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Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery
Governance

Ethiopia Country Profile

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About this report

This report was prepared by Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab Research Fellow in Antislavery Law and Policy), Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab Associate Director), and Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab Research Fellow).

The report is based primarily on research conducted from 2020-2021 and may not therefore consider more recent emerging evidence. Updates to the report to reflect new and emerging evidence are ongoing.

The authors welcome enquiries on the report and the project more broadly, which may be directed to Katarina Schwarz at Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk

About the project

The report was produced to support the research project ‘Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery Governance in the UK and the Top 20 UK Source Countries’, funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. The research team consisted of Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab, University of Nottingham), Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab), Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab), Alexandra Williams-Woods (CSIS, University of Liverpool), and Prof Jean Allain (Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull).

The **Rights Lab** is a University of Nottingham “Beacon of Excellence” and home to the world’s largest and leading group of modern slavery researchers. Through its five research programmes, impact team, and INSPIRE project, the Rights Lab is underpinning antislavery with an advanced research agenda, collaborating with civil society, business, and government, and elevating survivor-informed research as a key part of knowledge production to help end slavery.

The **Wilberforce Institute** at the University of Hull aims to advance fundamental knowledge of slavery and emancipation, informing policy, business practice and public debate at local, national and international levels. The Wilberforce Institute brings together experts in humanities, law and social sciences to help tackle this global problem head on.

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1. Overview of antislavery and anti-trafficking governance in Ethiopia

1.1. GSI rankings and government response ratings¹

	Vulnerability		Prevalence			Government response	
	Ranking ²	Score ³	Ranking ⁴	Absolute ⁵	/1000 ⁶	Ranking ⁷	Rating ⁸
2013	37	62.04	12	620,000	6.7	-	xxx
2014	43	62.3	71	389,700	4.1	101	CC
2016	18	52.09	90	411,600	4.14	-	CCC
2018	27	64.5	51	614,000	6.1	-	CCC

Although the nature of modern slavery makes measuring the phenomenon an inherently difficult task, the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index (GSI) aims to provide the 'best available data and information about the scale and regional distribution of modern slavery'.⁹ This includes **national prevalence estimates** of the number of people experiencing modern slavery in each country, calculated on the basis of a predictive model that accounts for individual and country-level risk factors.

National prevalence estimates are analysed in the context of results of Walk Free's **Vulnerability Model**. This model uses 'statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery'.¹⁰ The 2018 Vulnerability Model features five factors, made up of 23 distinct variables: governance issues, lack of basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict.

Walk Free also tracks **government responses** to modern slavery, tracking government efforts across five milestones: (1) survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of slavery; (2) criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery; (3) coordination occurs at the national and regional level, and governments are held to account for their response; (4) risk factors such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed; and (5) government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.¹¹

It should be noted that the scope, methodology, and sources underpinning GSI findings has changed over the years. This means that data between different reporting years is not directly comparable.

¹ Walk Free Foundation, 'The Global Slavery Index 2013' (2013), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2014' (2014), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2016' (2016), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2018' (2018), available [here](#) (accessed 05 June 2020)

² Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates high vulnerability relative to other countries

³ Note: a higher score indicates increased vulnerability to modern slavery, with a median country score of 47.28 in 2018

⁴ Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates a high number of people experiencing modern slavery per 1000 in the overall population relative to other countries.

⁵ Note: absolute prevalence measures the estimated number of people experiencing modern slavery in the country

⁶ Note: prevalence /1000 measures the number of people estimated to experience modern slavery per 1000 people in the overall population

⁷ Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates better government responses to modern slavery relative to other countries.

⁸ Note: government response ratings are broken into scoring bands, with an A rating representing the strongest government response to modern slavery (with a score of 70-79.9), followed by BBB (60-69.9), BB (50-59.9), B (40-49.9), CCC (30-39.9), CC (20-29.9), C (10-19.9), and D (<0-9.9)

⁹ Walk Free Foundation, 'Global Findings' (2018), available [here](#).

¹⁰ Walk Free Foundation, 'Methodology: Vulnerability' (2018), available [here](#).

¹¹ Walk Free Foundation, 'Methodology: Government Response' (2018), available [here](#).

1.2. TIP Rankings 2001-2020¹²



The Trafficking in Persons report ranks countries into one of four tiers, as mandated by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (TVPA). A country's ranking is based on an assessment of the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons, rather than on the extent of trafficking within the country, and considers government action against the TVPA's minimum standards.¹³

Tier 1: Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, the country must continue to make progress in its anti-trafficking efforts each year.

Tier 2: countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:

- (a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- (b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or
- (c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.

Tier 3: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. Countries ranked as Tier 3 may be subjected to restrictions on non-humanitarian, non-trade foreign assistance from the US. Impositions of such restrictions are determined by the President.¹⁴

1.3. Quantitative measures on anti-trafficking governance (TIP Reports)¹⁵

Measure	Year	Qty	Source
Transnational trafficking cases investigated	2019	699	[1]

¹² US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report' (2020), available [here](#); (2019) available [here](#); (2018), available [here](#); (2017), available [here](#); (2016), available [here](#); (2015), available [here](#); (2014), available [here](#); (2013), available [here](#); (2012), available [here](#); (2011), available [here](#); (2010), available [here](#); (2009), available [here](#); (2008), available [here](#); (2007), available [here](#); (2006), available [here](#); (2005), available [here](#); (2004), available [here](#); (2003), available [here](#); (2002), available [here](#); (2001), available [here](#)

¹³ Minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are found in section 108, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (United States), available [here](#).

¹⁴ See further Department of State (2020), above n 12, 40-41.

¹⁵ Sources:

[1] US Department of State (2020), above n 12.

[2] US Department of State, (2019), above n 12.

Transnational trafficking suspects prosecuted	2019	30	[1]
Transnational traffickers convicted	2019	1,042	[1]
Domestic trafficking cases investigated (sexual exploitation)	2019	2,119	[1]
Domestic traffickers convicted (sexual exploitation)	2019	558	[1]
Domestic traffickers convicted (forced labour)	2019	153	[1]
Transnational trafficking cases investigated	2018	535	[2]
Transnational traffickers convicted	2018	1,028	[2]
Labour inspectors employed	2018	616	[2]
Labour inspections conducted	2018	38,000	[2]
Government funding for labour inspectorate	2018	\$206,850	[2]
Traffickers convicted	2017	182	[2]

1.4. Statistics on children's work and education¹⁶

	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	7 to 14	41.5 (10,202,669)
Attending School (%)	7 to 14	73.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	30.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		54.1

Children in Ethiopia engage in the worst forms of child labour, including in forced labour in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation. According to the results of a 2015 national child labour survey published in 2018, almost 16 million children from the ages of 5 to 17 engaged in child labour. The majority of these children were found in Oromia, Amhara, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' regions.

2. Treaty commitments¹⁷

Instrument	Ratification date
1926 Slavery Convention	N/A
1953 Protocol to the Slavery Convention	N/A
1930 Forced Labour Convention	2 September 2003
2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention	N/A
1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	21 January 1969
1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	24 March 1999
1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	11 June 1993
1966 Optional Protocol to the ICCPR	N/A

¹⁶ US Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 'Child Labour and Forced Labour Reports: Ethiopia' (US Department of Labor, 2019), available [here](#).

¹⁷ UN Treaty ratification info sourced from UN Treaty Collection available [here](#); ILO Convention ratifications available [here](#); Rome Statute ratification status available [here](#). Membership data on the 2017 Call to Action is found at Delta8.7, 'Call to Action' available [here](#).

2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	N/A
1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	N/A
1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	N/A
1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	2 September 2003
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children	22 June 2012
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	25 March 2014
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	14 March 2014
2011 Domestic Workers Convention	N/A
Regional Commitments	
1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	15 June 1998
2009 African Union Convention for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons "the Kampala Convention"	N/A
Key International Commitments	
1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights	
1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power	
2005 UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law	
2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (5.3, 8.7)	
2017 Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	

3. General country context

3.1. Constitutional structure¹⁸

Ethiopia is a federal parliamentary republic based on the civil law system.¹⁹ The country has nine regional states with ethno-religious characteristics.²⁰ Under the 1995 Constitution, Ethiopia has a bi-cameral legislature consisting of a 153 seat House of Federation or *Yefedereshein Mikir Bete* and a 547 seat House of People's Representatives or *Yehizb Tewokayoch Mekir Bete*. Members of the House of Federation are indirectly elected by state assemblies to serve 5-year terms, while members of the House of People's Representatives are directly elected from their constituencies by simple majority vote to serve 5-year terms.²¹ The Prime Minister, appointed by the majority party is the head of government, while the president and chief of state is indirectly elected by both chambers of parliament. The Federal Supreme Court, consisting of 11 judges, is the highest court in Ethiopia, although the House of Federation exercises jurisdiction over all constitutional matters.²² The House of People's Representatives on the prime minister's recommendation appoint the Federal Supreme Court president and vice-president. The Federal Judicial Administrative Council nominates other Supreme Court judges and the House of People's

¹⁸ Constitution available [here](#)

¹⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, 'The World FactBook: Ethiopia' (2020), available [here](#).

