

# Riskline / Destination Report

This document was generated on 22 December 2023



# ETHIOPIA

## Overall risk level

<p><b>Low</b></p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p> <p>Exercise caution</p>	<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Reconsider travel</p>	<p><b>Extreme</b></p> <p>Defer non-essential travel</p>
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The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

## Security risk level

<p><b>Low</b></p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p> <p>Exercise caution</p>	<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Reconsider travel</p>	<p><b>Extreme</b></p> <p>Defer non-essential travel</p>
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

## Covid-19 risk level

<p><b>Low</b></p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p> <p>Exercise caution</p>	<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Reconsider travel</p>	<p><b>Extreme</b></p> <p>Defer non-essential travel</p>
<p>Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to <b>Low Risk</b> locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities.</p>	<p>Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to <b>Moderate Risk</b> locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to <b>Medium Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to <b>High Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to <b>Extreme Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities.</p>

# Overview

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## Upcoming Events

There are no upcoming events scheduled

# Travel Advisories

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## ● Medium risk: Ongoing measles outbreaks across at-risk countries

There is an outbreak of measles in multiple countries considered 'at risk' due to their poor health infrastructure, endemic poverty and other instabilities such as ongoing conflicts or the long-term effects of natural disasters, including **Nigeria, India, Liberia, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan**, the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cameroon, South Sudan** and **Indonesia**. Unvaccinated people and children are at the greatest risk of measles. Travellers should ensure they have an up-to-date MMR vaccine before departure.

Multiple countries have reported an uptick in the number of measles cases and fatalities since 2020. The increase in cases was primarily attributed to the postponement of vaccination campaigns due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a widespread lack of vaccination coverage and growing scepticism and opposition to vaccination. The worst-affected country was **Nigeria**, where over 18,628 cases were recorded between January and June 2022. The country suffers under extreme instability with constant bandit raids and attacks preventing medical and health centres from opening to provide vaccinations to rural populations. Second-round measles vaccinations were postponed in **Ethiopia** in April 2020 due to COVID-19, allowing cases to increase as large numbers of children remained unprotected. The **Tigray** conflict has exacerbated the situation in **Tigray, Amhara** and **Afar regions**. **Liberia** suffered nationwide neglect of sweeping vaccination campaigns between 2014-2015 during an Ebola outbreak. At least 5,528 confirmed measles cases were reported between January and August 2022 across the country's 15 counties. Authorities in **South Sudan** announced an outbreak on 11 December 2022, with over 31 deaths and 2,741 cases reported across 22 of the country's 79 counties. The national measles vaccination rate was reportedly less than 85 percent, lower than the 95 percent recommended target.

Arguably the worst-affected country in Asia has been **Afghanistan**, with around 1.1 million malnourished children facing the risk of being severely affected by measles. Between January 2021 and January 2022, at least 35,319 suspected measles cases were reported, out of which around 3,221 cases were confirmed and 156 related fatalities were recorded nationwide. Children who contract the

disease are also prone to various secondary infections including diarrhoea and encephalitis. The most affected provinces are **Balkh, Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Kabul, Paktika** and **Paktia**. The root cause of such a widespread outbreak can be traced to Afghanistan's fragile primary healthcare system and the subsequent failure to vaccinate a sufficient number of at-risk children. The situation has been compounded by the Taliban takeover in August 2021, which has led to a lack of foreign funding in the health sector, rising poverty, a mass exodus of skilled workers, including healthcare workers, and the movement of internally displaced populations. Measles cases have also been on the rise in **Pakistan**, particularly in the aftermath of widespread deadly flooding in June-September 2022. Even before the floods, the country had reported over 4,500 cases of measles. The situation has since worsened as the floods triggered a series of water- and vector-borne diseases and strained the already-poor healthcare infrastructure, thus leading to an increased risk of vaccine-preventable diseases like measles. Similarly, **India** has also witnessed a spike in measles cases in recent years, primarily due to a diversion of resources from routine immunisation due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. For example, the first dose coverage of the measles vaccine dropped to 88 percent in 2020 from 100 percent in 2018.

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection transmitted via coughing and sneezing from infected persons. Cold-like symptoms as well as fever are initially presented before a skin rash develops three to five days later. The measles vaccine is effective at preventing the disease. There is no treatment once infected beyond rehydration and bed rest.

## ● **Moderate risk: Localised polio outbreaks ongoing across multiple countries**

There have been localised infection cases of polio vaccine-derived poliovirus types 1, 2 and 3 (cVDPV1, cVDPV2, cVDPV3) reported across multiple countries in 2023. Unvaccinated children and adults are at greatest risk. Travellers should make sure they are fully vaccinated against polio before travelling to countries with an increased risk of exposure to the disease. Government officials might require inbound and outbound travellers to show proof of polio vaccination on their International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) yellow card.

Polio is an acute viral infection, transmitted via infected faecal matter, usually in contaminated food or water supplies. Symptoms occur anywhere between two to five days after infection and include flu-like signs such as headache, tiredness,

fever, stomach pain and nausea, and in some cases meningitis and paralysis. There is no cure for polio but vaccines to protect against the virus exist. In countries like Ukraine and the United States (US) where cases have been reported in previous years, the risk of the outbreak has decreased in 2023. However, contamination is still possible

Although polio is not endemic to the above countries, vaccine-derived poliovirus types are routinely detected in wastewater samples presenting a risk of infection for unvaccinated individuals. Between 2021 and 2022, multiple countries, namely **Congo-Brazzaville, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, Indonesia, Niger, Cameroon, Algeria, Burundi, Sudan, Togo, Ghana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Benin, Mozambique** and **Niger** have also reported vaccine-derived poliovirus cases, which generally lower than five cases per year. Although rare, cases of wild poliovirus (WPV1) outside of Pakistan and Afghanistan (endemic countries for WPV1) remain a possible threat due to international travel, with only one case recorded in **Malawi** in 2022. **Ukraine**, due to the ongoing effects of conflict, is suffering from compromised sanitary infrastructure and shortages of drinking water, heightening the risk of further infections. Poliovirus circulation has been confirmed in the regions of **Rivne** and **Zakarpattia**. Two children were diagnosed with cVDPV2 in 2021, while a further 19 asymptomatic cases were also detected. Despite **Ukraine** remaining vulnerable to the disease, the outbreak was declared closed in September 2023 thanks to a prompt intervention of the Ministry of Health. **Israel, Yemen** and **Benin** recorded a significant decrease in cases compared to 2022. Samples of cVDPV2 bacteria have been detected in wastewater in **Jerusalem**. In the US, **New York City** authorities detected one infection case with onset paralysis in June 2022. The virus was also detected in wastewater samples from areas in and around New York City. British health authorities detected cVDPV2 in wastewater in **London** in May and August of 2022, but have reported no cases of infection. One sample of cVDPV2 was also detected in wastewater in **Montreal, Canada**, in August 2022.

Travellers to polio-affected countries are advised to get vaccinated against polio before departure. Adults who were vaccinated for polio during childhood should get an additional lifetime booster dose of the vaccine. Once vaccinated, your doctor will provide you with an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) yellow card; previously vaccinated adults should consult a doctor for vaccination procedures at least a month before travel, while unvaccinated adults should consult a doctor two months prior. International

travellers who stay beyond four weeks in countries affected by polio may have to show proof of polio vaccination when exiting that country. To meet this requirement, travellers should receive a polio vaccine between four weeks and 12 months before the date of departure from the country having polio cases. Implement advanced hygiene practices during travel and avoid drinking tap water where possible. Monitor your health for any flu-like symptoms for at least a week after returning from travel.

## ● **Medium risk: Refugee arrivals on Ethiopia-Sudan border**

Exercise caution for travel to the **Ethiopia-Sudan border** on an ongoing basis due to the security situation in Sudan that has led to an exodus of refugees.

On 15 April 2023, renewed internal conflict erupted in Sudan between rival armed factions, triggering the shutdown of all air travel and disrupting road and rail links to neighbouring countries. Both Sudanese and non-Sudanese nationals fleeing the fighting have arrived in large numbers at the **Metemma-Gallabat border crossing** in the **Amhara region**, seeking entry to Ethiopia, as of 20 November the border crossing has been closed due to cross border raids. Further, unofficial crossings are also likely to be made as the humanitarian situation rapidly deteriorates in Sudan. Due to the chaotic situation caused by the sudden eruption of violence across Sudan, travellers have reported difficulty in entering Ethiopia from Sudan due to a lack of customs and passport personnel on both sides of the border, traffic congestion and up to a weeklong waiting period to obtain a visa. Visas on arrival for all non-resident foreigners have been suspended until further notice. As of September, at least 81,000 people have fled across the border from the Sudan conflict.

Anticipate delays in crossing the **Ethiopia-Sudan border** until further notice. While no incidents of violence or unrest have yet been reported at affected crossings, it is advisable to use first-class bus services and travel during daylight. Stop at all security checkpoints and be ready to present official documentation when asked – copies are generally not accepted. Travellers must present a valid passport and photo identification upon arrival, with a visa-on-arrival fee of up to USD100 to be levied. Register travel details with local embassies or consulates. Though disruptions have not yet been reported at other border crossings, travellers should allow for additional travel time in general if attempting to cross international borders.

## ● **Extreme risk: Conflict and ethnic tensions in Amhara, Tigray and border regions**

Defer non-essential travel to the **Amhara, Afar, Tigray, Oromia, Somali** and **Gambella regions** in the near-term due to ongoing ethnic communal violence and residual violence following the **Tigray** conflict.

As of November 2022, a tentative peace deal was held between the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), following fighting which began in November 2020 after TPLF forces attacked a federal military facility in **Tigray region**. The conflict experienced dramatic ebbs and flows between 2020-2022. While the current peace deal has enabled the restoration of basic services, such as banking and internet access, as well as the resumption of transport links along the **Addis Ababa-Mekelle Road** and through **Mekelle Alula Aba Nega Airport (MQX/HAMK)**, Eritrean soldiers, formerly allied with government forces, remain stationed in the region and inter-communal violence continues.

The **Tigray** conflict broke out while Abiy Ahmed was leading a political campaign to weaken the TPLF as punishment for their decision to defy orders to postpone the region's parliamentary elections. The conflict quickly spread to **Amhara, Afar, Oromia** and **Somali regions**, exacerbating existing insecurity and ethnic tensions in these regions. As of November 2022, the death toll of the conflict was estimated to stand at 500,000-600,000 people, with 4.2 million displaced and a total of 20 million food insecure. Both sides of the conflict and their allies are facing credible allegations of crimes against humanity, including ethnic cleansing and mass rapes and executions of civilians and captured fighters. Moreover, public infrastructure, which has long been underdeveloped, has been dealt severe blows in recent years; transport and health infrastructure were particularly hard-hit and have yet to fully recover despite reconstruction efforts.

