opposition forces in western Oromia has led to repeated clashes and widespread displacement. According to the ICHREE, in 2022 incidents of large-scale killings targeting ethnic groups increased in Oromia, perpetrated by Amhara militias, the OLA, Oromia Special Forces, and the ENDF. In June and July, hundreds of civilians, mainly ethnic Amhara, were killed in the West Wollega and Kellem Wollega zones of Oromia by armed assailants. Between August and early December, dozens of ethnic Oromo were killed in Horo Guduru and East Wollega zones by militants from the Amhara region, allegedly the Fano.

In March 2022, government forces burned a civilian alive in Benishangul Gumuz. In June, at least 50 civilians were extrajudicially executed in Gambella following the offensive against security forces by joint forces from the Gambella Liberation Front (GLF) and OLA.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	O / 4
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The ongoing conflict in Oromia, the two years of civil war in Tigray, and political tensions throughout the country have inflamed ethnic divisions, contributing to discriminatory policies and actions against certain groups. Tigrayan, Amhara, and Oromo groups and activists have spoken out about the increasing number of targeted attacks and discrimination they have experienced.

The number of IDPs in Ethiopia surpassed 2.72 million as of July 2022, and humanitarian groups have struggled to meet the growing need.

Same-sex sexual activity is prohibited by law and punishable by up to 15 years’ imprisonment. Women face discrimination in education. A gender gap persists in many aspects of economic life, including women’s wages relative to men in similar positions; according to the World Bank’s Gender Innovation Lab, women have far lower wage incomes (44 percent lower) and business sales (79 percent lower) than men.

Despite near-universal primary school enrollment, access to quality education and other social services varies widely across regions and is particularly poor in the “emerging” lowland states.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	0 / 4
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While the constitution establishes freedom of movement, local conflicts impede people’s ability to travel freely. Travel to Tigray, several parts of Oromia, and other parts of Ethiopia have been severely impeded due to the violent conflicts. The intentional destruction of infrastructure such as roads and bridges by armed actors has also undermined civilian and humanitarian movement.

Though the government and the Tigray administration agreed to end hostilities in November 2022, the conflict impeded people’s movement in the region throughout the year.

Violent conflict and security clampdowns in Amhara, Afar, Oromia, and Benishangul Gumuz have also significantly reduced internal travel, with most Ethiopians feeling safer in their home region than in other states.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate	1 / 4
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actors?	
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Private business opportunities are limited by heavy government regulation of key industries and the dominance of state-owned enterprises in many sectors. State monopolies have persisted in the telecommunication, shipping, and aviation industries, while the financial sector is closed to foreign competition and effectively controlled by state-owned banks.

All land must be leased from the state. A gender gap persists in many aspects of economic life including land ownership and access to finance.

The conflicts have hindered people’s ability to exercise their right to own property and private businesses. The ICHREE’s 2022 report documented widespread looting and destruction of properties by government forces, its allied forces—including Eritrean forces—and Tigrayan forces in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar, as a result of the war in Tigray. The rising number of attacks targeting ethnic groups committed by armed militants resulted in the destruction and looting of properties in Benishangul Gumuz, Amhara, SNNP, Oromia, and other regions.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	1 / 4
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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. Particularly in conflict-affected areas, people have barely any legal protections in practice. The government and its allied forces have been implicated in committing widespread acts of rape and sexual violence against Tigrayan women and girls, with the particular goal of rendering them infertile.

Forced child marriage is illegal but common in Ethiopia, and prosecutions for the crime are rare. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also illegal, but the law is inconsistently enforced. In Tigray, the conflict and the humanitarian crisis have resulted in an increase of instances of child marriage, child labor, human trafficking,

and coerced sex. Civilians in Tigray have been sex trafficked by the ENDF, its regional allied forces, and Eritrean forces.

LGBT+ people do not have social freedoms and do not publicly identify themselves, for fear of violent retaliation. Same-sex sexual relations are illegal.

G4 0-4 pts

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

1/4

Ethiopia's 2019 labor law extended paid maternity leave and raised the working age to 15 years. However, reports from Ethiopia's industrial parks suggest that working conditions can be precarious, and child labor is prevalent in many agricultural households.

Ethiopia has an antitrafficking law that stipulates strict punishments for crimes such as sexual exploitation and human trafficking. People in Ethiopia, particularly women and girls, continue to experience forced labor, debt bondage, and other forms of exploitative labor practices.



On Ethiopia

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Country Facts

Global Freedom Score

21/100 Not Free

Internet Freedom Score

27/100 Not Free

Other Years

2022

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