



Ethiopia declared a six-month state of emergency on 16 February 2018 in an effort to silence protests. The government promised deep reforms; however, fundamental issues (opening up of political space, allowing dissent and tolerance of different perspectives) have not been addressed. The country also currently hosts over 894,000 refugees from neighbouring countries, and NGOs are heavily regulated.

This country profile is based on the analysis of security incidents and concerns shared by 15 aid agencies through the Aid in Danger project. It provides a unique insight into the environment in which aid agencies work.¹

Reported concerns affecting aid delivery in Ethiopia



- **Operational space:** Arrests of staff members; abuse of power by police.



- **Crime:** Mostly petty crime – burglaries, fraud, vehicle break-ins, vandalism, thefts. Violent crime – armed/unarmed robbery, car-jackings, sexual violence also reported.



- **Killed, injured, kidnapped (KIK):** One NGO staff member missing, five injured, 16 assaulted since January 2015.



- **RTAs:** 3% of reported road traffic accident (RTA) incidents caused NGO staff injuries.



- **Weapons use:** 17% of NGO-related security incidents involved weapons use.²

No particular changes to the country-typical patterns were identified in recent months (October-December 2017)



- Few incidents were reported since October 2017. No arrests or abuses of power reported.



- The main threat continues to be **crime**.



- Concerns about ethnic **conflicts** in Oromia, SNNP regions.



- No NGO staff member deaths, kidnappings or injuries reported since October 2017.

¹ All decisions made on the basis of or with consideration to such information remain the responsibility of the organisations taking such decisions. Staff are advised to secure travel briefings prior to travel.

² Weapons use reported during 30 incidents related to aid delivery distribution, conflict, crime, KIK and unrest. Weapons were used in 100% of conflict-related incident, 33% aid distribution incidents; 20% crime incidents; 22% unrest-related incidents and 17% of KIK incidents.

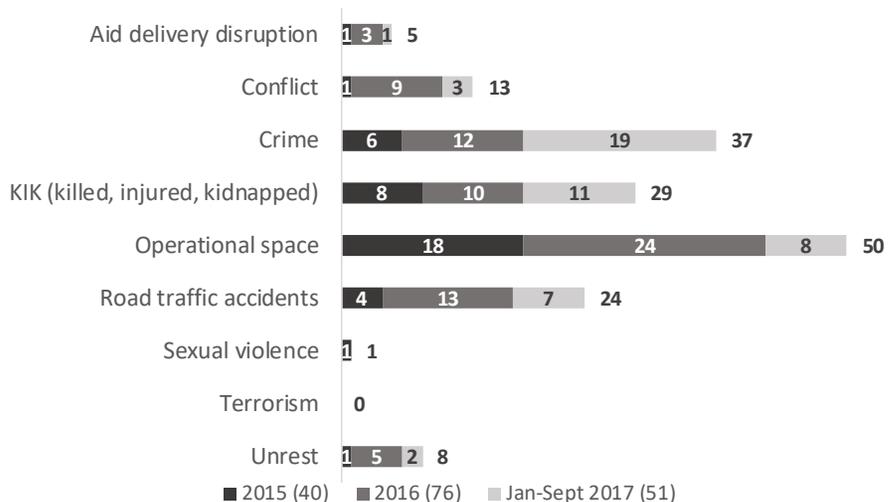
Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Long-term threat patterns, January 2015-September 2017

A high number of incidents were related to NGO staff member arrests and abuse of power by police. Next highest were RTAs and criminally motivated incidents including theft, vehicle break-ins, and vandalism.



Aid delivery disruption: Looting; property damaged in the context of demonstrations.

Conflict: Ethnic conflict: Amhara, Afar, Gambella, Oromia and SSNP regions.

Crime: Petty crime – thefts, vehicle break-ins and vandalism.

KIK: Injuries and assaults in the context of crime; beneficiaries, staff members and police also committed assaults.

Operational space: **Arrests** mostly following RTAs; also over personal disputes and alleged links to opposition and al-Shabaab. **Abuse of power** mostly involved police forcing NGO staff members to transport personnel and militia, and takeover of NGO vehicles.

Road traffic accidents: 97% of reported RTA incidents did not cause NGO staff injuries.

Sexual violence: From a fellow NGO staff member.

Terrorism: No incidents identified.

Unrest: Anti-government protests; rioting.

Recent concerns to aid delivery, October-December 2017

Few reported incidents since October 2017. No arrests or abuses of power reported; reports of criminally-motivated incidents that affected aid workers and NGO assets.



Aid delivery disruption: NGO property damaged in the context of demonstrations/rioting.

Conflict: Active fighting between ethnic groups: Oromia, SSNP regions.

Crime: Theft; rental vehicle damaged by stones thrown by children. No indication that this was aid work related.

KIK: No incidents identified.

Operational space: No incidents identified.

Road traffic accidents: No incidents identified.

Sexual violence: No incidents identified.

Terrorism: No incidents identified.

Operational space: No incidents identified.

Unrest: Civil unrest and road blocks linked to tense political environment.

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Operational space: Arrests of staff members; abuse of power by police.



- Abuse of power through corruption: demands for facilitation payments, bribery demands by police and NGO vehicle takeovers are common.
- Land leases or government contracts can often include demands for payments. While facilitation payments and bribes are illegal, Ethiopia's anti-corruption framework is not always enforced.
- Special traffic police units conduct on-scene investigations.
- Government restrictions on INGOs speaking about the impact political tensions have on their work. Aid officials fear access to affected communities would be restricted or their agencies would be expelled if they speak out (2016-10).