In the wake of the **Tigray** conflict, the state government announced a campaign to absorb all regional security forces into wider state forces in an attempt to create a unified state security apparatus. This move is broadly considered a precautionary measure to prevent the repetition of the situation in **Tigray** where state forces rebelled against federal forces. Under this action, state forces have moved to disarm the Amhara Special Forces (ASF), with members to be absorbed either into state forces or federal regional police. The announcement was met with violent protests and unrest across **Amhara** since 6 April, which triggered the

implementation of curfews across the cities of **Gondar**, **Dessie**, **Debrebirhan**, **Kombolcha** and **Weldiya**. Internet blackouts and movement restrictions were also implemented amidst violent protests in which at least two people were killed and 20 injured by state security forces in **Kombolcha**. Protests were also reported in the regional capital, **Bahir Dar** as well as smaller cities including **Debre Birhan** and **Merawi**. Political violence is also spreading across the region: on 27 April, Girma Yeshitila, the head of the ruling Prosperity Party, was assassinated in **Mehal Meda** allegedly for his close ties to Abiy Ahmed. The assassination was followed by the arrest of 47 men whom federal forces alleged were attempting to overthrow the state government. Overland transport through **Amhara** remains severely disrupted, with the **A2 highway** blocked at multiple points due to fighting between regional and local Fano militias with federal security forces. Due to ongoing clashes and protests across the region, flights were halted at **Lalibela (LLI/HALL)**, **Bahir Dar (BJR/HABD)**, **Kombolcha (DSE/HADC)** and **Gonder (GDQ/HAGN) airports** and a state of emergency was declared on 4 August. A nightly 19:00 local time curfew is in effect for the cities of **Bahir Dar**, **Gonder**, **Debre Birhan**, **Debre Markos**, **Shewa Robit** and **Lalibela** until further notice. On 13 September, federal security forces shot and killed two people and injured at least three others in **Mekaneselam, South Wollo zone** for violating the curfew. Fano and allied Amharan forces continue to clash with federal forces across **Amhara** and due to the blanket internet outage across the state since August, accurate and timely details on locations and casualty figures will likely remain difficult to obtain.

All regions along the borders with Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan suffer from similar hostilities and underlying ethnic tensions. In **Oromia**, **Afar** and **Somali regions**, inter-communal violence and sectarian strife increased substantially after the war broke out in November 2020. In April 2021, at least 100 people were killed in communal clashes in **Haruk** and **Gewane**, while Sudanese leaders claimed the fertile border areas of **Al-Fashaga**, evicting Ethiopian farmers, in December 2020. Further opportunistic and spontaneous outbreaks of violence cannot be ruled out as these issues remain unsettled.

In-country travellers are advised to avoid all government and security forces infrastructure. Maintain close contact with consular officials and consider taking advantage of commercial flights to evacuate while they are still in operation. Remain cautious and anticipate bolstered security, additional checkpoints and travel restrictions. Consider contracting a local personal security escort; in the event of an attack, immediately seek shelter in hardened facilities. A satellite

phone is highly recommended for overland travel.

## ● **Extreme risk: Border regions with Sudan and South Sudan**

Defer non-essential travel to regions bordering Sudan and South Sudan, including the **Al Fashqa Triangle** and **Gambella region**, due to inter-communal unrest and militant activity.

Ethiopia's border with Sudan and South Sudan is over 1,600km (1,000 miles) long and porous, facilitating cross-border smuggling and criminal activity. The Ethiopian military is unable to secure the border. Militant groups from the **Amhara region** have maintained control over large swathes of border territory, including a disputed region known as the **Al Fashqa Triangle**, made up of some 12,000 square kilometres of agricultural land, 250 square kilometres of which runs along the border between Ethiopia's **Amhara** and **Tigray** and Sudan's **Gedaref** state. The **Tigray** conflict (2020-2022) saw Sudanese forces retake parts of the **Al Fashqa** following accusations that Ethiopian militants had ambushed Sudanese troops in December 2020. Amharan troops have taken advantage of the ongoing conflict in Sudan between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF), attempting to carry out several attacks on the border since 15 April. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, has condemned reports of Amharan military activity in the border area amidst an increasingly fragile security situation as large numbers of Sudanese cross the wider **Amhara** border, fleeing the ongoing Sudanese conflict.

Prior to the most recent border clashes, Ethiopia and Sudan normalised relations following a period of high tension in the 1990s, however, cross-border raids, ostensibly to target rebel groups that operate in the **Oromia region** bordering Sudan, continued unabated. A major cross-border raid by ethnic Mulre militants – reportedly wearing South Sudanese army uniforms – in **Jekow** and **Nyinenyang counties** in **Gambella region** in April 2016 resulted in the death of more than 200 ethnic Nuer villagers, and triggered the deployment of Ethiopian forces to South Sudan to search for over 100 kidnapped Ethiopian nationals. While the military deployment was agreed to by the South Sudanese government, tensions along the border were heightened, with further clashes remaining likely in the medium-term. In February 2020, at least 12 people were killed and 7,000 others displaced in **Nuer zone, Gambella region** due to inter-communal unrest.

For the purpose of business-critical travel, inform your embassy and Ethiopian officials of plans to travel to this region. Anticipate bolstered security, additional checkpoints and travel restrictions. Consider contracting a local personal security escort. A satellite phone is highly recommended for overland travel.

# Summary

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## Overall ● High Risk

Ethiopia is a **High Risk** destination: reconsider travel.

## Security ● High Risk

High Risk locations can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks. Travel is possible, but there is a potential for severe or widespread disruptions.

## Covid ● Low Risk

Authorities previously implemented a state of emergency however this was lifted and few measures have remained in place due to ongoing, localised conflict and a fragile health system. Basic restrictions on gatherings and social distancing remain in place. Authorities may require people to wear masks when in public.

## Political Instability ● Medium Risk

Elected in 2018 in the country's first peaceful transfer of power, Prime Minister (PM) Abiy Ahmed has since implemented several reforms, however, divisions within the ruling party, ethnic tensions that often result in violent unrest and disputes between the federal government and regional authorities continue to threaten stability.

## Conflict ● High Risk

Following the November 2022 peace deal, ending the **Tigray** conflict, the federal government announced it would disarm regional forces, absorbing them into the federal system. The **Tigray** conflict arose partly due to the fractured nature of Ethiopia's various security bodies, with each state maintaining its own military. The conflict spilled over into Sudan and Eritrea and other Ethiopian regions, including **Amhara, Afar, Oromia** and **Addis Ababa**. Tensions are reported sporadically on the Sudanese and Somali borders. Rebel movements in **Oromia, Ogaden** and **Benishangul Gumuz** pose a security threat, as do multiple and isolated inter-communal conflicts which remain a problem nationwide.

## Terrorism ● High Risk

Although several domestic militant groups have been removed from the government's list of terrorist organisations, they continue to pose a threat, particularly in the **Oromia, Ogaden** and **Benishangul Gumuz regions**. Somalia-based al-Shabaab are also active across East Africa and large-scale attacks cannot be ruled out, including in **Addis Ababa** where terror plots have previously been foiled.

## Unrest ● Medium Risk

Demonstrations occur sporadically nationwide, including in **Addis Ababa**, and often lead to violent unrest and disruptions to overland travel. Clashes between protesters and with security forces are commonplace and frequently result in casualties and mass arrests. Protests tend to be localised and limited in duration. Security forces are likely to crack down on violent unrest and authorities have suspended telecommunications including internet and social media access during previous periods of unrest.

## Crime ● Medium Risk

Crime levels are low by regional standards but foreign nationals may experience petty theft, mugging and scams in urban areas such as **Addis Ababa**. There is a risk of sexual harassment and assault for women, although foreign nationals are less likely to be targeted.

## Natural and Environmental ● Medium Risk

Periodic and potentially severe drought poses a threat and is exacerbated by poor mitigation measures. Flash flooding also poses a risk nationwide, particularly in central and southern Ethiopia. Emergency services are poorly staffed, and disaster management agencies are not well-equipped.

## Local Travel ● Medium Risk

Driving standards, roads and vehicle maintenance are often poor, and traffic accidents frequently occur, particularly in **Addis Ababa**. Public transport, except for taxis, is generally insecure. Air travel is considered safe and Ethiopia's Civil Aviation Authority complies with international safety standards.

## Health and Medical ● High Risk

Medical facilities are limited and generally of a poor standard. Although most medical personnel are adequately trained, doctors are spread thin and hospitals often lack equipment and sufficient supplies. There is a risk of tuberculosis, meningitis, Zika virus, Bilharzia, yellow fever, cholera and COVID-19.

## Political Overview : ● Medium Risk

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PM Ahmed won a second five-year term in office in July 2021, while his Prosperity Party won 410 out of 436 seats in Parliament. Ahmed's gains were, however, overshadowed by the fact that the vote was not held in the **Tigray region**, where government troops were undertaking a widespread military campaign that has been condemned by the international community for rights abuses and for creating a humanitarian crisis, which has seen over 2.1 million people displaced there. The conflict also spilled over into other regions, including **Afar** and **Amhara**, before being resolved in November 2022. In the aftermath of the conflict, PM Ahmed pushed for the dissolution of all regional militaries, absorbing all security forces into the federal forces, a move to avoid the repetition of the **Tigray** conflict and the splintering of security forces. .

Ethnic tensions remain high in the country, however, particularly in light of the recent fighting between government troops and Tigrayan rebels. A peace deal was brokered between the government and Tigrayan leadership in November 2022, resulting in the decriminalisation of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the instatement of Getachew Reda as the head of an interim Tigrayan government. The move to absorb state militaries into the federal body has triggered a collapse in political stability and security in the Amhara region, posing the most immediate threat to Ahmed's government. In June 2019, Amhara separatists launched a coup attempt against the federal government in **Bahir Dar** and **Addis Ababa**, killing several high-ranking officials and triggering a nationwide internet blackout; the plotters included at least one Amhara security officer who had been amnestied by Ahmed in 2018. The possibility for further inter-communal unrest remains high. As of 2023, around 3.9 million people were internally displaced in Ethiopia, with **Gambella, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' region (SNNPR), Tigray, Oromia, Amhara** and **Benishangul-Gumuz regions** the worst affected due to inter-communal clashes among multiple communities, particularly the Gujis, Gedeos, Oromos, Amharas and Gumuzes. Clashes between ethnic Oromo and Somali communities - triggered by the incursion of ethnic Somali 'Liyu Police' paramilitaries - have also continued on the border between Oromia and Somali regions, despite a major internal conflict in 2018 that saw the removal of the latter region's longtime leadership by federal forces.