²⁰ Ameha Wondirad, 'An Overview of the Ethiopian Legal System' (2014) 20 *CLJP/JDCP*, 575, available [here](#).

²¹ Central Intelligence Agency, above n 19

²² *Ibid*.

Representatives make appointment. It is noteworthy that unlike many countries, the House of Federation, not the Court, is responsible for interpreting the constitution and resolving disputes between States,²³ while the House of People's Representatives is responsible for enacting federal laws.²⁴ Under Article 46(1), Ethiopia is a federal state comprises of regional governments. The nine regional states are mainly formed based on ethnicity besides geography.²⁵

3.2. Political context

Ethiopia has witnessed unprecedented political changes during the past five years with reforms in the army,²⁶ release of political prisoners, and plans to revise repressive laws.²⁷ In July 2018, Ethiopia and Eritrea resolved their decades-long standoff, signing a peace treaty and agreeing to implement a 2002 decision of the International Boundary Commission.²⁸ Nevertheless, the country faces political instability and social turmoil, as some of its states fight for autonomy.²⁹ Abiy Ahmed became Ethiopia's Prime Minister in April 2018 following the unexpected resignation of his predecessor Hailemariam Desalegn in February of the same year.³⁰ The political context in Ethiopia is one of the most complex in Africa – aiming for greater autonomy for regional states and strong control at the federal level. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of four ethnically based parties: the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP), the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM), and the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organisation (OPDO),³¹ controlled the government until its successor, the Prosperity Party was formed in December 2019. The 2019 Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit, ranked Ethiopia as 125 of 167 countries, indicating that the country is far from being fully democratic.³²

However, under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, rule of law has gained increased attention.³³ The new government has also decriminalised political movements previously accused of treason, allowed peaceful rallies and demonstrations, and invited opposition leaders to return to the country and resume political activities.³⁴ The government also allowed the formation of new political parties and media outlets operate with increased freedom across the country.³⁵ The 2020 World Press Freedom Index ranks Ethiopia 99 of 180 countries, moving up 11 places from the previous year.³⁶ The Press Freedom Index also noted that 'Ethiopia is not coloured red on the World Press Freedom Index map for the first time since the five colours began being used in 2013. Abiy Ahmed Ali, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, allowed the many detained journalists and bloggers to be released as soon as he became prime minister in 2018. The new authorities also restored access to more than 200 news websites and blogs that had been blocked for years, and Ethiopian TV stations that are based abroad are now able to work freely.'³⁷ However, draconian laws affecting the press, including the 2009 terrorism law, have yet to be amended. There are

²³ Article 62(1) of the Constitution.

²⁴ Article 55(1) Constitution.

²⁵ Fesseha-Mulu Gebremariam and Bizuayehu-Daba Feyisa, 'The role of democratic developmental State ideology for national integration: an assessment from the perspective of the 1005 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution' (2017) 14(2) *Research and Science Today* 23, 26.

²⁶ Nordea, 'Ethiopia: Economic and Political Overview', available [here](#).

²⁷ Yoseph Badwaza and Jon Temin, 'Reform in Ethiopia: Turning Promise into Progress' (2018), available [here](#). See UK Home Office, 'Country Policy and Information Note Ethiopia: Opposition to the government' (July 2020) 16 ff, available [here](#).

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia: Events of 2018' (2019), available [here](#).

²⁹ Nordea, 'Ethiopia: Economic and Political Overview', above n 26.

³⁰ BBC, 'Ethiopia Country Profile', available [here](#).

³¹ Nordea, 'Ethiopia: Economic and Political Overview', above n 26.

³² The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2019: A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest' (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, 2020).

³³ US Department of State, '2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia' (2019), available [here](#).

³⁴ US Department of State, '2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ethiopia' (2018), available [here](#).

³⁵ Ibid. See also UK Home Office, above n 27, 21 ff.

³⁶ Reporters without Borders, 'Ethiopia: New freedoms to be consolidated' (2020), available [here](#).

³⁷ Ibid.

also concerns that relevant media reforms have not been institutionalised, which could undermine progress.³⁸

Within the last months, fighting has ravaged northern Ethiopia since early November when the government opened a military offensive against the ruling faction in the region of Tigray, starting a conflict that has caused thousands of deaths and widespread destruction, displaced over 2 million people, and sent tens of thousands of refugees into neighbouring Sudan.³⁹

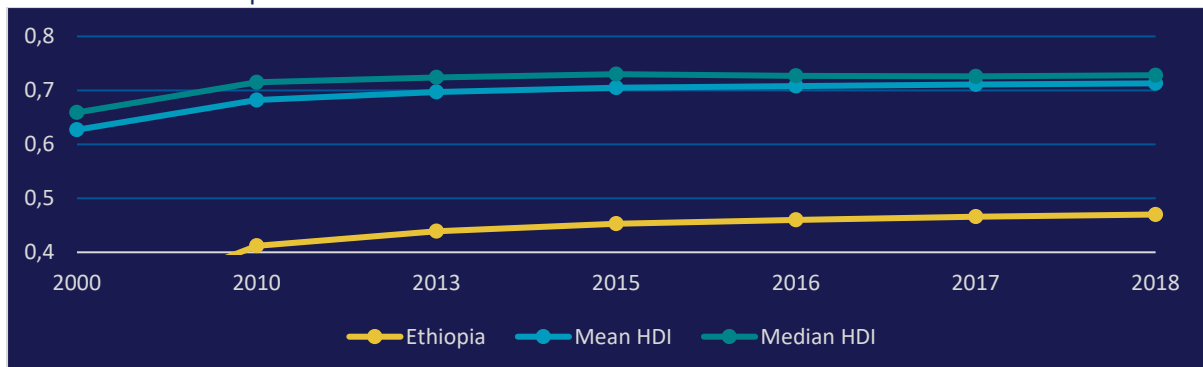
3.3. Migration profile

Ethiopia is a source country for irregular migration to the Middle East, North Africa, southern Africa, and Europe.⁴⁰ Migration outflow from the country is generally low compared to other countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.⁴¹ In fact, much of the irregular migration flow on the Eastern route from Ethiopia towards the Middle East and Gulf States uses Djibouti and Somalia as key transit countries.⁴² Ethiopia also serves as a major transit country for migrants from the Horn of Africa, especially Somalia and Eritrea towards Sudan and onward to the Middle East and Europe.⁴³

As of mid-2019, the country's emigrant population was estimated to be 871,7 thousands, while the number of international migrants residing in the country was estimated 1,3 million (1,1% of the total population).⁴⁴ Social class, gender, poverty, and resources are key variables along which migration from Ethiopia is stratified.⁴⁵

3.4. Development profile

3.4.1 Human Development Index⁴⁶



The Human Development Index (HDI) measures average life expectancy, level of education and income for each country in the world. Each country is given a score between 0 and 1 - the closer a country gets to 1, the more developed it is.⁴⁷ Ethiopia's scores place it in the 'low human development category' grouping, positioning it at 173 out of 189 countries and territories.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Declan Walsh and Abdi Latif Dahir, 'Why Is Ethiopia at War With Itself?' *New York Times* (12 February 2021), available [here](#).

⁴⁰ Peter Tinti, 'Ethiopia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa' (2018) 3, available [here](#).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Deanna Davy (Danish Refugee Council), 'Unpacking the Myths: Human smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa' (RMMS, 2017) 3, available [here](#).

⁴³ Ibid.

