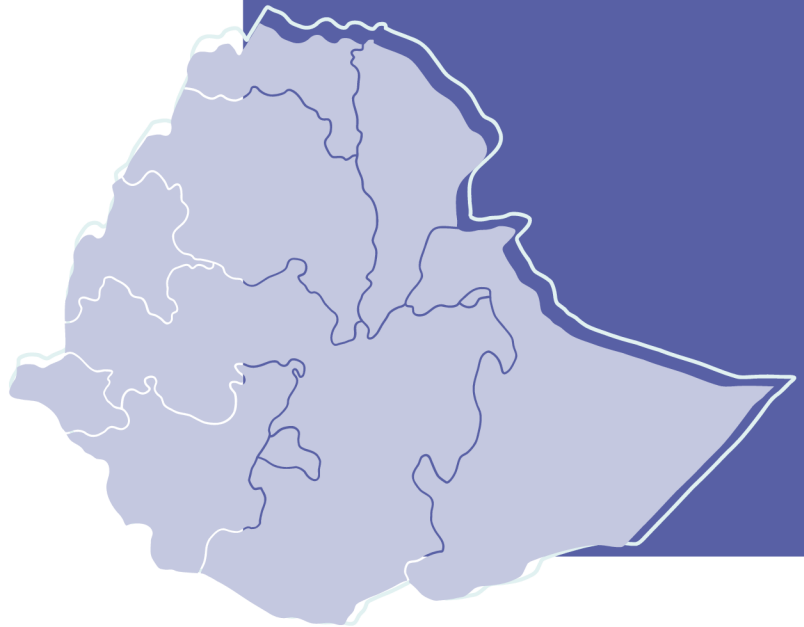


KEY ASKS ETHIOPIA

Preventing Escalation, Advancing
Inclusive Peace and Addressing Regional
Risks



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethiopia faces a worsening convergence of political, security, humanitarian, and governance crises. There is an imminent risk of relapsing into full-blown conflict in Tigray, driven by internal power struggles, unresolved territorial disputes, and the continued presence of external forces. This threatens to escalate into a broader regional confrontation involving Eritrea and Red Sea security.

Concurrently, active conflicts in Amhara and Oromia continue to cause mass displacement, severe human rights abuse, and the weaponization of health and food. With over 3.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), women, children, and youth face heightened protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and forced recruitment. Democratic backsliding, hate speech, and climate shocks further deepen societal polarization. Urgent, inclusive, and rights-respecting interventions are required to prevent broader regional instability and advance sustainable peace.

BACKGROUND

Ethiopia's interconnected crises are compounded by a deepening governance crisis marked by shrinking civic space, restrictions on independent media, and the arbitrary detention of journalists and activists. Despite initial reform promises, democratic backsliding and a shift toward authoritarian governance have weakened institutional checks and balances. Documented abusees, including unlawful killings, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and impediments to humanitarian access—have severely undermined peaceful political participation.

Furthermore, hate speech and identity-based disinformation are reinforcing societal polarization, with women in public life facing targeted online abuse and youth exposed to militarized narratives. Climate variability and environmental degradation are also interacting with conflict, intensifying competition over land and water, and driving unsafe migration. These dynamics require integrated, community-led responses that respect the rule of law and protect the most vulnerable.

Political and Security Developments

The Tigray region faces a high risk of relapsing into full-scale conflict. A violent power struggle between the TPLF and the federally backed Tigray Interim Administration (TIA) has escalated, with the TPLF taking over key areas. Amhara and Eritrean forces continue to occupy parts of Tigray, blocking IDP returns. Heightened military deployments along the border and shifting regional alignments raise fears of a wider Ethiopia-Eritrea confrontation, potentially reigniting disputes over Ethiopia's access to the Red Sea.

The Amhara region sees the Federal forces remain engaged in heavy fighting with Fano militias. Fano attacks have increased by over 50% in early 2026, explicitly targeting election infrastructure to undermine federal legitimacy. This conflict places a severe drain on the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), which is stretched across multiple fronts.

In Oromia, the conflict between the government and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) remains unresolved. Both sides have committed severe atrocities. Government forces have been implicated in indiscriminate drone strikes, extrajudicial killings, and the mass forced conscription of men, while civilians face the weaponization of health and food supplies.

The Ethiopia's transitional justice process is stalled. Delays in establishing independent accountability, truth-seeking, and reparations mechanisms threaten to weaken public confidence and hinder long-term peacebuilding, leaving victims of the Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia crises without justice.

In the humanitarian situation, conflict and climate shocks have left more than 3.3 million people internally displaced. In Western Tigray, over one million displaced people live in extreme conditions, severely constrained from accessing fuel, cash, and basic services, leading to heightened mortality and reports of forced conscription. In the Amhara region, over 400,000 IDPs reside across 18 locations, facing massive barriers to food, healthcare, and WASH services. Women, children, and female-headed households face acute risks of GBV and psychosocial distress. In the Oromia region, mass displacement specifically targets women, while men face forced conscription. The closed civic space severely limits the documentation of these gendered human rights violations.