Border conflicts also remain a very real threat to stability in Ethiopia despite the signing of a peace agreement with Eritrea in July 2018. Elsewhere, clashes along the

Ethiopia-Kenya border in November 2015 triggered the closure of the border and the deployment of additional Ethiopian military units in the area. Further clashes along that border as well as along the border with Sudan in the **Al Fashqa area**, and with South Sudan between Mulre, Anuak and Nuer ethnic groups remain possible.

In the broader economic realm, Ahmed's government is pursuing privatisation reforms and seeking new trade deals with Ethiopia's neighbours, including Eritrea, as part of a peace deal to end the long-running border conflict. Ahmed has succeeded in obtaining an invite to the economic BRICS bloc, indicating a deepening of relations with China, amongst others.

## Recent incidents

30 March 2023 - 31 March 2023

### ● **Moderate risk: Authorities lift criminal charges against TPLF leaders - Update**

The Ethiopian government announced that criminal charges against Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) leaders were lifted, in line with a peace deal that included the establishment of a transitional government for Tigray and the removal of the TPLF from the list of terrorist organisations. A TPLF official, Getachew Reda, was earlier appointed as the head of the interim government.

23 March 2023 - 24 March 2023

### ● **Moderate risk: Authorities appoint TPLF official as head of Tigray's interim government - Update**

The Ethiopian government has appointed a senior official in the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Getachew Reda, as the head of an interim government for Tigray, as part of a peace deal that included the establishment of a transitional government for the region and the removal of the TPLF from the list of terrorist organisations.

# Conflict : ● High Risk

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**Border Conflicts:** The internal conflict between Tigray and Addis Ababa, between November 2020-November 2022 quickly spread to a border conflict between the Tigrayan rebels, including the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) which resulted in thousands of casualties. Despite a peace deal reached in November 2022, and the instatement of a TPLF figure as leader of an interim Tigrayan government, Eritrean forces remain active across **Tigray** as well as in the disputed area between Ethiopia and Sudan, known as the **Al Fashqa triangle**.

The **Al Fashqa triangle**, located along the Ethiopian-Sudanese border, in the Ethiopian Amhara region saw smaller-scale conflict as part of the wider **Tigray** conflict. However, since the outbreak of violence between Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), security concerns have chiefly been oriented around refugee movement across the border. Bilateral talks between Ethiopian and Sudanese leadership have restarted over plans for the Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) and shelling in the area has not been reported since 2022. **Al Fashqa triangle**, known for its agricultural value, has been controlled by Ethiopian militias since the mid-1990s, although it is recognised by Ethiopia proper as Sudanese territory.

Border conflict between **Eritrea** and **Ethiopia** is not without precedence, with a 30-year guerrilla war of independence from 1961-1991 and a 1998-2000 conflict that resulted in the death of 70,000 people. Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders reached a peace settlement on 9 July 2018 to return the disputed town of Badme to Eritrean control and restore full diplomatic and commercial relations. At least 100,000 Ethiopian troops currently face 120,000 members of the Eritrean Defense Forces across a Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). The **Ethiopian-Eritrean border** remains closed until further notice and visitors are strongly advised to defer travel to areas adjoining the demilitarized TSZ.

**Internal Conflicts:** Following the November 2022 peace deal, Addis Ababa announced the disarmament of all regional militaries. This announcement triggered widespread protests across **Amhara** which descended quickly into clashes between members of the Amharan Special Forces and Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF). A militia group known as the Fano has also joined the clashes in **Amhara**, triggering a state of emergency since 4 August. Violence in **Afar** and **Oromia** regions has also increased due to the **Tigray** conflict, with massacres carried out across multiple locations,

including in **Mai Kadra, Humera** and **Axom**, killing hundreds of thousands and injuring over 2 million. The initial belligerents were the ENDF and TPLF who entered into conflict initially on the basis of electoral disputes. Violence quickly spread to the **Eritrean border** and further internal regions, including **Amhara, Oromia** and **Afar**.

Pre-existing internal conflicts continue, including the activities of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which operates in pursuit of the right to national self-determination and a greater degree of autonomy for the Oromo people. The OLF allied itself with the Tigray rebels during the **Tigray** conflict. Prior to June 2018, it was labelled as a terrorist organisation. Up until it was delisted as a terror group, OLF militants routinely targeted state security infrastructure though they largely refrained from attacks on civilians and foreign nationals. The group has since splintered into OLF and OLA (Oromo Liberation Army) who continue to carry out armed attacks against the ENDF. In **Amhara**, the Patriotic Ginbot 7, a diffuse rebel movement with ties to exiled opposition politicians, has carried out gun and grenade attacks on security personnel and hotels, particularly those facilities associated with the ruling party, before suspending its armed campaign in June 2018 after political reforms were implemented by the central government. And in **Somali** and **Afar regions**, ethnic Somali paramilitaries operating as the 'Liyu Police' have staged incursions against ethnic Oromia communities across the **Oromia-Somali** border, including in **East** and **West Hararghe zones**.

**External Conflicts:** Tensions remain high between Somalia and Ethiopia since the December 2006 invasion of Somali territory as part of anti-Al Shabaab forces who took power of Mogadishu in the same year. Ethiopia withdrew its troops from the African Union's Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces by the end of November 2020, retrieving all its armed forces for deployment against the TPLF.

**Secessionist Conflict:** In 1984, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), a group of ethnic Somali nationalists based in eastern Ethiopia, took up the banner of past groups seeking self-governance for ethnic Somalis in the **Somali region**. The group is known for several major attacks on foreign-owned infrastructure and workers, including the April 2007 attack on an oil field in Abole that left sixty-five Ethiopian and nine Chinese oil workers dead. Despite the group's de-listing as a terrorist organisation, ceasefire declaration and rebranding as a political opposition, die-hard elements of the ONLF may continue to present a risk to visitors in the **Somali region**.

**Ethnic Tensions:** In July 2023, some 4.5 million people were estimated to be internally displaced due to the **Tigray** conflict as well as multiple smaller scale ethnic conflicts, including the inter-communal conflict between ethnic Oromos and Gedeos in

**Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' region (SNNPR).** One of the primary drivers of unrest is disputes over agricultural land, particularly for coffee-growing, water access and grazing livestock. Hundreds of thousands more have been displaced in **Amhara, Oromia, Somali** and **Benishangul-Gumuz regions** due to inter-communal violence, including between the Gedeo and Guji communities, the Oromo and Amhara communities, the Somali and Afar communities and the Gumuz, Berta (Benishangul). Federal forces have had to intervene multiple times in response to militias driving people across regional borders to seize their homes and land, inviting further reprisals that displace even more people. While thousands are repatriated daily, many more refuse to return to their homes due to the risk of further conflict. The security situation in **Tigray, Amhara, Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz** and **Oromia regions** remains extremely volatile.

**International Military Alliances:** The country's geopolitical status as a key regional ally of the United States in the global War on Terror benefits the Ethiopian military with the provision of material and experiential support. Ethiopia receives nearly half a billion dollars in American aid each year.

**International Forces on Territory:** Eritrean soldiers, allied with ENDF, were involved in both the border conflict as well as internal conflicts in **Amhara** and **Tigray** regions.

**Strength of Military Forces:** The ENDF numbers approximately 138,000 personnel. The organisational transformation of the ENDF from its roots as a guerrilla army to an all-volunteer professional military organisation has been facilitated by the direct contributions of the United States.

# Terrorism

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**Domestic Terrorism:** Ethiopia is host to a credible domestic terrorist threat. Indigenous groups including the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the militant wing of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Gambella Peoples Liberation Front (GPLF) are all thought to have carried out kidnappings, assassination attempts, road mining, and the bombing of bars, hotels, transportation infrastructure, and government buildings. These groups respond by accusing government security agents of organising and carrying out the attacks for the purpose of falsely attributing blame to perceived antagonists. On 30 March, the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) was removed from the list of terrorist organisations as part of the federal government and Tigrayan regional government's commitment to a peace deal brokered in 2022.

In response to heightened internal security measures in southeastern Ethiopia due to ethnic unrest, visitors are advised to defer all travel east of the **Harar-Gode line** and south of **Jijiga, Somali state**. Foreign nationals across the country are advised to exercise extreme caution in the northern **Tigray** and **Afar regions**, as well as the **Danakil desert area** bounded by the **Dessie-Adigrat road**, the **Dessie-Djibouti road** and the **Ethiopian/Eritrean border**. Travel to the **Oromia, Bedew** and **Gambella regions** warrants contracting personal security escort, though every effort should be taken to distinguish civilian convoys from commonly targeted Ethiopian military convoys. Beware of unattended baggage or packages left in any location, and limit exposure in hotel lobbies, restaurants, and busy markets.

**International Terrorism:** Somali-based extremists have found sanctuary in remote areas of the country along the border with Ethiopia, where clan ties with ethnic Somali residents of the Ethiopian Ogaden may assist with cross-border infiltration. These individuals appear to be in a position to plan and execute attacks targeting tourist and government infrastructure in Ethiopia. With Ethiopia officially joining the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), attempted attacks, including by the Somali affiliate of al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, on government, security forces and western targets are highly likely. While security forces have successfully thwarted several attempted acts of terrorism, they cannot be relied upon to prevent all potential attacks. Visitors should, therefore, limit exposure around potential targets as well as crowded public places – markets, large restaurants and bars, sporting venues – as well as locations popular with tourists.

**Response Preparedness:** Ethiopia has a tough, effective security apparatus that dates

from the revolutionary opposition's long conflict with the Derg regime. Armed with the blunt instrument of brute force and methods of collective punishment that have come under criticism from international human rights organisations, the government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi often came down on militants with an iron fist. Nationwide security sweeps commonly resulted in the indefinite incarceration of those suspected to be terrorist sympathisers.

## Recent incidents

20 December 2023 - 21 December 2023

- **High risk: Deadly Fano militia attack reported in West Gojjam zone, Amhara region**

Local sources reported that at least 13 people were killed and hundreds of residents were displaced following an attack by the Fano militia group in the Feres Bet area of Dega Damot district, in West Gojjam zone of Amhara region. Further details were not immediately available.