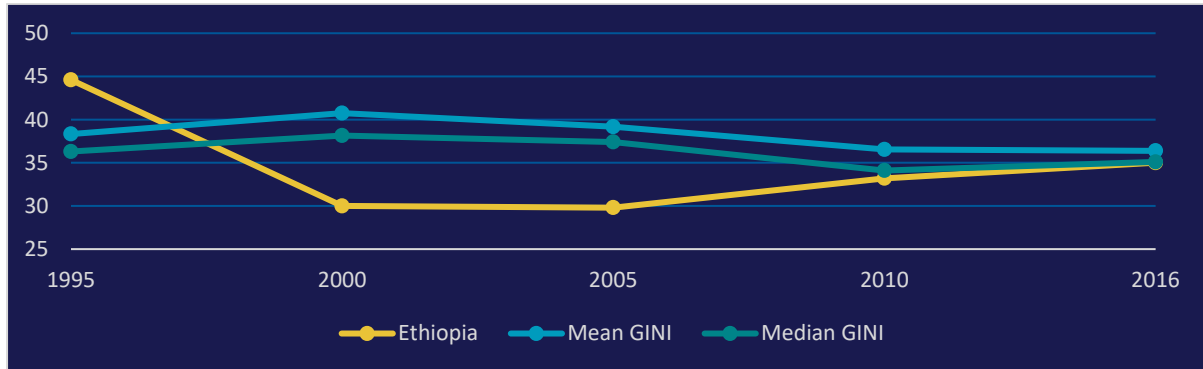
⁴⁴ Migration Data Portal, 'Ethiopia' (2020), available [here](#).

⁴⁵ Girmachew Adugna, 'Migration patterns and emigrants' transnational activities: comparative findings from two migrant origin areas in Ethiopia', (2019) 7(5) *Comparative Migration Studies*, available [here](#).

⁴⁶ United Nations Development Programme, 'Human Development Reports' <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-2-human-development-index-trends-1990%E2%80%932018>>.

⁴⁷ BBC, 'Contrasts in development between different countries', available [here](#).

3.4.2 GINI Co-Efficient⁴⁸



Gini index measures the extent to which income distribution or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.⁴⁹

3.4.3 UN Sustainable Development Goals⁵⁰

Ethiopia SDG		
Year	Rank	Score
2020	136	55,23
2019	135	53.2
2018	128	53.2
2017	126	53.5
2016	125	43.1

The Sustainable Development Reports assess implementation of, and progress towards, the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG Index and Dashboards summarise countries' current performance and trends across the 17 SDGs. All SDGs are weighted equally in the index. Changing indicators, data, and methodology used to determine rankings and scores mean that SDG index results are not comparable over time.⁵¹

3.4.4 GDP Rates

3.4.4.1 GDP Growth Rate⁵²

Ethiopia GDP Growth Rate - Historical Data		
Year	GDP Growth (%)	Annual Change
2018	6.81%	-2.69%
2017	9.50%	0.07%
2016	9.43%	-0.96%
2015	10.39%	0.14%
2014	10.26%	-0.32%

⁴⁸ The World Bank, 'GINI index (World Bank estimate) - Ethiopia', available [here](#).

⁴⁹ World Bank, 'Metadata Glossary', available [here](#).

⁵⁰ Sustainable Development Report (2020) <<https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>> accessed 05 November 2020.

⁵¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 'Sustainable Development Report 2019' (June 2019) 19.

⁵² World Bank, 'GDP growth (annual %) - Ethiopia' (2019), available [here](#).

2013	10.58%	1.93%
2012	8.65%	-2.53%
2011	11.18%	-1.37%
2010	12.55%	3.75%
2009	8.80%	-1.99%
2008	10.79%	-0.67%
2007	11.46%	0.62%
2006	10.83%	-0.98%
2005	11.82%	-1.75%
2004	13.57%	15.73%
2003	-2.16%	-3.68%
2002	1.51%	-6.79%
2001	8.30%	2.23%
2000	6.07%	0.91%
1999	5.16%	8.62%
1998	-3.46%	-6.59%
1997	3.13%	-9.29%
1996	12.43%	6.30%
1995	6.13%	2.94%
1994	3.19%	-9.95%
1993	13.14%	21.82%
1992	-8.67%	-1.54%
1991	-7.14%	-9.86%
1990	2.73%	3.09%

3.4.4.2 GDP per capita (current US\$)⁵³

Year	GDP per capita
1990	254.2
2000	124.4
2010	341.5
2011	354.4
2012	467.0
2013	499.5
2014	566.9
2015	640.5
2016	717.1

⁵³ World Bank, 'GDP per capita (current US\$) – Ethiopia' available [here](#).

2017	768.5
2018	771.5
2019	857.5

3.4.5 Other relevant indicators

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Unemployment rate (%)⁵⁴	2.22	2.2	2.17	2.12	2.08	2.08	2.08
Youth unemployment rate⁵⁵	3.38	3.36	3.33	3.26	3.21	3.23	3.26

Other relevant indicators include the UNDP's 2018 Gender Inequality Index, which assigned Ethiopia 0,508 points;⁵⁶ the Freedom House's Global Freedom Score, which ranked Ethiopia 24/100 and labelled it as "not free";⁵⁷ and the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, where Iran is ranked 96 out of 180 countries.⁵⁸

3.5. Ethiopia's Human Rights Record

Following years of protests against government policies and police brutality, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's election ushered in a new wave of reforms, including release of political prisoners, reform of repressive laws, and admission that security forces used torture in the past.⁵⁹ The killing of popular Oromo artist and activist, Hachalu Hundessa in June 2019, however sparked widespread violence and resulted in massive incarceration, threatening recent human rights gains.⁶⁰ Hachalu's death triggered unrest and violence especially in the Oromia region, leaving at least 178 people dead and around 9,000 arrests.⁶¹ Other human rights issues in Ethiopia include torture, inhumane prison conditions, forced disappearances by government forces, censorship, and interference with the right to peaceful protest. Violence against women and children is also widespread across Ethiopia, supported by government inaction; also, many children continue to be exploited in child labour, including its worst forms.⁶²

An increase in ethnic violence resulted in thousands of killings across the country, with security forces siding with their own ethnic groups in communal clashes.⁶³ During early 2019, vigilante group and regional government security carried out coordinated attacks against members of the Qimant, an ethnic minority people who had campaigned for autonomy within the Amhara Regional State, killing around 60 people.⁶⁴ Although Ethiopia signed a peace accord with Eritrea in 2018, which resolved decades-long dispute, in January 2020, the Ethiopian government unofficially changed its asylum policy towards Eritreans. Previous policy granted all Eritrean asylum seekers refugee status as a group. However, as Human Rights Watch noted 'changes to asylum procedures for Eritreans

⁵⁴ Statista, 'Ethiopia: Unemployment rate from 1999 to 2020' (2020), available [here](#).

⁵⁵ Statista, 'Ethiopia: Youth unemployment rate from 1999 to 2020' (2020), available [here](#).

⁵⁶ See UNDP, 'Gender Index (GII)' (2019), available [here](#).

⁵⁷ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2020-Ethiopia' (2020), available [here](#).

⁵⁸ Transparency International, 'Country Data-Ethiopia' (2020), available [here](#).

⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia' (2020), available [here](#).

⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia: Opposition Figures Held Without Charge' (2020), available [here](#).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² US Department of State, above n 34.

⁶³ Amnesty International, 'Ethiopia 2019' (2020), available [here](#).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

undermines their access to asylum and denies unaccompanied children necessary protection.⁶⁵

3.6. Social support systems⁶⁶

Although article 41(3) of the Ethiopian Constitution grants Ethiopians equal right to publicly funded social services, provision of social security is generally subject to available resources. Article 90 of the Constitution provides that 'to the extent the country's resources permit, policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health and education, clean water, housing, food and social security'. As such, social protection is not a legally enforceable right, nor a statutory obligation of the state to its citizens.⁶⁷ Given recurrent drought in Ethiopia, which affects farming and crop production, government policies have sought to provide food security as well as developmental, preventative and rehabilitative programs. Some of the social programmes developed by the Ethiopian government include the National Plan of Action on Older Persons (2006–2015), National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (2012–2021), and Private Organisation Employees Pension (Social Security) Scheme (2011 to present).⁶⁸

In 2012, the government adopted the National Social Protection Policy, with the goal of protecting the poor, vulnerable individuals and communities from the adverse effects of shocks and poverty. The policy also aims to increase access to healthcare services, education, and social welfare.

⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia: Unaccompanied Eritrean Children at Risk' (2020), available [here](#).

⁶⁶ National Social Protection Policy available [here](#).

⁶⁷ Melisew Dejene Lemma and Logan Cochrane, 'Policy Coherence and Social Protection in Ethiopia: Ensuring No One Is Left Behind' (2019) 9 *Societies*, 6, available [here](#).

⁶⁸ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, 'Ethiopia Migration Profile: Study on Migration Routes in the East and Horn of Africa' (2017), available [here](#).