KEY ASKS

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

1. Drive Inclusive Diplomacy and Ceasefires: Press for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia to prevent a relapse into full-blown conflict. Support AU- and IGAD-led diplomacy—including mediating tensions over Red Sea/maritime access—and ensure the full implementation of the Pretoria Agreement through inclusive dialogue with affected communities, women, and youth.
2. Scale Humanitarian Aid and Protect Civilians: Increase U.S. humanitarian and recovery assistance for the 3.3+ million IDPs. Press for unrestricted humanitarian access and the strict protection of civilians. Explicitly condemn and address the weaponization of health and food and ensure robust protection mechanisms for women and children against conflict-related sexual violence and forced recruitment.
3. Advance Accountability and Democratic Governance: Support the full implementation of Ethiopia's Transitional Justice Policy. Coordinate with partners to condition expanded security and economic cooperation on measurable progress in civilian protection, civic space, and victim-centered accountability for war crimes, CRSV, and arbitrary detentions.
4. Center Women, Youth, and Local Peacebuilders: Make the meaningful participation of women and youth a measurable requirement in all U.S.-supported peace and recovery efforts. Provide direct, flexible funding to local CSOs, integrate the climate-conflict-migration nexus into assistance, and fund independent, African-led research to ensure community evidence directly shapes U.S. policy.

KEY ASKS

UNITED NATIONS AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

1. Mediate Conflicts and Ensure Humanitarian Access:
Support mediation for sustainable political solutions in Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia. Advocate for unrestricted humanitarian access and heightened protection for civilians –specifically naming and prioritizing the safety of children and women in the conflict-affected areas of Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia.
2. Strengthen Transitional Justice and Accountability: Partner with the African Union and IGAD to provide technical assistance, ensuring Ethiopia’s transitional justice institutions are independent, inclusive, gender-responsive, and aligned with international human rights standards to guarantee timely accountability.
3. Apply WPS/YPS Agendas and Regional Diplomacy: Integrate the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas across all mediation, dialogue, and recovery efforts, backed by dedicated funding. Concurrently, support diplomatic initiatives promoting peaceful, multilateral engagement on Red Sea and maritime security that respects sovereignty.
4. Address Hate Speech and Climate-Security Risks: Support a coordinated, rights-respecting mechanism to monitor hate speech and gendered online abuse while protecting free expression. Ensure humanitarian and peacebuilding responses utilize joint conflict analysis and support equitable, community-led management of natural resources in climate-affected borderlands.

KEY ASKS

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

1. Advocate for Ceasefires and Mobilize Humanitarian Support: Engage U.S. policymakers and diplomatic actors to prioritize civilian protection, the rule of law, and unhindered humanitarian access. Mobilize resources, fundraising, and partnerships to support conflict-affected communities and IDPs.
2. Champion Transitional Justice and Survivor Healing: Advocate for the full implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and Ethiopia's Transitional Justice Policy. Partner with local faith and civil society groups to support survivor-centered trauma healing, restorative justice, and amplify the voices of women, youth, and marginalized survivors.
3. Build Community Early Warning and Counternarratives: Develop and strengthen community-based early warning systems to identify hate speech and incitement. Promote digital literacy, support targeted women and youth peacebuilders, and advance locally led counternarratives grounded in dignity, nonviolence, and social cohesion.
4. Foster Dialogue on Climate and Resource Disputes: Promote dialogue and joint action on climate-related resource disputes, displacement, and migration, especially in pastoralist and borderland communities, advocating for conflict-sensitive adaptation and durable solutions.

ABOUT THE CONVENERS

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Salama Hub and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) jointly implement the Horn of Africa Research and Advocacy Joint Project, an initiative established to respond to the complex and evolving peace and security challenges facing the Horn of Africa. The project convenes a diverse coalition of civil society organizations, faith leaders from multiple religious traditions, women and youth-led movements, and academic institutions to promote collaborative research and advocacy on peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

Through this partnership, AFSC and AACC work to address the root causes of violent conflict, militarization, shrinking civic and democratic space, and the humanitarian crises affecting communities across the region. By fostering inclusive dialogue, supporting locally led solutions, and amplifying the voices of affected communities in key policy and advocacy forums, including the United Nations, African Union, and United States Government, the project seeks to advance sustainable peace throughout the Horn of Africa.

ABOUT AFSC

The American Friends Service Committee, AFSC, is a 109-year Quaker international NGO (1917-2026) and a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of all Quakers (1947). AFSC promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. We work with people and partners worldwide of all faiths and backgrounds to meet urgent community needs, challenge injustice, and build peace. AFSC is particularly active in the Horn of Africa, where we have created the Salama Hub, a research and advocacy program for peace and stability.

The AFSC's Salama Hub, a research and advocacy program, works for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa by strengthening local civil society organizations and faith leaders in influencing policies from research. It also fosters community-led healing and reconciliation. What makes it unique is its African-led research, that connects issues from the communities to the policy level. The program presents an opportunity for civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) capacities to be strengthened. The program works with a wide range of partners—from local groups to regional and international bodies like the African Union, IGAD, European Union, and the U.S. policymakers—to ensure these local insights directly influence policies and social dynamics.

ABOUT AACC

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 200 million Christians across the African continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Indigenous churches in Africa, and a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. As an ecumenical body, AACC is a fellowship of more than 215 members comprising of Churches, National Christian Councils (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions, and other Christian organizations in 43 African countries.

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