19 December 2023 - 20 December 2023

- **High risk: Deadly OLA attack reported in South Gondar zone, Oromia region**

Local sources reported that at least two people were killed, one other was wounded and five more were abducted when suspected Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) militants attacked Were Meneyo Kebele village in Dera district, South Gondar zone of Oromia region, on 19 December.

12 December 2023 - 13 December 2023

- **High risk: Deadly attack reported in Horo Guduru Welega zone, Oromia regional state**

Local sources reported that at least 13 people were killed and four others injured in the Joje locality of Amuru district, Horo Guduru Welega Zone in Oromia regional state, during morning hours local time on 12 December following an ambush attack on a vehicle en route to Bure district's Beko Taba locality to load grain. Further details were not currently available.

11 December 2023 - 14 December 2023

● **High risk: Deadly attack, abductions reported in Amhara**

Local sources reported that at least two people were killed and 11 others were abducted between 11-13 December in Dera Woreda, Amhara region; no group claimed immediate responsibility for the attack. Clashes between federal forces and Amharan forces and their allies were reported in the area.

## Unrest : ● Medium Risk

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**Strikes:** Workers retain the right to strike, though the law contains detailed provisions that make legal labour action difficult to carry out, such as a minimum of 130 days advance notice before striking. The law prohibits strikes by workers who provide essential services, including air transport and urban bus service workers, hospital and pharmacy personnel, firefighters, and urban sanitary workers. Strike action rarely escalates to violence, though route closures may directly impact travel plans. Monitor local media and Riskline advisories for updates on affected areas.

**Protests and Demonstrations:** Organisers of large public meetings or demonstrations must notify the government 72 hours in advance and obtain a permit. Authorities regularly deny permits sought by opposition political parties, detaining and beating individuals suspected of holding unsanctioned meetings and demonstrations. Police brutality is widely acknowledged across Ethiopia and protests are met with extreme violence. A protest to demand the return of water supply in **Welkite** on 17 February left three dead and 30 injured after security forces fired on protesters.

While no reports have surfaced of foreign nationals having been targeted in demonstrations across the country, visitors are advised to take care to avoid protests on the probability that police will resort to violent crowd management tactics, including use of tear gas and baton charges, in dispersing large gatherings.

**Violent Unrest:** Violent unrest is relatively common in rural areas of Ethiopia, particularly along the shared borders of the **Somali, Amhara** and **Oromia regions**. In April, federal forces announced that all regional forces would disarm and be absorbed into the state military. Following this, violent unrest broke out across the **Amhara region**, devolving into clashes and conflict between federal forces, Amharan forces and Fano militiamen. In February, a decision was reached by the state government to absorb **Nagelle** and three other districts in **Guji Zone** to **East Borana Zone** in **Oromia**. This decision triggered violent protests on 3 March, resulting in the death of three people in Bore district and ongoing strikes. Violent protests have also rocked the **Oromia region** as part of a dispute between the Oromia representatives of the Orthodox Church and the state representatives. On 4 February, protests broke out between rival supporters of each group in **Shashemene**, the capital of **West Arsi Zone, Oromia**, resulting in at least eight protester deaths. The church factions were reunified on 12 February and no further clashes were reported.

Inter-communal tensions persist across the Somali region with representatives of Afar and Somali ethnic groups clashing regularly over land and displacement of people from regional areas. More than 150,000 people have been displaced from the border between **Afar** and **Somali region**, into **Sitti Zone, Somali region**, since 2019. On 27 March at least three people were killed and a further six injured when Afar and Somali police forces clashed after civilian protesters from both sides held demonstrations in **Ayshi'a town, Sitti region**, in which at least three civilians were killed.

## Recent incidents

10 December 2023 - 11 December 2023

### ● **Moderate risk: EPRP supporters to march in Addis Ababa on 10 December**

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) called on supporters to march from Addis Ababa's Meyazia 27 Square to Meskel Square via Ras Mekonnen Bridge, Piazza, Churchill Avenue, National Theatre, Mexico Square and La Gare from 10:00-14:00 local time (07:00-11:00 GMT) on 10 December.

# Crime : ● Medium Risk

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**Petty Crime:** Levels of violent crime targeting expatriates in Ethiopia are low by regional standards. However, like most other high traffic metropolitan centers, bag snatching, pickpocketing, and other petty crimes of stealth are common in crowded areas of Ethiopia's urban landscape, including **Addis Ababa**. Avoid confrontation, as even young boys are likely to be carrying a knife.

Beware of your surroundings, do not leave your belongings unattended and exercise general personal safety for travel. Only carry what is needed, do not flash expensive valuables or large sums of money, and keep cash, identification and mobile phones in front pockets, or in a zipped or concealed pocket or pouch rather than in a bag. Secure belongings when using public transport or when frequenting markets and other crowded public areas; secure bags diagonally across the body against the chest, keep bags within sight and away from the street. Refrain from using mobile phones or laptops in congested public places; avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Avoid walking in poorly lit and isolated areas. Stay in groups. Reject rides or drinks from strangers and never leave drinks unattended. Exercise extreme caution when purchasing and consuming alcohol in public venues. Do not accept pamphlets in the street or shopping centres; these could be impregnated with potent and disorienting drugs, which permeate the skin. If you start to feel unwell, tell staff or close friends and do not leave the venue alone or with strangers. Shout to attract attention, if needed.

**Violent Crime:** Although **Addis Ababa** is generally a secure destination for travellers, there has been an increase in violent robberies at parks and walking sites in the city. It is estimated that there are more than 1,000 rapes a year in **Addis Ababa** alone; however social practices obstruct investigations into rape and the prosecution of the rapist. Though the likelihood is very small that foreign nationals will be targeted, owing to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, victims of forcible sexual assault are strongly encouraged to seek immediate medical assistance. The risk of violent crime is significantly heightened outside the capital, particularly in areas affected by conflict.

Commonsense measures are best kept to ensure against becoming the victim of a violent crime. Travellers are advised to remain vigilant at all times and exercise general personal safety for travel: avoid walking alone at night, do not venture down roads with poor lighting and few access points. Be careful when using taxis and public transport and plot route bypasses around rowdy crowds. Seek local advice for areas to

avoid. If you are held-up by an armed robber do not become confrontational as any resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

**Property Crime:** Residential burglaries are not common but do occur.

Travellers are advised against leaving valuables in hotel rooms. Deposit important items in the safe. Be sure to lock hotel/house doors, even when you are present. Home invaders often conduct thorough investigations of their victims' routines and whereabouts prior to an attack. Avoid visible displays of wealth and check for signs of being followed when returning to one's place of residence. If you do happen to be burgled, remain cooperative as perpetrators are likely to be armed and any resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

**Piracy and Banditry:** In areas affected by ongoing conflict including **Amhara**, parts of **Oromia**, **Benshangul-Gumuz**, **Gambala**, **Tigray** and all border regions have a heightened risk of militia or shifta (bandit) activity.

**Fraud and Scams:** Confidence schemes are very popular in **Addis Ababa**. Men should be aware that there is a high probability that any unaccompanied Ethiopian women who approach them in leisure or public facilities are likely to be prostitutes, very often on commission to make sales on food and beverage concessions.

**Kidnapping:** Risk of kidnapping in **Addis Ababa** is virtually nonexistent. The tactic is restricted in practice to the northern **Tigray region**, **Somali region** and northeast **Afar region (Danakil Desert area)** and wider eastern Ethiopia, including the **Ogaden area**.

Travellers should remain aware of their surroundings and follow the latest advisories for their destination. Maintain communications and your itinerary with local contacts, authorities or embassy staff, especially in locations with a higher risk of kidnapping. Consider a local guide or security escort for the highest risk locations.

## Recent incidents

16 December 2023 - 17 December 2023

- **High risk: Deadly attack by unidentified assailants reported in Abwobo, Gambela region**

Local sources reported that at least four people were killed as they were herding cattle when unidentified assailants, suspected to be robbers, launched an attack in the locality of village 17 in Abwobo district, Gambela region, at around 15:00 local time (12:00 GMT) on 16 December. Security forces were conducting a search operation in the area.

08 December 2023 - 09 December 2023

- **High risk: Deadly prison break reported in Enchini, Oromia region**

Local media reported that at least seven people, including municipal officials and police officers, were killed during a prison break in Enchini, Adda Berga woreda, Oromia region, late on 8 December. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack; the escapees raided an armory and a bank before fleeing the town.

20 October 2023 - 21 October 2023

- **Medium risk: Suspected OLA militants abduct Chinese nationals near Fiche, Oromia region**

Local reports indicated that an unknown number of Chinese nationals were abducted in an ambush by suspected Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) militants on factory located outside of Fiche, Oromia region, during late morning hours local time. Government forces were involved with a subsequent shootout with OLA militants while attempting to free the abductees.

04 October 2023 - 05 October 2023

- **Medium risk: Gunmen abduct workers in Oromia region**

Local media reported on 4 October that at least six Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) employees, including a Kenyan national, were abducted by unidentified individuals during a field assignment near the Aluto Langano geothermal project site in Oromia region, several days earlier. A ransom demand of ETB10 million (USD180,800) per person was demanded.

# Law

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## Overview

The legal system in Ethiopia is a mix of national and regional courts that practice a mixture of Sharia Islamic law, some codified national law and customary law. The Judiciary's independence is protected under the constitution but it is overburdened and generally weak.

# Corruption

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## Overview

A study by Selam Development Consultants in collaboration with the government's Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission reported that the Customs and Revenue Authority was the most corrupt government office followed by the construction permit and land administration offices. The report also noted an increase in corruption in institutions dealing with customs, import and export, foreign currency, taxes and tax collection, land acquisition for business purposes and other public utilities such as electricity and telecommunications. According to the study, at least half of all government contract involve paying an average of 24 percent of the contract's value in unofficial payments.

**Travellers:** Petty corruption in law enforcement exists at levels significantly lower than those of neighbouring Kenya or Uganda. The occasional traffic officer may solicit bribes in return for turning a blind eye to an alleged infraction but the practice is by no means systemic. Where petty corruption and impunity have been identified, the Federal Police have been quick to acknowledge problems with professionalism by engaging in reform process building.

**Residents:** Ethiopia has a high incidence of bribery. Offering bribes to avoid problems with authorities is common, though details remain sketchy as the government is cautious to avoid publicly disclosing the results of investigations into potentially embarrassing abuses of official power.

Most procedures for resident foreign nationals and temporary visitors are not prohibitively cumbersome and bribery or facilitation payment requests are not commonplace, and should never be paid, for the bureaucratic errands required of resident foreign nationals.