4. National modern slavery context

4.1. Modern slavery profile

Ethiopia is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking.⁶⁹ Ethiopian children, women, and men are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour both within the country and abroad.⁷⁰ Individuals from rural Ethiopia are often trafficked to the Middle East and Gulf countries under false promises of a better life; with many of the victims subjected to forced labour in transit countries such as Djibouti, and in destination countries.⁷¹ Ethiopian women are also trafficked to neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, and South Sudan.⁷² Traffickers transport their victims by air and land, while victims are sometimes forced to travel by foot to neighbouring countries facilitating the journey through their network.⁷³ Further, within Ethiopia, traffickers exploit victims in forced labour and sex trafficking in urban centres.⁷⁴ Given the clandestine nature of human trafficking, accurate data on the scale of the problem is not always available, although some studies show that up to 1,000 women leave the country every month to find jobs as domestic workers abroad,⁷⁵ where many are physically and sexually abused and sometimes killed.⁷⁶ A 2011 ILO study revealed that young persons and children commonly fall prey to traffickers and those benefiting from the migration process.⁷⁷ This study also indicates that 'recruitment of victims may be initiated by different people, including local brokers, returnees and visitors from destination countries, relatives and friends of these, and licensed or unlicensed agencies'.⁷⁸

A 2019 study conducted by the Research and Evidence Facility found that 'smuggling out of Ethiopia is facilitated by agents who are part of an intricate web of expansive international networks. These agents recruit would-be migrants and arrange the logistics, mainly through legal means that are backed by complex money laundering schemes. [...] Travel agencies are used as covers to legitimately provide clients being smuggled with legal visas and commercial air travel arrangements, most commonly to Saudi Arabia or Gulf states. [...] In Ethiopia, smuggling and trafficking networks gradually take control of the migrants' journey, and continuously negotiate the price for onward movement. Migrants initially place themselves in the hands of the smugglers/traffickers freely. They want to travel to new markets.'⁷⁹ They are often aware that they will have to pay additional costs, and that they will be subjected to such mistreatment as lack of care, poor food and accommodation, and that they might be roughed up or even tortured, or abandoned if they or their relatives do not meet the traffickers' demands.⁸⁰

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention' (CEDAW/C/ETH/8, 2017) para 56, available [here](#).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 207.

⁷⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention', above n 72.

⁷⁶ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, above n 68.

⁷⁶ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 207.

⁷⁷ ILO, 'Trafficking in Persons Overseas for Labour Purposes The Case of Ethiopian Domestic Workers' (2011) 25 ff, available [here](#).

⁷⁸ Ibid, 30.

⁷⁹ Research and Evidence Facility (REF), 'Rapid Assessment of Organised Criminal Networks Responsible for Human Smuggling and Trafficking Migration between the Horn of Africa and Yemen: Findings from Puntland' (EU Trust Fund for Africa, 2019) 8, available [here](#).

⁸⁰ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 207.

4.2. Causes and drivers of modern slavery and transnational trafficking

Poverty is one of the underlying causes of human trafficking in Ethiopia,⁸¹ although the phenomenon may also be linked to political and cultural factors, especially a sense of responsibility towards one's family and idealistic perceptions about living in Western and Middle Eastern countries.⁸² The 2020 TIP Report notes that 'manamasas— trusted community members who share information about the advantages of working abroad— play a key role in facilitating internal and transnational trafficking by exaggerating the advantages of working abroad'.⁸³

By encouraging labour migration, for instance concluding labour exchange agreements with Gulf countries, the Ethiopian government is tacitly creating modern slavery vulnerabilities, as many victims work under exploitative conditions in destination countries.⁸⁴ Lack of awareness on legal migration channels is also exposing Ethiopian women to trafficking in the Middle East. Others with knowledge of legal migration channels may still prefer irregular channels, which are considered quicker, compared to government's lengthy and cumbersome procedures.⁸⁵

Internal displacement also creates human trafficking and modern slavery risks. Many of the relevant population become vulnerable to exploitation, in part due to extreme poverty and lack of access to justice. Some 1.7 million individuals are estimated to be internally displaced, because of drought and internal conflict. Further, North Koreans are found working in Ethiopia, many of whom may have been forced to work by the authoritarian regime in North Korea.⁸⁶

4.3. Particularly vulnerable groups

Young Ethiopian women travel through Eritrea or Djibouti to undertake domestic work in Saudi Arabia, which is the primary destination country for irregular migrants. These individuals reside in Saudi Arabia without valid travel papers, which increases their vulnerability to forced labour or sex trafficking. Ethiopian men and boys travel to other African nations and Gulf countries, where they are often exploited in forced labour. Also, recruitment agencies frequently target young people from rural Ethiopia under false promises of a better life.⁸⁷

Ethiopian children are also vulnerable to modern slavery, with many particularly exposed to the worst forms of child labour, including forced domestic work, and dangerous agricultural work. Around 16 million children between ages 5 to 17 are estimated to be exploited in child labour in Ethiopia, especially in Amhara, Oromia, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' regions.⁸⁸ Also, as earlier noted, North Korean nationals are found working in Ethiopia, many of whom may have been compelled to do so by the North Korean government.⁸⁹

⁸¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention', above n 72, para 59; ILO, above n 77, 21 ff.

⁸² Messay M. Tefera, 'Cross-Border Migration and Human Trafficking in Ethiopia: Contributing Factors, Policy Responses and the Way Forward', (2018) *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 98.

⁸³ US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report', above n 12, 206.

⁸⁴ Maastricht Graduate School of Governance above n 68.

⁸⁵ Gudetu Wakgari, 'Causes and Consequences of Human Trafficking in Ethiopia: The case of Women in the Middle East', (2014) 2(2), *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* 239, available [here](#).

⁸⁶ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 207.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ US Department of Labour, '2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor' (2018), available [here](#).

⁸⁹ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 207.

5. Antislavery governance frameworks

5.1. Legislative measures

5.1.1. Constitution 1995⁹⁰

Article 18 of the constitution prohibits slavery, servitude, trafficking in person and forced labour, under the heading 'Prohibition against inhuman treatment':

- (2) No one shall be held in slavery or servitude. Trafficking in human beings for whatever purpose is prohibited
- (3) No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour
- (4) For the purpose of sub-Article 3 of this Article the phrase 'forced or compulsory labour' shall not include:
 - a. Any work or service normally required of a person who is under detention in consequence of a lawful order, or of a person during conditional release from such detention;
 - b. In the case of conscientious objectors, any service exacted in lieu of compulsory military service;
 - c. Any service exacted in cases of emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community;
 - d. Any economic and social development activity voluntarily performed by a community within its locality.

Article 36(1)(d) prescribes that every child has the right 'Not to be subject to exploitative practices, neither to be required nor permitted to perform work which may be hazardous or harmful to his or her education, health or well-being'; and Article 34(2) refers that marriages are founded on consent: 'Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses'.

5.1.2. Proclamation for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Proclamation No. 909/2015)⁹¹

Articles 3(1) and 3(3) of the legislation prohibit human trafficking and child trafficking respectively in ways largely consistent with Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol, and makes it punishable with 15 to 25 years' imprisonment. Article 3(2) envisages aggravating circumstances:⁹²

- (1) Any person, for the purpose of exploitation, within the territory or outside of Ethiopia:
 - a) at the pretext of domestic or overseas employment or sending to aboard for work or apprenticeship;
 - b) by concluding adoption agreement or at the pretext of adoption; or
 - c) for any other purpose;using threat or force or other means of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, promise, abuse of power or by using the vulnerability of a person or recruits, transports, transfer harbors or receives any person by giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment from 15 years to 25 years and with fine from 150,000 to 300,000 Birr.
- (2) Where the crime stipulated under sub-article (1) of this Article:
 - a) is committed against child, women or anyone with mental or physical impairment;
 - b) resulted in physical or psychological harm on the victim;
 - c) is committed by using drugs, medicine or weapons as a means;

⁹⁰ Constitution 1995 available [here](#).

⁹¹ Proclamation for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Proclamation No. 909/2015), available [here](#)

⁹² Article 3(1)(c) Proclamation for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking.

- d) is committed by public official or civil servant in abusing of power; or
- e) is committed by a person who is parents, brother, sister, a guardian or a person having a power on the victim; the punishment shall be rigorous imprisonment not less than 25 years or life imprisonment and with fine from 200,000 to 500,000 Birr.

(3) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered trafficking in persons even if this does not involve any of the means stipulated under sub article (1) of this article.

