

# Ethiopia



## Quick facts

Number of IDPs	About 300,000
Percentage of total population	About 0.4%
Start of current displacement situation	1977; 2006
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	Undetermined
New displacement	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, deliberate policy or practice of arbitrary displacement, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	157



For decades, Ethiopia has faced international, internal and regional conflicts, and episodes of localised violence between communities and ethnic groups driven by the struggle for political power and control of resources.

From 1977 to 1978, Ethiopia waged a war with Somalia in which the United States and the former Soviet Union were involved. The war against Eritrea from 1998 to 2000, the ongoing protracted armed struggles for self-determination in Oromiya and Somali Regions, and localised violence in regions including Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz, have led more recently to large-scale loss of life and internal displacement.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea War, fought between 1998 and 2000 over a disputed border area, claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people and displaced over 350,000 on the Ethiopian side alone. Even though most of the IDPs have returned to their places of origin, some of them, and in particular Ethiopians of Eritrean origin, have faced a situation similar to statelessness (they are considered as refugees by Ethiopia), and have remained in camps under the protection of UNHCR.

Since then, internal armed conflicts and localised episodes of violence have caused displacement in various areas. Government forces have continued to fight insurgency groups including the Ogaden National Liberation Front in Somali Region and the Oromo Liberation Front in the south of the country. In Somali Region, fighting continued in 2010 despite the government's peacemaking efforts; at the end of December, it signed a peace agreement with a splinter group of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). While the text of the agreement was not made public, issues related to internal displacement were reportedly not discussed. Despite this initiative, attacks in December 2010 by Ethiopian security forces on villages in Somali Region reportedly led to the death of about 20 civilians and the displacement of hundreds of families.

Ethnic clashes and inter-communal violence were also ongoing in various parts of the country in 2010. Major causes of conflict included political disputes, territorial claims, struggles for control over natural resources, government "villagisation" resettlement programmes and other issues related to culture and identity. In April 2010, clashes among ethnic Nuer clans drove thousands of people from their homes in Gambella region. Local leaders accused the government of not doing enough to facilitate reconciliation or provide protection and

livelihoods opportunities to members of their communities, and of leaving IDPs and the host community to suffer the consequences.

As of December 2010, it was estimated that about 300,000 people remained internally displaced by all these events. Nearly all of these IDPs had reportedly sought shelter with relatives or fled into the bush for safety. There were no organised camps for people internally displaced by conflict or violence in the country. Restrictions by the government have made it difficult for humanitarian and human rights agencies to collect reliable information on their numbers or their situation.

In displacement-affected regions such as Somali, southern Oromiya and Gambella, the food security, health, nutrition, and access to water of communities were all of major concern. In Gambella and Somali, local authorities and humanitarian organisations reported that thousands of vulnerable people were living in destitution as a result of their displacement.

Despite the presumed levels of humanitarian need in displacement areas, the government restricted the access to conflict areas of international humanitarian agencies and human rights monitors. It also introduced laws in January 2009 that severely restricted their activities; thus it was not possible for international agencies to assess the profile and needs of people displaced by conflict, violence or human rights violations.

Ethiopia does not have a national legal framework for the protection of IDPs. It was one of the first countries to sign the Kampala Convention but had not ratified it as of the end of 2010.

The national response to conflict-induced displacement was criticised by national and international agencies operating in the country, and human rights organisations and opposition leaders also accused the government of restricting the provision of food and other assistance to regions which it perceived as opposition strongholds.