**Business:** Officials are underpaid and often unaccountable. Common forms of corruption include bribes to receive certain permits and contracts or to get a public official to act more favorably in the issuing of a license.

# Security Services

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**Security Services:** The police in Ethiopia are considered to be honest and cooperative in their dealings with expatriates. Where petty corruption and impunity have surfaced as problems, the Federal Police have been quick to engage processes of systemic reform. A Federal High Court recently made news by sentencing an Addis Ababa police officer to 4 years imprisonment for soliciting a bribe from a taxi bus driver.

At the same time, as with law enforcement agencies in any developing countries, Ethiopian police lack sufficient training and resources. Foreign nationals requiring assistance in the resolution of serious matters are encouraged to contact their respective embassies for guidance.

Ethiopian security forces, except in **Addis Ababa**, do not have a widespread presence in the country and may lack credible capacity to respond to incidents.

# Natural Risks : ● Medium Risk

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Periodic and potentially severe drought poses a threat and is exacerbated by poor mitigation measures. Flash flooding also poses a risk nationwide, particularly in central and southern Ethiopia. Emergency services are poorly staffed, and disaster management agencies are not well-equipped.

## Drought

A drought is a period of below-average precipitation in a given region, resulting in prolonged shortages in the water supply. Droughts can have a substantial impact on the agriculture and ecosystem of the respective region, triggering food shortages as well. Extended periods of drought may contribute to social unrest, malnutrition, dehydration and possible famine.

Government preventive strategies and water reserves are inadequate to the task of meeting water shortfalls. Ethiopia's climate is hot and dry year-round with temperatures reaching highs of 41 degrees Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit) in July. Prolonged drought from 2015 to 2018 has contributed to societal unrest nationwide due to clashes over land and internal displacement, including in the Somali, Oromia, Afar and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) regions.

Anticipate severe shortages to water supplies in drought-affected areas. Tap water may not be safe to drink and is likely to require treatment for purposes of consumption. Consult closely with your country's consulate or designated representative to develop plans for emergency extraction.

## Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor drainage systems in the affected area.

Flash flooding during Ethiopia's kiremt (June-September) rainy season presents a risk to travel in central and southern Ethiopia, particularly in lowland areas, adjoining

streams, drainage channels and canyons. Many secondary roads are likely to be made impassable in the transition from summer to autumn. In August 2018, seasonal flooding killed dozens and displaced thousands more across Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, Afar, Gambella and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (SNNP) regions. In Somali region, there is also an increased risk of flooding during the belg (March-June) and deyr (October-December) rainy seasons.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

## **Earthquakes**

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long period. Initial mild shaking may worsen and become extremely violent within a matter of seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake.

Addis Ababa is situated 75-100km (46-62 miles) away from the western margin of the Main Ethiopian Rift System. Several earthquakes produced in the rift have been felt in the city, though the most recent significant earthquake occurred in 1961.

When shaking begins, drop to the ground and take cover under, and hold on to, a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a heavy desk or table that can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you're not near a strong piece of furniture, crouch down and protect your head and face in an inner corner of a building; only stand in a doorway if you know it is strongly supported. Stay away from windows or glass panels. Most deaths and injuries in an earthquake are caused by collapsing building materials and heavy falling objects. Stay indoors until the tremors stop and you are sure it is safe to exit. Avoid all areas in the vicinity of outer walls and doorways, as these are

most prone to falling debris. In a high-rise building, the electricity may go out and the sprinkler systems may come on. Do not use the elevators. If the lights go out, avoid using candles, matches or lighters during or after the earthquake; if there is a gas leak, an explosion could result. If outdoors, move to an open space away from buildings, electric poles and street lights which are prone to collapse. Do not travel on roads and bridges which may have been damaged by the earthquake. Be prepared for secondary earth movements that follow the initial earthquake; some of these may be large enough to cause additional damage or bring down weakened structures.

## **Volcanic Eruptions**

A volcanic eruption occurs when lava, rocks and gas are discharged from a volcanic vent. Eruptions can also trigger volcanic ash clouds and landslides called lahar.

The country's only active volcano, Mount Erta Ale, is situated in the Danakil Depression of the remote northeastern Afar region. The area is one of the lowest and hottest places on earth.

In the event of a volcanic eruption, listen to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you receive instructions to evacuate. Local authorities may elect to vacate specific areas at greater risk. If instructed to remain indoors, stay inside with windows and doors closed and all heating and air conditioning systems turned off. Move to a ground level interior room without windows. If you are caught in an outdoor rock fall, roll into a ball to protect your head. Immediately evacuate an area when volcanic fumes and gases begin to cause an irritation to your sensory or respiratory organs. Your symptoms should dissipate when you are no longer in contact with the gases or fumes. Keep your vehicle engine switched off. Avoid driving in heavy ashfall. Ash and debris may clog a car's engine, causing the vehicle to stall. If driving is unavoidable, ensure that all windows are rolled up and that the air conditioning system is turned off. In the event of volcanic activity, avoid travel within the radius of the danger zone established by authorities. Volcanic ash clouds may also impact air travel if the volcano is located within range of an airport; confirm updated itineraries with airline representatives if this occurs.

## **Heat Waves**

A heat wave is characterised by temperatures that hover at 10 degrees or more above

the average high for the region over a period of several weeks. Parallel weather systems may include temperature inversions and katabatic winds.

The Ethiopian summer months (June to September) are hot and humid in Dire Dawa, Harari, Somali, Afar and Tigray regions, with temperatures climbing to as high as 35 degrees Celsius (96 degrees Fahrenheit). The Danakil Desert is one of the hottest places in the world, with daily temperatures approaching 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit). Many towns shut down during the afternoon owing to the relative scarcity of air-conditioning. With units generally restricted to high-end homes, hotels, and restaurants, travelling on aboard public transport can be particularly unpleasant.

In hot weather, you will need to increase fluid intake (non-alcoholic), regardless of activity level. Stay indoors in an air-conditioned room. This is the primary means of protection against heat-related illness and possibly death. If a home is not air-conditioned, identify public facilities that are. Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing. If you must be out in the heat, limit outdoor activity to early morning and late evening hours. Those at greatest risk of suffering heat-related illness include infants, young children and adults aged 65 or older.

## Recent incidents

08 December 2023 - 09 December 2023

### ● **Medium risk: Flooding displaces hundreds of thousands in several regions**

Local sources indicated that around 1.5 million people were affected, over 632,700 displaced and 57 others killed by flooding and landslides following heavy rainfall and overflow of rivers in Somali, Oromia, Afar, South Ethiopia and Gambela regions, since October. Dasenech woreda in South Ethiopia's South Omo zone and Bale, East Bale, West Guji and Arsi zones in Oromia were among the worst-affected.

# Health and Medical: ● High Risk

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## Overview

Medical facilities are limited and generally of a poor standard. Although most medical personnel are adequately trained, doctors are spread thin and hospitals often lack equipment and sufficient supplies. There is a risk of tuberculosis, meningitis, Zika virus, Bilharzia, yellow fever, cholera and COVID-19.

## Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

## Outbreaks and Other Diseases

### Malaria

#### Areas with Malaria:

- All areas below 2,500 m (8,200 ft) elevation, except none in Addis Ababa (the capital)

#### Recommended chemoprophylaxis:

- Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine

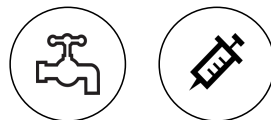
## Yellow Fever

There is a risk of Yellow Fever in some areas.

## Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

**Note:** Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines as well as Yellow Fever vaccine are based on guidelines from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yellow Book 2024. All other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

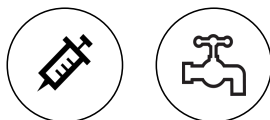
### Routine vaccines



Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

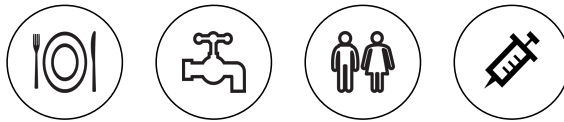
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

### COVID-19



All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

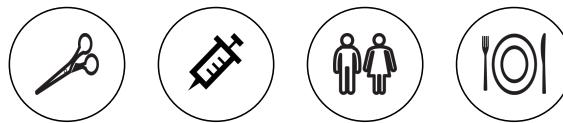
## Cholera



Active cholera transmission is widespread in Ethiopia. Cholera is rare in travellers. Certain factors may increase the risk of getting cholera or having severe disease. Avoiding unsafe food and water and washing your hands can also help prevent cholera.

Vaccination may be considered for children and adults who are traveling to areas of active cholera transmission.

## Hepatitis A



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to Ethiopia.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

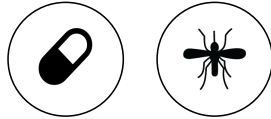
Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

## Hepatitis B



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers of all ages traveling to Ethiopia.

## Malaria



CDC recommends that travellers going to certain areas of Ethiopia take prescription medicine to prevent malaria. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking this medicine multiple days before your trip, as well as during and after your trip. Talk to your doctor about which malaria medication you should take.

Find country-specific information about malaria.

## Measles



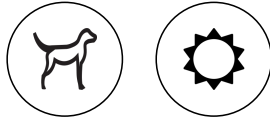
Infants 6 to 11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

## Meningitis (Meningococcal disease)



Recommended for travellers 2 months old or older traveling to areas of Ethiopia that are part of the meningitis belt during the dry season.

## Rabies



Rabid dogs are commonly found in Ethiopia. If you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in Ethiopia, there may be limited or no rabies treatment available.

Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.

Travellers more likely to encounter rabid animals include

- Campers, adventure travellers, or cave explorers (spelunkers)
- Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens
- Visitors to rural areas

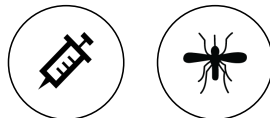
Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children traveling to Ethiopia.

## Typhoid



Recommended for most travellers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.

## Yellow Fever



**Recommended** for all travellers  $\geq 9$  months old except as follows. **Generally not recommended** for travel limited to the regions of Afar or Somali.

## Required documentation

### Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

Required for travellers nine months and older arriving from countries with risk for YF virus transmission; this includes longer than 12-hour airport transits or layovers in countries with risk for YF virus transmission.