Exploitation is defined to include forced labour, servitude, slavery and practices similar to slavery, sexual servitude and enslavement, debt bondage, organ removal, forced begging, and engaging children in military service (Article 1(4) of the Law).⁹³ Criminal liability of legal persons is envisaged under Article 13, and Article 14 includes a relevant provision regarding consent:

(1) Notwithstanding to the consent of the victim, for the aim of exploitation, if the consent is secured through a means of threat, coercion, other form of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or by using the vulnerability or by giving or receiving bribe or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, the criminal liability of the human trafficker or migrant smuggler shall not be relieved.

(2) In cases of trafficking of child or smuggling of child from and into Ethiopia, the consent given by any child or his guardian shall be unacceptable.

During February 2020, the Ethiopian Parliament approved Proclamation 1178/2020— A Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Persons. Although the government has not formally adopted the legislation, the 2020 US TIP Report indicates that the new law allegedly mandates funding for the government's anti-trafficking efforts, while it also addresses challenges with institutional coordination between government agencies.⁹⁴

5.1.3. Criminal Code (Proclamation No.414/2004)⁹⁵

Article 596 of the Criminal Code prohibits the buying, selling, enslavement and trafficking of persons and prescribes a penalty of 5 to 20 years imprisonment and a fine:

(1) Whoever:

a) forcibly enslaves another, sells, alienates, pledges or buys him, or trades or traffics in or exploits him in any manner; or

b) keeps or maintains another in a condition of slavery, even in a disguised form, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to twenty years, and fine not exceeding fifty thousand Birr.

(2) Whoever, in order to deliver him at his place of destination, carries off or transports a person found in situations stated above, whether by land, by sea or by air, or conducts or aids such traffic, is liable to the punishment under sub-article (1)above.

(3) Where the crime is committed against children, women, feebleminded or sick persons, the punishment shall be rigorous imprisonment from ten years to twenty years.

The Criminal Code prohibits trafficking in women and children and prescribes a penalty of 5 to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine:

Article 597. Trafficking in Women and Children.

⁹³ Article 2 Proclamation for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking.

⁹⁴ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 205.

⁹⁵ Criminal Code (Proclamation No.414/2004) available [here](#).

(1) Whoever by violence, threat, deceit, fraud, kidnapping or by the giving of money or other advantage to the person having control over a woman or a child, recruits, receives, hides, transports, exports or imports a woman or a minor for the purpose of forced labour, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to twenty years, and fine not exceeding fifty thousand Birr.

(2) Whoever knowingly carries off, or transports, whether by land, by sea or by air, the victim mentioned in sub-article (1), with the purpose stated therein, or conducts, or aids such traffic, is liable to the penalty prescribed under sub-article (1) above.

It is noteworthy, however, that punishment for trafficking offences has been increased by the 2015 anti-trafficking legislation, while the scope of the offence has been expanded to cover trafficking in persons, as opposed to trafficking in women and children as found in the Criminal Code. The Criminal Code also prohibits the recruitment of Ethiopian women by unlicensed agents to undertake domestic work abroad, punished with 5 to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine:

Article 598. Unlawful Sending of Ethiopians for Work Abroad.

(1) Whoever, without having obtained a license or by any other unlawful means, sends an Ethiopian woman for work abroad, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to ten years, and fine not exceeding twenty-five thousand Birr.

(2) Where the Ethiopian woman sent abroad, owing to the act mentioned above, suffers an injury to her human rights, or to her life, body or psychological make-up, the sender shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to twenty years, and fine not exceeding fifty thousand Birr.

Although the provision addresses the disproportionate recruitment of women as foreign domestic workers, the non-inclusion of men and children is a fundamental omission in the Article. Article 635 further criminalises trafficking for prostitution and makes it punishable with up to 5 years imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 Birr:

Whoever, for gain, or to gratify the passions of another:

a) traffics in women or minors, whether by seducing them, by enticing them, or by procuring them or otherwise inducing them to engage in prostitution, even with their consent; or

b) keeps such a person in a brothel to let him out to prostitution, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding five years, and fine not exceeding ten thousand Birr, subject to the application of more severe provisions, especially where there is concurrent illegal restraint.

5.1.4. Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016⁹⁶

The statute was adopted to protect the rights and wellbeing of Ethiopian workers abroad. Under the legislation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is tasked with approving employment contracts, providing pre-employment and pre-departure orientations and facilitating the departure of workers.⁹⁷ The legislation prohibits the direct employment of workers by overseas employers unless undertaken through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or licensed agencies. However, this does not preclude direct employment by a staff of an Ethiopian Mission, or recruitment by an international organisation.⁹⁸ Also direct employment for jobs other than housemaid services is permitted under the legislation.⁹⁹ Employers are generally required to cover travel expenses, including entry

⁹⁶ Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016, available [here](#)

⁹⁷ Article 5 Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation.

⁹⁸ Article 6(2)(a) and (b), Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation.

⁹⁹ Article 6(2)(c) Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation. Article 6(3) states that employment under article 6(2)(c) may only be permitted with evidence of: (a) 'an assurance secured from a pertinent mission or

visa fee, residence permit, while the worker covers other incidental costs including passport issuance fee, expenses related to certificate of occupational competence.¹⁰⁰ Although, some expenses are incurred to the workers, the bulk of the costs seem to be incurred to employers, which could reduce the possibility of debt bondage, which could trap workers indefinitely. The legislation provides various penalties for non-compliance and/or violation of the Proclamation by recruitment agencies, even though it failed to specify the applicable provisions of the Criminal Code.

5.1.5. Labour Proclamation No.1156/2019¹⁰¹

The Labour Proclamation is the primary legislation governing employer-employee relations in Ethiopia. The legislation, *inter alia*, safeguards the rights of employees from exploitative labour and sexual violence, while also protecting children from child labour, including its worst forms. Article 89 of the Labour Code prohibits the employment of children below the age of 15 years into the workforce, or assigning such children to undertake works that may endanger their lives or health.

5.2. Prosecution

According to the 2020 US TIP Report, Ethiopian authorities reportedly investigated 699 cases of transnational trafficking in 2019, which resulted in the prosecution of 30 suspects and conviction of 1,042 individuals. During 2018, 535 cases were investigated and 1,028 individuals convicted. With regard to domestic trafficking, authorities reportedly investigated 2,119 cases of sexual exploitation and convicted 558 traffickers in 2019. Authorities further convicted 153 traffickers of forced labour.¹⁰² Some 182 traffickers were convicted during 2017.¹⁰³ Between 2014 and 2015, the Federal Police cooperated with the Federal Public Prosecutor to investigate 127 cases of human trafficking, of which 136 individuals were prosecuted, and 49 traffickers convicted and sentenced, with penalties ranging from 2 to 18 years imprisonment.¹⁰⁴

However, the tendency of officials to conflate human trafficking with smuggling, suggests that some of the cases might involve smuggling and other crimes.¹⁰⁵ Also, despite increasing conviction rates, the 2020 US TIP Report notes that police and judicial corruption continues to be a challenge in Ethiopia.¹⁰⁶

5.3. National policies and plans

5.3.1. National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2015–2020)

The action plan is the main document guiding government's anti-trafficking efforts. It provides guiding principles consistent with international best practices for anti-human trafficking action, and stipulates the institutional frameworks for combatting human trafficking in Ethiopia.¹⁰⁷

The Ethiopian government is reportedly increasing its overall anti-trafficking efforts, although attention seems to be rather focused on transnational labour trafficking as opposed to internal forced labour and sex trafficking.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, authorities are taking

from mission of country of destination if an Ethiopian mission is not present in the country of destination; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia that the worker's basic rights and dignity will be respected in the country of destination; b) life and disability insurance coverage for the worker pursuant to Article 62(1) of this Proclamation has been issued; c) appropriate air or land transport service together with contract of employment are submitted'.

¹⁰⁰ Article 10 Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation.

¹⁰¹ Labour Proclamation No.1156/2019 available [here](#).

¹⁰² US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 205.

¹⁰³ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 192.

¹⁰⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, above n 72, para 155.

¹⁰⁵ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 205.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁷ US Department of Labour, '2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor', above n 88.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid* 205.

additional steps to identify and refer victims to care, although efforts are largely directed at transnational trafficking.¹⁰⁹

5.3.2. National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2016–2020)

The child labour action plan provides guidelines on child labour identification as well as withdrawal and reintegration of children.¹¹⁰

5.3.3. National Human Rights Action Plan (2016–2020)

Although responding to broader human rights issues, the action plan contains various activities to combat trafficking in persons, including media campaign and increased efforts to assist women and child victims in urban centres. The 2020 US TIP Report however notes that the action plan lacked dedicated funding for its implementation.¹¹¹

5.3.4. National Children's Policy 2017¹¹²

The policy aims to protect children from exploitation, by combatting child trafficking, child labour (including its worst forms), organ harvesting, and commercial sexual exploitation. It also aims to build the capacity of government officials and undertake relevant legal reforms to facilitate children's rights protection. In addition, the policy seeks to raise awareness about children's rights at family and community levels, while ensuring improved institutional coordination.¹¹³

5.3.5. The Social Protection Policy

The policy contains formal and informal intervention programmes aiming to reduce socioeconomic risks, poverty and vulnerabilities. It further aims to ensure equitable growth to everyone including women.¹¹⁴

5.4. National institutions and inter-departmental coordination

Article 39 of the 2015 anti-trafficking legislation established a National Committee to coordinate the country's human trafficking responses. The Committee, led by the deputy prime minister, coordinates programmes to protect, assist and rehabilitate victims. The Committee is composed of staff from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Federal Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Education, Regional States, other governmental agencies, as well as religious and charitable organisations. Article 40 of the legislation further established the Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants Task Force, which reports to the National Committee. The Task Force supports efforts to prevent human trafficking while also designing strategies to assist and rehabilitate victims. It also works with the ministries constituting the National Committee as well as other agencies, including the National security and intelligence service and the Ethiopian Federal police commission. With regard to the National Committee, it should be mentioned that the body faces enormous challenges in executing its mandate given that its constituent members have other competing priorities within their own respective mandates, which are not trafficking specific.¹¹⁵

The government has further established the Migration and Human Trafficking Crime Team, to address issues related to trafficking in persons and smuggling crimes. The Team consists of 35 investigators and 6 prosecutors.¹¹⁶ Other bodies performing thematic roles include the National Steering Committee on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs National Forum to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour, National

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 193.

¹¹² National Children's Policy available [here](#).

¹¹³ Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth, 'Children's Rights Policy 2017' (2017) 8,10, 25, available [here](#).

¹¹⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention', above n 72, para 91.

¹¹⁵ Peter Tinti, 'Ethiopia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa', above n 40, 17.

¹¹⁶ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 205.

Steering Committee against Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children, and the National Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling Council.¹¹⁷

5.5. Victim support and assistance frameworks

Various frameworks exist for supporting and assisting victims of human trafficking. Article 26(1) of the 2015 anti-trafficking proclamation mandates the government to set up procedures for identifying, rescuing, repatriating, and rehabilitating victims in partnership with other governments and international organisations. In addition, article 26(2) states that victims must be provided with healthcare, psychological and social services. The government has partnered with foreign governments and international organisations to develop a National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which has been initially assessed as effective with robust victim protection measures.¹¹⁸

The government reportedly identified 27,877 potential victims of transnational trafficking during 2019, with the majority intending to depart the country for overseas work. The government offered repatriation assistance as well as job training to 7,545 of these individuals.¹¹⁹ In terms of domestic trafficking, four one-stop justice and protection centres established in Addis Ababa reportedly provided services to 2,119 victims of sex trafficking and 153 forced labour victims.¹²⁰ During 2018, authorities at federal and regional levels intercepted more than 10,000 individuals aiming to migrate to Gulf States and other African countries. The government provided shelter, psychological support, healthcare, and skills trainings for alternative employment to many of these individuals.¹²¹ The government runs two migration response centres in Metema and Afar in collaboration with an international organisation.¹²²

5.6. Training and capacity-building for responders

The Attorney General's Office, partnering with an academic institution and an international organisation, trained members of the Task Force on best practices in public awareness raising. Further, the government cooperated with, and provided in-kind support to an international organisation to train community dialogue facilitators in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and other regional states.¹²³ Members of the police force and transport workers also received training on techniques for recognising child trafficking victims, which resulted in the referral of victims to local shelters.¹²⁴ In 2015, UNODC trained 70 prosecutors, judges and police investigators from various regions on the contents of the anti-trafficking legislation.¹²⁵

5.7. Public awareness raising

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs undertakes a series of awareness raising campaigns to combat human trafficking using radio, TV, and other channels, including community organisations.¹²⁶ In this regard, the labour ministry works with grass roots associations and uses community gatherings to highlight the indicators of trafficking and associated risks. A Child Trafficking Unit has been established at a major bus station in Addis Ababa to increase awareness of the phenomenon.¹²⁷ The authorities reported carrying out 534 awareness campaigns on human trafficking, migration, and smuggling in Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya and SNNP regional states of Ethiopia, which reached an

¹¹⁷ US Department of Labour, '2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor', above n 88.

¹¹⁸ US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 205.

¹¹⁹ Ibid 206.

¹²⁰ Ibid 205.

¹²¹ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 192.

¹²² US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 205.

¹²³ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 194.

¹²⁴ Ibid 193.

¹²⁵ Peter Tinti, above n 40, P19.

¹²⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention', above n 72, para 151.

¹²⁷ Ibid, para 156.

estimated 18 million people.¹²⁸ In 2018, the Attorney General's Office collaborated with the private sector to screen an anti-trafficking movie in Amhara to highlight trafficking risks.¹²⁹

5.8. Efforts to address vulnerabilities and drivers

The government has taken a number of steps to facilitate legal migration and reduce vulnerabilities to modern slavery, including the adoption of Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016. The legislation was enacted to protect the rights and wellbeing of Ethiopians working abroad. To qualify for overseas work, relevant individuals must complete eighth grade education and possess occupational competence certificate.¹³⁰ Provisions are also made for pre-employment and pre-departure training relevant to the prospective job.¹³¹ With a few exceptions, overseas employment may only be undertaken through the Ministry of Labour and licenced agencies, which may well reduce fraudulent employment.¹³²

The government is also undertaking economic empowerment programmes to reduce poverty, which could indirectly address human trafficking problems.¹³³ The Social Protection Policy, which aims to reduce poverty and ensure equitable growth to the population, could reduce vulnerabilities to human trafficking. The National Human Rights Action Plan also aims to assist women and child victims of exploitation in urban areas. In addition, during 2018, the government employed over 600 labour inspectors who conducted 38,000 inspections at formal work sites, to prevent exploitative labour. However, authorities did not report the extent of labour violations or the number of licenses revoked.¹³⁴

Ethiopia has completed a National Risk Assessment in 2018, identifying human trafficking as one of the six key risks that has a greater impact on people's lives, security and economy of the country, and situated it as one of its top priorities for counter-action.¹³⁵

5.9. Frameworks for international coordination

The government has concluded labour agreements with several countries in the Middle East where many Ethiopians undertake domestic work, including Kuwait, Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.¹³⁶ Under these agreements, signatories are required to commit to ethical recruitment, provide legal remedies for violation of labour rights, provide fair wages – equal wages for equal work, and ensure reasonable working hours, including leave time.¹³⁷

In January 2020, the governments of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia convened a meeting in Eritrea to discuss ways to strengthen diplomatic ties and address issues related to trafficking in persons. The three countries adopted a Joint Action Plan intended to achieve socioeconomic development, consolidate peace, and tackle human trafficking.¹³⁸ Similarly, in January 2020, labour Ministers and senior government officials from East Africa, including Ethiopia met in Kenya to formulate a regional cooperation agreement for protecting migrant workers and address the problem of labour exploitation in Gulf

¹²⁸ Ibid, para 57.

¹²⁹ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 193.

¹³⁰ Article 7(1) Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation.

¹³¹ Article 8(1), Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation.

¹³² Article 6 Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation.

¹³³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention', above n 72, para 154.

¹³⁴ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 194.

¹³⁵ Research and Evidence Facility (REF), above n 79, 7.

¹³⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Eighth periodic report submitted by Ethiopia under article 18 of the Convention', above n 72, para 59; Emeline Wuilbercq, 'New Ethiopia law to give life sentences to crooked labour brokers' (2020), available [here](#).

¹³⁷ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 194.

¹³⁸ Mixed Migration Centre, 'Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: East Africa & Yemen' (Q1 2020) 8, available [here](#).