### Other entry requirements:

#### Health document

All travellers arriving at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (ADD/HAAB) may be required to complete a mpox e-Health Declaration form prior to departure. Airlines will verify the form using the QR code generated upon completion. Document link:

<https://forms.gle/zpDUEyHzEByyQw4A8>

**Note:** Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

## While you are there

### Emergency Numbers

Medical	<b>991; 917</b>	
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### Emergency services

Ambulance services are virtually non-existent in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, health centres are generally located very far away from a significant proportion of the population, resulting in appalling emergency response times.

### Evacuation

In the event of moderate injury or illness, medical evacuation may be required. More serious injuries or illness will require evacuation.

### Routine care

Medical facilities are extremely limited; while doctors are often relatively well trained

they are spread thin in rural areas and are concentrated in the capital. Levels of sanitation are low. Clinics outside the capital often lack access even to basic medication and equipment.

## Medicine

There are frequent shortages of essential medicine; prescription drugs are in very limited supply; access to essential medication outside the capital is almost non-existent. Travellers are advised to bring enough prescription and over-the-counter medication to last the duration of their trip to Ethiopia.

## Payment

Most urban private clinics and health care providers are overpriced and expect payment in cash, with or without comprehensive travel health insurance.

## Ailments

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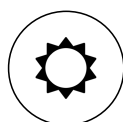
### Traveller's diarrhoea (TD)



*Traveller's diarrhoea (TD) is a catch-all term for a number of minor or moderate bacterial, viral and parasitic infections, generally transmitted through infected food or water. In the majority of cases antibiotics or anti-diarrhoeal medication is unnecessary; travellers experiencing TD should ensure that they remain hydrated and well rested until their symptoms dissipate. Most cases of TD last less than three days; if diarrhoea continues for longer periods, travellers should consider consulting a medical professional.*

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### Altitude Sickness



Altitude sickness may develop in anyone who ascends rapidly to altitudes greater than 2,500 metres (8,200 ft). Addis Ababa sits at 2,800m.

*Altitude sickness is a pathological effect on humans caused by low partial pressure of oxygen at altitudes above 2,400 metres (8,000 feet). Typical symptoms resemble those caused by influenza, including headache, fatigue and dizziness; severe symptoms can include fever, persisting shortness of breath, loss of consciousness or haemorrhages. While preventative treatment and acclimatisation can prevent or lessen symptoms, the only effective treatment is to descend to lower altitudes.*

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## Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E)

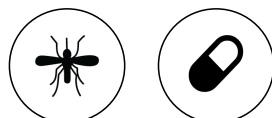


Hepatitis poses a risk to travellers in Ethiopia.

*Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The three main variations (A, B and C) are caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses, but are transmitted by different means.*

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## Malaria

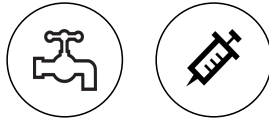


Malaria risk - primarily due to Chloroquine-resistant *P. falciparum* - threatens visitors year round at all altitudes below 2,000 metre (<6,561 ft). Addis Ababa and the highland areas are malaria free.

*Malaria is a serious parasitic infection, transmitted by the bite of the *Anopheles* mosquito. Symptoms can be flu-like and include a high fever, joint pain, anaemia, chills and headaches; if left untreated, symptoms can quickly complicate and become life-threatening. While pre-departure courses of anti-malarial prophylactics are available, these do not guarantee immunity to malaria. Caught early, malaria can be treated easily with a range of anti-malarial medications.*

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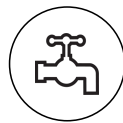
## Tuberculosis (TB)



Ethiopia is ranked seventh on the World Health Organization's list of 22 high burden TB countries globally and is one of three countries in Africa with more than 5,000 estimated new multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) infections annually. The expansion and strengthening of laboratories in different parts of the country is under way in Bahir Dar in the north west, Mekele in the north, Adama in the east and Awassa in the south; the government also plans to build at least one treatment centre and one lab in each of these cities.

*Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection transmitted via the coughing and sneezing of infected persons. Symptoms – which may take years to develop if a person has latent TB – include fever, night sweats, chest pain, coughing up blood, weight loss and fatigue. TB can be treated with a course of antibiotics; the length of treatment is significantly longer once the disease becomes active and is no longer latent.*

## Meningococcal Meningitis



Ethiopia forms part of the so-called African Meningitis Belt.

*Meningococcal meningitis is a serious bacterial infection, transmitted via the coughing and sneezing of infected persons and is particularly prevalent during the dry season. Symptoms include a high fever, neck stiffness, severe headaches, a rash, nausea and confusion. The onset of symptoms can be rapid, occurring within hours of infection. The disease can be treated with a wide range of antibiotics. Left untreated, meningococcal meningitis has a fatality rate approaching 50 percent; survivors may experience serious complications.*

## Cholera



There are sporadic outbreaks of cholera in Ethiopia, particularly in the summer months. An outbreak that began in April 2019 left hundreds dead and thousands sickened by early 2020. The hardest-hit regions included Somali, Southern and Oromia, however Tigray, Amhara, Harar and Addis Ababa were also affected.

*Cholera is a bacterial infection transmitted through contact with infected food or water – usually by infected faeces – and is most prevalent in areas with poor sanitary standards. Symptoms include heavy, watery diarrhoea, vomiting and muscle cramps. If left untreated, cholera can rapidly become fatal. Cholera can be treated with a course of rehydration and antibiotics.*

## Dengue Fever



Dengue fever poses a risk to travellers in Ethiopia.

*Dengue fever is a viral infection, transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, which is most active during early morning and late afternoon hours and is commonly found in urban areas. Symptoms include a high fever, joint pain and headaches, although severe cases may cause significant falls in blood pressure and/or haemorrhaging, which can be fatal. There are no vaccines or treatments for dengue fever.*

## Schistosomiasis



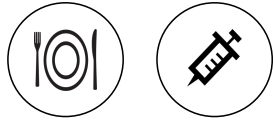
Although rare across the country, schistosomiasis has been reported in freshwater lakes and rivers in outlying rural regions.

*Schistosomiasis (also known as bilharzia or katayama fever) is a parasitic infection, transmitted through contact with infected water sources, usually freshwater lakes or rivers. Saltwater and chlorinated pools are not affected by schistosomiasis. Symptoms include a rash, fever, muscle pain, abdominal pain and the enlargement*

of the spleen and/or liver. The disease can be treated via the administration of praziquantel. If left untreated, schistosomiasis can cause serious chronic gastrointestinal or central nervous system diseases.

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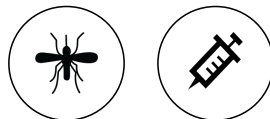
## Polio



*Polio is an acute viral infection, transmitted via infected faecal matter, usually in contaminated food or water supplies. In most cases poliovirus is asymptomatic; in cases where symptoms are present, they can range from the mild – including a high fever, joint pain, nausea and headaches – to the severe, resulting in paralysis. There is no treatment for polio after infection.*

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## Yellow Fever

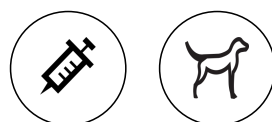


Travellers to western areas of Ethiopia are advised to consider yellow fever vaccination.

*Yellow fever is a serious viral infection, transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, which is most active during early morning and late afternoon hours and commonly found in urban areas. Initial symptoms include a high fever, chills, vomiting nausea and backaches/muscle pain; in some cases those infected may develop potentially fatal complications, including jaundice, severe haemorrhaging and kidney failure. There is no post-infection treatment for yellow fever.*

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## Rabies



Rabies poses a risk to travellers in Ethiopia, particularly in rural areas.

*Rabies is a serious viral infection, transmitted through close contact with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches or licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). Travellers who suspect they may have come into contact with a rabies-infected animal should seek immediate emergency attention: post-exposure treatment has a high success rate if administered early. Late-stage rabies (when symptoms begin to occur) is untreatable and fatal.*

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## Recent incidents

30 November 2023 - 01 December 2023

### ● **Medium risk:** Deaths recorded amid cholera outbreak in Somali region

Health authorities announced that at least 772 confirmed cases, including 23 related deaths, were recorded in the Somali region in the last two weeks, amid an outbreak of cholera following recent heavy flooding; Kelafo district was worst-affected. Further rain is also forecast in the coming weeks and could exacerbate the situation.

07 September 2023 - 08 September 2023

### ● **Moderate risk:** Cholera infections on the rise in Amhara, other regions - Update

Officials indicated on 7 September that over 20,000 cases of cholera and 271 related fatalities were recorded since the outbreak began in August 2022. Affected regions include Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumz, Harari, Oromia, Sidama, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) and the Dire Dawa administrative city. Recent outbreaks were reported in Amhara's Kumer and Metema.

26 June 2023 - 27 June 2023

- **Moderate risk: Cholera infections on the rise in Oromia, other regions - Update**

Updated reports indicated that 156 fatalities have been recorded since the cholera outbreak began in August 2022. The most affected regions are Oromia, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) and Sidama. As of 20 June there were at least 11,407 active cases.

10 May 2023 - 11 May 2023

- **Moderate risk: Fatalities reported amid dengue fever outbreak in Afar region - Update**

Updated sources indicated that at least 1,638 confirmed cases of dengue fever and nine related fatalities were reported in Logia and Mile districts, Afar region, as of 10 May. Efforts were underway to also control the spread of malaria in the region but further details were not immediately available.

# Covid-19: ● Low Risk

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## Summary

Authorities previously implemented a state of emergency however this was lifted and few measures have remained in place due to ongoing, localised conflict and a fragile health system. Basic restrictions on gatherings and social distancing remain in place. Authorities may require people to wear masks when in public.

**What is the current nationwide Policy?:** Distancing

**Policy starts:** 31 March 2022

**Policy ends:** indef

**Policy explanation:**

A mask mandate remains in effect alongside social distancing.

**Policy source:** <https://www.moh.gov.et/site/>

**Last update:** 25 October 2023

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## Infection

**Infection Level:** Low

**Infection rate:** 0.0 cases per 100k in the last 14 days

**As of date:** 09 November 2023

**Hotspots:** -

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## International Travel

## International Flights

**Is there a ban on international commercial flights?** Partial

**Through what date?** indef

### **Flight Ban Explanation:**

International flights are operational but multiple routes have been suspended due to travel restrictions. Further details on Ethiopian Airlines operations are available on the website <https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19%28coronavirus%29>.

**Last Update:** 29 November 2023

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## Entry and Borders

**Is there a ban on entry for any travellers?** No

**Through what date?** indef

### **Travellers from where are banned?**

**Land border:** Partially Open

**Maritime border:**

### **Entry Rules Explanation:**

All travellers, regardless of whether they are fully vaccinated or previously infected, are allowed to enter without restrictions.