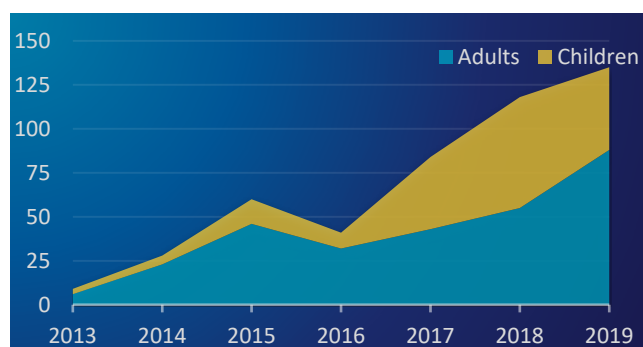
countries.¹³⁹ Ethiopia is a member of the Khartoum Process where states parties cooperate to address migration, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling issues.¹⁴⁰ Ethiopia is also a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), where countries from the horn of Africa collaborate to address development issues, including human smuggling and trafficking.¹⁴¹ A number of IGAD meetings have specifically addressed the issue of human trafficking.¹⁴²

6. Experiences of modern slavery of Ethiopian nationals in the UK

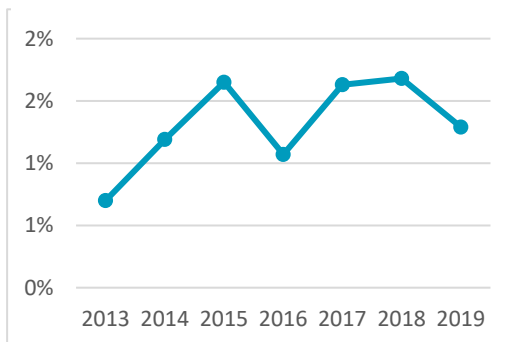
6.1. Demographics of Ethiopian nationals in the NRM (including intersectionality)

Ethiopian nationals have consistently been in the top twenty nationalities represented in National Referral Mechanism referrals, although they have typically represented less than 2% of all referrals. The number of Ethiopian nationals referred into the NRM has varied from 9 potential victims referred in 2013, up to 138 referrals in 2019. Adults have typically made up the majority of Ethiopian nationals referred into the NRM -except in 2018-, with between 3 (2013) and 63 (2018) Ethiopian nationals referred who were minors at the time of their exploitation from 2013-2019.¹⁴³

Number of Ethiopian nationals referred into the NRM by age at time of exploitation



Proportion of potential victims referred into the NRM that are Ethiopian nationals



Ethiopian nationals referred into the NRM typically experience labour exploitation and domestic servitude, with only a small proportion of Polish potential victims recorded as having experienced sexual exploitation. While gender data was not disaggregated by nationality from 2015-2019, NRM reports included such data in the 2013 and 2014 reports.

¹³⁹ Ibid 9.

¹⁴⁰ The Khartoum Process, available [here](#)

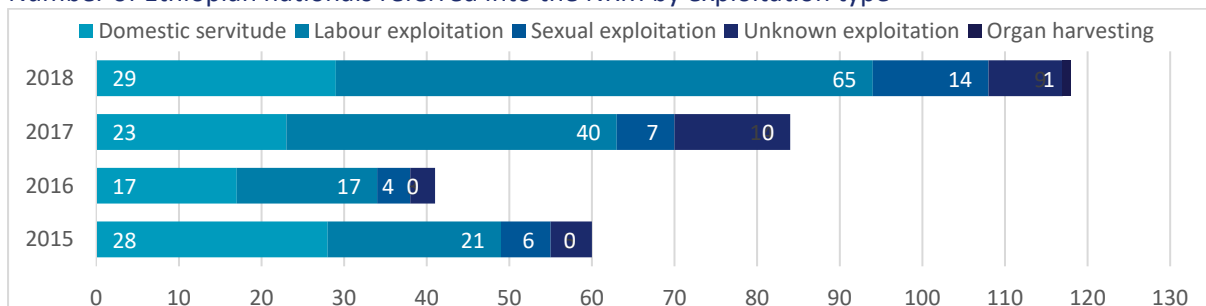
¹⁴¹ IGAD, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route', available [here](#).

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Home Office, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK: End of Year Summary 2019: Data tables' 2nd edn available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018' (2019) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2017' (2018) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2016' (2017) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2015' (2016) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2014' (2015) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre: National Referral Mechanism Statistics 2013' (2014) available [here](#).

In these years, the majority of Polish nationals referred into the UK NRM were female (100% in 2013 and 96% in 2014).

Number of Ethiopian nationals referred into the NRM by exploitation type¹⁴⁴



6.2. Typical journeys from Ethiopia to the UK for trafficking victims

Although it is difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the mixed migration and trafficking flows from Ethiopia, research suggests that one of the four major routes from the East and Horn of Africa is the Northern Route (also known as the 'Central Mediterranean Route'), which reaches Europe through Egypt, Libya and North African countries.¹⁴⁵ It is a particularly dangerous route which commonly involve abuse, kidnapping and fatalities while crossing the desert, and drownings while crossing the Mediterranean Sea. "In some cases, abuses are perpetrated by smugglers who exploit their clients during the journey; however, recent research suggests that these abuses are more commonly carried out by groups that specialise in kidnapping for ransom, forced labour, and trafficking in persons."¹⁴⁶ For instance, one significant protection risk for smuggled migrants and refugees in their routes to Europe is extortion by smugglers, which often comprises detention in 'safe houses', where they are forced to pay to be released. This extortion often involves torture and rape to place pressure on the migrant and his/her family at home to transfer a ransom for the migrant's release.¹⁴⁷ For counteracting these hazards, Emergency Migrant Response Centres (EMRCs) have been established by the government of Ethiopia and the IOM on the main routes and next to border areas (Ethiopia-Djibouti and Ethiopia-Sudan borders) with the aim of providing lifesaving assistance to vulnerable migrants.¹⁴⁸

In opposition to more loose and horizontal smuggling networks in the region, the Libya-based Northern network has been described as "increasingly hierarchical, with smuggling kingpins dominating the smuggling business from Libya, and Horn of Africa smugglers playing important, but usually subordinate, positions to the Libyan kingpins".¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Note that exploitation type data is not disaggregated by nationality in the 2013, 2014, or 2019 data and these years are therefore excluded.

¹⁴⁵ Katrin Marchand, Julia Reinold and Raphael Dias e Silva, 'Study on Migration Routes in the East and Horn of Africa', (Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, 2017) XI ff. Katie Kuschminder, Lisa Andersson and Melissa Seigel, 'Migration and multidimensional well-being in Ethiopia: investigating the role of migrants destinations' (2018) 7(3) *Migration and Development* 325. 'Ethiopians can cross the border [of Sudan] in a regular manner by obtaining a visa using official documents. For this reason, some Ethiopians travel to Sudan overland or by air through regular channels, and only seek out migrant smugglers upon arriving in Sudan to facilitate their onward, irregular travel to Libya or Egypt': See Deanna Davy (Danish Refugee Council), above n 42, 8

¹⁴⁶ Deanna Davy (Danish Refugee Council), above n 42, 7. See also Becky Carter and Brigitte Rohwerder, 'Rapid fragility and migration assessment for Ethiopia' (GSDRC, 2016) 3 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0895ee5274a31e00003e/Fragility_Migration_Ethiopia.pdf> accessed 28 October 2020.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 20.

¹⁴⁸ IOM, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants in the Context of Mixed Migration Flows: State of Play in the IGAD Region. Background Paper' (2015) 32 <<https://ethiopia.iom.int/sites/default/files/Human%20trafficking%20and%20smuggling%20of%20Migrants%20-%20state%20of%20play%20in%20the%20IGAD%20....pdf>> accessed 28 October 2020.

¹⁴⁹ Deanna Davy (Danish Refugee Council), above n 42, 3. 'Smugglers are also responsible for a range of other services, which may include acquiring fraudulent travel documents, bribing border guards and other government officials to enable safe passage of the clients, and paying militia and others to release captured migrants and enable them to continue their journey' (p. 7).