Visas on arrival for all non-resident foreigners have been suspended until further notice. Travellers must obtain their visa at the Ethiopian Embassy in their country of origin before entry into Ethiopia or apply to <https://www.evisa.gov.et/> for an e-visa. Further details were not immediately available.

**Entry Rules:** <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ethiopia/entry-requirements>

**Last Update:**

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## Testing

**Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test** No

**When?**

**Is it mandatory or optional?**

**Test Type:**

**Minimum age requirement:**

**Pre-travel test validity, in hours:**

**After arrival test days:**

**Testing Explanation:**

**Testing Rules:** -

**Last Update:** 29 November 2023

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## Health and Travel Documentations

**Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation?** Yes

**Documentation Explanation:**

### **Health document**

All travellers arriving at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (ADD/HAAB) may be required to complete a mpox e-Health Declaration form prior to departure. Airlines will verify the form using the QR code generated upon completion.

**Health Document:** <https://forms.gle/zpDUEyHzEByyQw4A8>

**Last Update:** 25 October 2023

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## Tracing App

**Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving?** No

### **Tracing App Explanation:**

There is no mandatory national contact tracing app at this time.

**Last Update:** 25 October 2023

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## Quarantine on Arrival

**Who needs to quarantine on arrival** None

**Travellers from where need to quarantine?**

**How many days is quarantine?**

**Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government?**

### **Quarantine Explanation:**

**Quarantine Rules:** [https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19\(coronavirus\)](https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19(coronavirus))

**Last Update:** 2023-11-29

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## Exit

**Is there a ban on exit for any travellers?** No

**Are there special requirements to exit?** No

### Exit Requirements Explanation:

**Exit Requirements (URL):** [https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19\(coronavirus\)](https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19(coronavirus))  
**Last Update:** 29 November 2023

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## Vaccination

**Percent vaccinated with at least one dose:** 45.658 as of 28 May 2023

**Percent fully vaccinated:** 35.38 as of 28 May 2023

**Is vaccination mandatory for entry?** No

**Fully vaccinated are exempt from:** Entry Ban

**Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:**

**Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:**

**"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:**

**Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:**

**Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised?** N/A

**Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?**

**"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:**

**Accepted boosters:**

**"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:**

Recovery status is valid from days until after .

**Vaccination certificates accepted:**

**Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:**

**Recent recovery document required:**

**Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:**

### Explanation:

All travellers, regardless of whether they are fully vaccinated or previously

infected, are allowed to enter without restrictions.

**Sources:** [https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19\(coronavirus\)](https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19(coronavirus))

**Last change to vaccination policy:**

**Last Update:** 29 November 2023

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## Other International Travel Restrictions

**Exit Requirements Explanation:**

**Last Update:**

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## Domestic Situation

### Areas on Lockdown

**Last Update:**

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### Areas under Curfew

#### **Amhara region**

Overnight curfews are in place in Dessie, Debrebirhan, Kombolcha and Weldiya (Woldiya) as well as the Oromo and South Wollo special zones amid renewed protests over the government's decision to dissolve a regional paramilitary force. Other restrictions also include a ban on holding unsanctioned protests

and on civilians carrying weapons, as well as a ban on bars and nightclubs and auto-rickshaws. Residents are obliged to cooperate with security forces; those who help deserting security forces as well as give shelter to deserting security forces will be punished.

A nightly curfew from 20:00-03:00 local time is in effect for Bahir Dar, Gonder and Debre Birhan. Additionally, officials impose a nightly curfew from 19:00 local time in Markos, Shewa Robit and Lalibela until further notice.

### **Benishangul-Gumuz region**

An indefinite security-related curfew is in effect in Asosa from 20:00-06:00 local time until further notice.

**Last Update:** 29 November 2023

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## **Domestic Travel**

### **Domestic Travel Explanation:**

Public transport across the country is operating at a reduced capacity.

### **Amhara region**

Under the state of emergency imposed in the Amhara region due to ongoing military conflict, internal checkpoints were established and security forces may confiscate private vehicles for military operations. Commercial flights are suspended at Lalibela (LLI/HALL), Gonder (GDQ/HAGN), Bahir Dar (BJR/HABD) and Kombolcha (DSE/HADC) airports until further notice. The circulation of motorbike taxis and motorcycles is also suspended in the region.

**Last Update:** 29 November 2023

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## **Other Domestic Restrictions**

There are no domestic restrictions in place.

**Last Update:** 25 October 2023

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## Resources

**Health Dept COVID Site:** <https://www.moh.gov.et/site/>

**There are no recent incidents**

# Local Travel : ● Medium Risk

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## Travel Safety

**Air Travel: Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport** is a full-service international and domestic gateway to the rest of Ethiopia. Airports in **Dire Dawa (Aba Tenna Dejazmach Yilma International Airport)** also receive a few international flights, mainly small airlines of Arab countries, including Air Djibouti.

The country's national carrier Ethiopian Airlines has an extensive domestic network operating internal flights to over 40 towns. Although service is often infrequent and quite basic, the prices are reasonable and your personal security is more highly prioritized than it might be on the alternatives for domestic inter-city travel. Accidents are uncommon with only two fatal incidents reported since 1970.

Bus service departs regularly to the city centre 8 km (5 miles) away. Taxis also operate from the airport. When exiting the terminal, the yellow or cream-colored cabs will be managed by agencies and more reputable - if also more expensive - than the blue taxis you will see close by.

A passport valid for six months beyond the date of expected departure is required for presentation upon arrival in Ethiopia. A domestic departure tax is required at the airport when travelling by air within Ethiopia. For international flights, Ethiopia charges a USD 20 departure tax, most often included in the airfare.

**Airspace:** International flights are operational but multiple routes have been suspended due to travel restrictions. Further details on Ethiopian Airlines operations are available on the website <https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/aa/travel-updates/updates-on-covid-19%28coronavirus%29>.

**Borders and Entry:** All travellers, regardless of whether they are fully vaccinated or previously infected, are allowed to enter without restrictions.

Visas on arrival for all non-resident foreigners have been suspended until further notice. Travellers must obtain their visa at the Ethiopian Embassy in their country of origin before entry into Ethiopia or apply to <https://www.evisa.gov.et/> for an e-visa. Further details were not immediately available.

**Road Travel:** Roads in Ethiopia are poorly lit and mostly unpaved. A network of all-weather roads exists within most city-centres but Ethiopia's ranking as the country with

the second highest rate of traffic accidents in the world should be fair warning for those contemplating car rental. Over 2,000 people are killed every year in road accidents. If opting for self-drive, beware of unpredictable local driving habits, uncontrolled livestock on the roadway, and the lack of basic safety equipment on many vehicles.

Bear in mind that a local driver's licence is required for travel within Ethiopia. Travellers must present a valid International Driving Permit (IDP) at the Transport and Communications office on Haile Gebre Sillasie Road in **Addis Ababa** to obtain one.

For foreign drivers involved in a minor traffic accident in **Addis Ababa**, local police response is generally prompt and reasonable. Ensure that all valuables are secured before exiting the vehicle as we have received reports of criminals grabbing what they can while the motorist is busy with the aftermath of an accident.

Driving beyond the **Addis Ababa** city limits, be advised that regular fuel shortages can make travel exceptionally difficult. Ensure your vehicle is well maintained with a healthy supply of food and water, spare parts and long-range communications equipment. Where possible, long-distance travel should be organized in convoy. We advise against travel outside and between cities after dark in light of the increased frequency of highway robbery and the increased likelihood of sustaining damage to your vehicle or person.

Before undertaking any off-road travel, contact local authorities or contract an experienced local guide to ensure that your overland travel path has been cleared of mines. This is particularly crucial in the former conflict zones of northern Ethiopia and the border areas near Sudan and Somalia.

Overland travel to the areas bordering Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan is generally unsafe.

**Rail Travel:** Train service in Ethiopia is restricted to a 778 kilometer railway link between **Addis Ababa** and Djibouti. The train is slow, the service unreliable, and the system has been the frequent target of sabotage, bombings and derailment. Intelligence reports suggests that security has improved, but we continue to advise against this mode of transportation.

## **Public Transport**

**Buses:** The Government and private companies operate bus services throughout the country. All national buses leave from one of the two main bus stations in **Addis Ababa**: the Autobus Terra, near Mercato and the smaller terminal near the railway

station on **Ras Mekonin Avenue**. Travel by inter-city bus can be slow and uncomfortable with most trips taking from 6-10 hours. Windows are often permanently closed and you may experience long delays during the rainy season should the bus get stuck in the mud.

Buses in Ethiopia are regulated and drivers are prohibited from staying on the road after dark. When night falls, you will be dropped wherever stopped to continue your journey the following morning at 06:00 local time.

Bus stations in Ethiopia are open 24 hours a day and lack appropriate security to control access of travelers or loiterers. Stations and their immediate surroundings are havens for petty criminals, purse-snatchers, confidence men, pickpockets and luggage thieves. Foreign nationals are advised to monitor possessions closely at all times.

**Vehicle Hire:** The most comfortable means of transportation within the country is likely to be private chauffeured rental. Drivers can be hired for a days travel included in the price of the vehicle. In Addis Ababa, rental cars are available from Luxor, Avis and Hertz.

**Minibuses:** These line taxis are the favored local means of transportation. They have a sitting capacity of 11 persons and follow the main arteries (e.g., from **Bole airport** to the **Piazza square**). Though we have only rarely heard of foreign nationals opting to use this service, the rate for a ride within the downtown area is very affordable and they run from 06:00 am to 21:00 local time.

**Taxis:** Excepting taxis, public transportation in Ethiopia is generally perceived as insecure and should be avoided. Official white and blue taxis are available and offer shared-fare service. Fares generally rise by close to 50% after 21:00 local time.

Yellow tourist taxis available at any airport and most major hotels, offer greater personal security and comfort at an elevated price. These are available for single trips or for rental by the hour or the day.

The state-run National Tourist Organization has Mercedes' that can be used in the same manner, though their rates tend to be higher. Arrangements and payment for their use is made at the NTO Desks at **Bole Airport** outside the Customs area or in the hotel lobbies. The cost is fixed and paid in advance.

## **Movement Control Orders**

### **Curfew: Amhara region**

Overnight curfews are in place in Dessie, Debrebirhan, Kombolcha and Weldiya (Woldiya) as well as the Oromo and South Wollo special zones amid renewed protests over the government's decision to dissolve a regional paramilitary force. Other restrictions also include a ban on holding unsanctioned protests and on civilians carrying weapons, as well as a ban on bars and nightclubs and auto-rickshaws. Residents are obliged to cooperate with security forces; those who help deserting security forces as well as give shelter to deserting security forces will be punished.