Furthermore, they are reportedly embedded with corrupt officials which may either facilitate migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, or get involved more directly by accepting bribes or profiting from the exploitation of migrants and refugees.¹⁵⁰

6.3. Experiences of exploitation and working conditions

There is a lack of reliable data about the specific experiences of exploitation of Ethiopian nationals into the UK, although we know that a significant proportion of identified victims were men subjected to labour exploitation (65%).¹⁵¹

6.4. Consequent effects of trafficking on survivors

Human trafficking exerts psychological effects on survivors that persist after intervention, and even after community reintegration. Effects include anxiety, depression, alienation, disorientation, aggression, suicidal ideation, attention deficit, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In this context, community support and coping mechanisms may mitigate these effects.¹⁵² Cultural attitudes towards women may have an influence on rehabilitation of survivors, particularly if there is any form of social stigma attached to experiences, for example sexual abuse or trafficking, which has been to be highly prevalent at each stage of the trafficking process after departure for Ethiopian women.¹⁵³ Particularly, “domestic labour and other “caring” roles have been associated with various hazards including risk of injury, exposure to toxic chemicals, sleep deprivation, stress and other mental health problems, and physical and sexual abuse.”¹⁵⁴

6.5. Particular needs, requirements, and considerations for support and engagement

A 2020 study analysing service needs and response options for human trafficking survivors in Ethiopia underscored the **strong cultural stigma related to mental illness** in the country, which could affect survivor perceptions of mental health services. “Participants discussed the cultural tendency to attribute mental illness to magic, witchcraft, or spiritual forces. The attribution of mental illness to non-medical causes was illustrated as determining a path to care that often began with religious or spiritual leaders rather than healthcare professionals and may delay survivor help-seeking for mental health care. [...] Presenting for care at a health facility was seen as the last resort that people sought for mental illness, with the perception that trafficking survivors with mental health challenges would only be brought to healthcare providers if their needs escalated and became unmanageable by other means”.¹⁵⁵

The **feelings of shame and isolation** were found to prevent survivors from seeking help when they could not provide their communities with the financial gain that is expected from those who work abroad.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, the study showed the importance of incorporating job skills training and increasing awareness of the types of legal services

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 21.

¹⁵¹ UK Home Office, above n **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, 44.

¹⁵² See, generally David Okech et al, ‘Social Support, Dysfunctional Coping, and Community Reintegration as Predictors of PTSD Among Human Trafficking Survivors’, (2018) 44 *Behavioral Medicine* 209-218, and Asefach Haileselassie Reda, ‘An investigation into the experiences of female victims of trafficking in Ethiopia’ (2018) 11 *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 87.

¹⁵³ Lemma Derseh Gezie, Alemayehu Worku, Yigzaw Kebede, and Abebaw Gebeyehu, ‘Sexual violence at each stage of human trafficking cycle and associated factors: a retrospective cohort study on Ethiopian female returnees via three major trafficking corridors’ (2019) 9(7) *BMJ Open*, 1 ff.

¹⁵⁴ Joanna Busza, Sehin Teferra, Serawit Omer and Cathy Zimmerman, ‘Learning from returnee Ethiopian migrant domestic workers: a qualitative assessment to reduce the risk of human trafficking’ (2017) 13(71) *Globalization and Health*, 2.

¹⁵⁵ Kristen R. Choi, Dana C. Beck, Munmun A. Khan, Sue Anne Bell, Lemlem Beza and Michelle L. Munro-Krame, ‘A qualitative needs assessment of human trafficking in Ethiopia: recommendations for a comprehensive, coordinated response’ (2020) 19(37) *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 4 ff.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 5.

survivors may benefit.¹⁵⁷ In general, **comprehensive and participatory care models** were preferred than piecemeal or unilateral solutions.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 8.

7. The impact of COVID-19

7.1. Government's Response to COVID-19

The Ethiopian government is taking less conventional measures to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, which is proving to be effective compared to other neighbouring countries. Unlike most countries, Ethiopia did not impose a national lockdown measure.¹⁵⁹ Instead, the government took proactive measures during January and February, including introduction of passenger-screening protocols at Addis Ababa's international airport, and other preventive measures.¹⁶⁰ On 13 March, the government declared compulsory quarantine and aggressive nationwide awareness campaign. A national emergency was further declared on 8 April, accompanied by social distancing measures and contact tracing to track infected patients.¹⁶¹ Also, public universities were converted into quarantine centres, while other isolation centres and treatment facilities were provided.¹⁶² As of 30 October, the country had recorded 95,301 cases and 1,457 deaths.¹⁶³

Given resource constraint, Ethiopia has had to prioritise its spending and has encouraged economic activities throughout the pandemic. Thus, although government is unable to introduce huge economic-stimulus, its approach has somewhat eased the pressure on vulnerable groups and informal sector workers.¹⁶⁴ On 30 April, the Council of Ministers approved a set of economic package to support employment and production, including forgiveness of all tax debt prior to 2014/2015 and tax amnesty on interest and penalties for tax debt pertaining to 2015/2016-2018/2019. Further, firms paying employee salaries despite not being able to operate due to the pandemic enjoy exemption from personal income tax withholding for 4 months.¹⁶⁵ The central bank has provided 15 billion birr liquidity fund to private banks to support debt restructuring and prevent bankruptcies, while it has provided additional 33 billion birr to the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.¹⁶⁶ Through support from the private sector, including from the founder of the Alibaba Group and other donors, the government has been able to provide testing kits, facemasks, and other protective equipment.¹⁶⁷ Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's initiative of providing temporary shelters for urban street children has helped provide housing with capacity to accommodate 2,240 children. The project is undertaken in partnership with private donors.¹⁶⁸ The World Bank is however supporting the Ethiopian government with funds to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the poor and vulnerable population. In April, the Bank supported the government with \$82.6 million while additional \$250 million was offered in June 2020.¹⁶⁹

¹⁵⁹ Arkebe Oqubay, 'Ethiopia's unconventional COVID-19 response',

<<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/ethiopia-covid19-response/>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁶⁰ Kebede Keribe 'COVID-19 in Ethiopia: status and responses', <<https://rstmh.org/news-blog/news/covid-19-in-ethiopia-status-and-responses>> accessed 20 August 2020.

¹⁶¹ Arkebe Oqubay, 'Ethiopia's Response to COVID-19', <<https://oecd-development-matters.org/2020/05/26/ethiopias-response-to-covid-19/>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Worldometer, 'Ethiopia: Coronavirus cases',

<<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/ethiopia/>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁶⁴ Arkebe Oqubay, 'Ethiopia's unconventional COVID-19 response', above n 159.

¹⁶⁵ KPMG, 'Ethiopia Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19', <<https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/ethiopia-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ ILO, 'Country Policy Responses: Ethiopia', <<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#ET>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ World Bank, 'World Bank Provides Additional Support to Help Ethiopia Mitigate the Economic Impacts of COVID-19', <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/17/world-bank-provides-additional-support-to-help-ethiopia-mitigate-the-economic-impacts-of-covid-19>> accessed 20 August 2020

7.2. Impact of COVID-19 on Ethiopian workers and vulnerable population

Although infection and death rates in Ethiopia are low compared to other countries, the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic are nevertheless real. A preliminary survey conducted by the World Bank in Addis Ababa shows that the pandemic is affecting businesses following a steep fall in demand for goods and services.¹⁷⁰ As of early May, more than 42% of businesses had completely closed down, while 37% had no revenues.¹⁷¹ However, the effect of the shock on employment has been minimal, with most firms retaining their workers. This is likely due to the State of Emergency proclamation, which prevents firms from laying-off workers. Instead, workers have been largely granted paid leave.¹⁷² Nevertheless, the pandemic is expected to increase unemployment rates in urban areas at 12% for males and 26% for females.¹⁷³ The Ethiopian travel and tourism sector is also taking a hit from the pandemic given international travel restrictions. Revenue from Ethiopian Airlines previously accounted for around 2-3 % of the national GDP; continued international travel restrictions could lead to loss of 30-45% of the airline's revenue.¹⁷⁴

The pandemic is also exacerbating the already heightened food crisis in the country.¹⁷⁵ The agricultural sector is facing multiple shocks, arising from desert locust invasion and climate change, which threatens the livelihoods of pastoral and agro-pastoral households.¹⁷⁶ Also, individuals residing in informal settlements who already lacked access to safe water and sanitation, face additional threats of infection, while the nearly 1 million students catered to by the school-feeding programmes are affected by school closure.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ World Bank, 'Monitoring COVID-19 impacts on firms in Ethiopia', <<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/226621589807893144/pdf/Results-from-a-High-Frequency-Phone-Survey-of-Firms.pdf>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ African Development Bank, 'Ethiopia Covid-19 Crisis Response Budget Support Program (ECRBS)', <<https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/ethiopia-covid-19-crisis-response-budget-support-program-ecrbs-appraisal-report>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Ethiopia, 'Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 in Ethiopia', 27 <<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UN%2520Socio-Economic%2520Impact%2520Assessment%2520-%2520FINAL%2520DRAFT%2520%2520-%252014May20.pdf>> accessed 20 August 2020

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ African Development Bank, 'Ethiopia Covid-19 Crisis Response Budget Support Program (ECRBS)', above n 173.