A nightly curfew from 20:00-03:00 local time is in effect for Bahir Dar, Gonder and Debre Birhan. Additionally, officials impose a nightly curfew from 19:00 local time in Markos, Shewa Robit and Lalibela until further notice.

### **Benishangul-Gumuz region**

An indefinite security-related curfew is in effect in Asosa from 20:00-06:00 local time until further notice.

## **Recent incidents**

28 November 2023 - 29 November 2023

### ● **Medium risk: Deadly traffic accident reported in Borena zone, Oromia region**

Local media reported that at least 20 people were killed and more than 30 others were injured after a bus travelling from Milami city to Wayu crashed in the Teltele district of Borena zone, Oromia region, during morning hours local time.

# Destination Hotspots

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**Cities, Towns, Villages:** Foreign nationals are advised to remain cautious and maintain a low profile. Avoid all public demonstrations or large gatherings of people.

Crime targeting foreigners is limited to pick-pocketing and other crimes of opportunity. Be especially wary in crowded buses, markets like **Merkato** and **Piazza** in **Addis Ababa**, and other venues/events attracting large crowds. We have received several reports of backpacks and shoulder bags being surreptitiously sliced open with the contents removed by thieves.

**Regions:** Travellers are advised against travel east of the **Harar-Gode line** and south of **Jijiga, Somali region**, due to the risk of violent inter-communal unrest between the majority ethnic Somali community and minority populations.

Travellers should also exercise caution in the northern **Tigray, Amhara** and **Afar regions**. These regions are heavily affected by landmines and there is risk of kidnapping, as well as attacks by the Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front (EPPF).

Continuing unrest and sporadic violence plague the Gambella region in western Ethiopia. Ethnic Anuak fighters organized in the Gambella People Liberation Front (GPLF) based in Southern Sudan have been attacking **Highlanders** and **Nuer villages**. They have also been involved in sporadic fighting with the Ethiopian Army, causing a violent retaliation against the Anuak population. Road banditry is common and the security situation remains volatile.

# Safety

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## Emergency Numbers

Hazards	<b>905</b>	
Hazards	<b>906</b>	
Medical	<b>991; 917</b>	
Fire	<b>991</b>	
Traffic	<b>945</b>	
Police	<b>991</b>	

**Begging:** Begging is not uncommon in the **Merkato** and **Piazza market areas**, as well as the areas surrounding the **National Theatre, National Stadium, Meskal Square** and **Bole Road**. Avoid contributing where there is a likelihood your generosity may attract a crowd.

**Drugs and Alcohol:** Penalties for possession, use or trafficking in illegal drugs in Ethiopia are severe and include lengthy jail sentences and heavy fines. The use of the mild stimulant 'khat' is legal in Ethiopia, but it is considered an illegal substance in many other countries and should not be transported out of country.

**Food and Drink:** Ensure vegetables are cooked and fruit is washed before peeling, and avoid eating cut fruit if unsure as to who may have handled it. Milk is unpasteurised and should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish.

**Water Safety:** Most of the water in Ethiopia is not fit to drink, and a fair percentage of the population of Ethiopia has giardia (a water-borne parasite) at any given time. Fortunately bottled water is cheap and easy to find. Packs of 6 or 8 are available at any grocery store. Remember to wash your hands frequently. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should first be boiled or otherwise sterilised.

**Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO):** Ethiopia is affected by significant numbers of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) spread across many areas, resulting from a series of internal and international armed conflicts dating back to

1935.

The **Tigray, Afar, and Somali regions** are particularly heavily contaminated and off-road travel should be avoided in the absence of expert local guidance.

**Photography:** Photography of military sites, military assets and police and military personnel is illegal and may result in confiscation of film and arrest. Always obey signs prohibiting photography and refrain from photographing sensitive buildings and infrastructure (industrial facilities, bridges, dams, airfields, etc.) Never stop near a restricted area as you are likely to immediately draw unwanted attention from security personnel.

**Security Services:** The police in Ethiopia are considered to be honest and cooperative in their dealings with expatriates. Where petty corruption and impunity have surfaced as problems, the Federal Police have been quick to engage processes of systemic reform. A Federal High Court recently made news by sentencing an Addis Ababa police officer to 4 years imprisonment for soliciting a bribe from a taxi bus driver.

At the same time, as with law enforcement agencies in any developing countries, Ethiopian police lack sufficient training and resources. Foreign nationals requiring assistance in the resolution of serious matters are encouraged to contact their respective embassies for guidance.

Ethiopian security forces, except in **Addis Ababa**, do not have a widespread presence in the country and may lack credible capacity to respond to incidents.

# Culture

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**Cultural/Religious Sensitivities:** The Ethiopian Highlands are predominantly Orthodox Christian and can be distinguished quite readily from the predominantly Muslim regions, particularly through the Ogaden. Southeast Ethiopia is generally conservative in dress and attitude. Women and men do not touch and veils and headscarves are common. Avoid clothing that does not adequately conceal legs and shoulders. Indulging publicly in alcohol or displays of affection, even between man and wife, is considered shameful.

English is widely used for trade purposes, but Italian and French are also useful. Normal courtesies customary to the Western business environment are practiced and business cards may be exchanged.

Be aware that Ethiopia uses its own calendar (based on the Coptic calendar, with 13 months) and dates are approximately seven or eight years behind the Gregorian calendar.

Drug offences are treated seriously in Ethiopia with a carpet ban on all drugs except khat, a local stimulant.

**Political Sensitivities:** It is strictly prohibited to photograph military installations, police and military personnel, industrial facilities, and government buildings and infrastructure, including roads, bridges, dams, and airfields. Never stop near a restricted area; it is extremely dangerous to do so.

Avoid discussing local enmities and cross-border disputes.

# Specific Traveller Advice

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## Female Travellers

**Local Customs and Laws:** There are some customs and laws that a female traveller should take into consideration in Ethiopia. It is not culturally acceptable for women to drink or smoke in public, particularly outside **Addis Ababa**. Some monasteries and holy sites deny entrance to women. Women are advised to refrain from wearing clothing that could be considered too tight or revealing. Visitors are advised to wear loose-fitting and concealing clothing with high necks, skirts worn well below the knee and sleeves below the elbow. Women visiting mosques are expected to cover their heads with a traditional headscarf (hijab). Dress according to the local culture, especially when visiting places of cultural and religious importance. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any possible cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussions.

**Safety:** There are some safety concerns female travellers should take into consideration in Ethiopia. Sexual assault and rape do occur; however, visitors to the country are not likely to face an additional risk. Foreign female travellers may receive unwanted attention from local men, including open displays of catcalling, whistling, stalking and staring, including during daytime. Friendly behaviour considered normal at home such as smiling or making small talk with strangers may lead to unwanted attention or advances. Sit next to a female passenger if using public transport. Do not use public transportation or hail taxis off the street at night. Emergency services and police outside major cities are unlikely to respond effectively if cases of sexual assault or rape are reported. Female travellers should exercise caution when reporting crimes to local authorities. Consider consulting your home consulate/embassy for legal advice and ensure you receive a copy of the police report. Exercise personal safety awareness if walking alone at night. Stick to main, well-lit streets and avoid walking through desolate areas or unfamiliar neighbourhoods. Refrain from wearing headphones while walking in the evening.

**Health and Wellness:** Women have very limited access to specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in Ethiopia. Most medical facilities lack adequate resources and personnel to provide specialised care. Facilities that provide specialised care are concentrated in **Addis Ababa** and other major cities. Feminine hygiene products are unavailable in much of the country while menstrual

pads and tampons are available in **Addis Ababa**. Most types of emergency contraceptives are sold behind the counter at pharmacies and can be purchased from a pharmacist without a prescription. Prescription contraceptives may not be readily available as access to high-quality medication is limited outside major cities. Abortion is restricted except in cases of threats to the woman's life, incest, rape and foetal defects. Consult a health professional prior to travel, especially if pregnant or planning to become pregnant, due to the potential risk of Zika virus. Consider bringing an adequate supply of female-specific OTC drugs, oral contraceptive pills and feminine hygiene products, which may not be available locally. Visitors in need of specialised care are advised to visit private facilities in major cities.

## LGBT+

Homosexuality is illegal in Ethiopia. It is a criminal and punishable offense, and persons found guilty may be sentenced to imprisonment of up to 10 years. There are no legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country. Same-sex marriage is illegal. LGBT+ activity and persons are not socially accepted. LGBT+ travellers are advised to keep their sexual orientation and gender identities private. Prior to travel, review your privacy settings on social media platforms and reconsider the use of dating applications due to the risk of harassment and possible entrapment by local authorities. Refrain from engaging in any conversations about sexuality or LGBT+ issues. Avoid all public displays of affection, including hand-holding. Book separate hotel rooms. Transgender travellers are advised to have a passport and identification changed to reflect their new gender before travelling.

## Technology & Communication Risk

Travellers are likely to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in Ethiopia.

Internet access and social media have some restrictions. Some internet and social media content of political nature cannot be accessed freely and any associated social media posting can be unlawful. However, restrictions have been significantly relaxed since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office on 2 April 2018; censored websites were made accessible and political prisoners were also released. In the event of widespread unrest, internet access may be blocked at the national or sub-national level. Since that time, the federal government has still blocked internet access in **Dire Dawa, Addis Ababa, Amhara Harari, Oromia and Somali regions** during periods of deadly inter-communal unrest.

There are some concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device

searches and inspections at the border are unlikely, but they can occur. Possession and usage of satellite phones and radio communication equipment are regulated in the country. Travellers are advised to register their devices with telecommunications authorities. Individuals caught with unauthorised devices risk having them confiscated. All drone use requires permission from civil aviation authorities; there are multiple restrictions on flying drones near tourism sites and other facilities. State or criminal penetration of private data is likely. Authorities implement some state surveillance of ICT networks in the country.

Travellers should ensure that their ICT usage is compliant with local laws and regulations during their stay in the country. Travellers should expect possible restrictions in accessing specific internet websites/platforms and/or digital services. Posting specific content online may also be regulated. Travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure.

Travellers should be aware that the country enforces a limited degree of surveillance of telephone and electronic communications and travellers should remember that communication may be monitored. Online activities may be monitored. Cyber criminal groups may be present in the country. Exercise discretion in deciding to bring sensitive data into the country.

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