- Over 70% of operational space-related incidents involved NGO staff member arrests and detentions by state authorities. Nearly a third of these were related to RTAs (see [RTA's](#) on p. 6 for further details). In addition:
- Arrests and detentions due to personal disputes, alleged links to opposition and al-Shabaab, allegations of defamation and slander.
- NGO vehicles seized by police for own activities, and police forcing NGO staff members in vehicles to transport personnel and local militia were reported twice.
- Aggressive behaviour towards NGO staff members by police for operating NGO vehicle out of curfew hours (2015-10).
- NGO security guard imprisoned for alleged drug use.



Aid delivery disruption: Assaults on NGO staff members by beneficiaries; looting at project sites.



- Two NGO staff members were physically assaulted by beneficiaries, and NGO compounds and vehicles destroyed in retaliation for fatal NGO-linked RTA that killed two children.
- Two NGO staff members and driver were physically assaulted by beneficiaries and an unspecified number of NGO staff members were pushed and shoved by bereaved relatives at the site of a landslide.
- NGO staff member was arrested during an aid distribution for taking photos of children crossing their arms (considered to be a sign of protest).
- Looting at project sites by locals, Somali region.



Sexual violence: From NGO staff member.



- Against female NGO staff member by a fellow staff member.

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Crime: Mostly petty crime – burglaries, fraud, vehicle break-ins, vandalism, thefts. Violent crime – armed/unarmed robbery, car-jackings, sexual violence also reported.



- Petty thefts, muggings, vehicle break-ins, and vandalism are reportedly on the rise.
- Opportunistic crimes are common and can occur randomly in urban centres.
- Pickpockets and thieves active in Addis Ababa – Bole Road and in the Piazza, the Merkato, and other areas frequented by internationals.



- South-western and south-eastern regions known for increasing criminal activity; Ethiopia-Kenya border region experiences high crime rates.
- Border areas with South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea are high-risk sites for potential abductions or attacks.



- Agency-reported crime incidents included actual and attempted armed/unarmed robberies, burglaries, vandalism, sexual violence_(see [Sexual violence](#) on p. 3 for further information), vehicle break-ins and thefts.
- Four NGO staff members were injured and ten beaten in criminally motivated incidents.
- Food items under the custody of the Ethiopian government stolen in Oromia region.
- Fraudulent activity by NGO staff member.

Type of location

- **Warehouses:** A quarter of crime incidents occurred at NGO warehouses, occasionally by armed perpetrators.
- **Roads:** Cash taken from NGO staff members using distraction techniques, including child beggars surrounding staff.
- **Offices:** Project supplies, cash and computer equipment taken.
- **Project sites:** Blankets, food items and chairs taken, mostly in Gambella region.
- **Vehicles:** NGO vehicles damaged by stones thrown by locals including children.
- **Residences:** NGO laptops taken; no NGO staff members present.

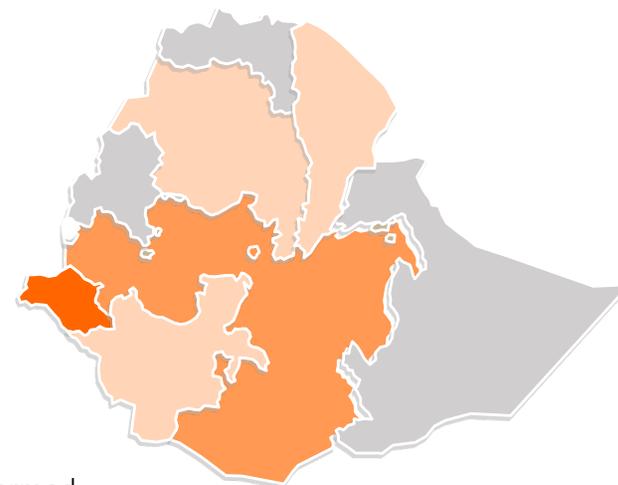


Weapon use in crime incidents

- **Unarmed:** In over three-quarters of reported crime incidents the perpetrators were unarmed.
- **Armed:** Ten reported crime incidents involved weapons use. Reported during road travel, street robberies, and at NGO compounds and warehouses. Weapons included firearms, machetes, spears and stones.

Aid in Danger project reported locations

9 or more reported incidents 3-8 reported incidents 1-2 reported incidents





Reported KIK incidents (29)

The table below lists KIK incidents reported between January 2016 and December 2017. KIK incidents are any incidents that resulted in a staff member being killed, injured or kidnapped. KIK includes beaten, kidnapped, killed, missing, tortured, and wounded.

2017-09	Location unknown	Two NGO staff member physically assaulted in an attempted street robbery.
2017-09	Location unknown	Two NGO staff member physically assaulted in a street robbery.
2017-08	Location unknown	NGO staff member and rental driver injured by stones thrown at vehicle window.
2017-07	Somali region	Physical fight between two NGO staff members.
2017-07	Oromia region	NGO staff member injured by bottles thrown at male companions by group of 5-7 males at a bar.
2017-06	Somali region	NGO staff member physically assaulted by another staff member.
2017-04	Tigray region	Female NGO staff member physically assaulted in an evening street robbery; hospital treatment required.
2017-03	Location unknown	NGO staff members pushed and shoved by bereaved relatives at landslide site.
2017-02	Gambella region	NGO security guard physically assaulted by five Anuak members armed with spears and machetes.
2017-01	Location unknown	NGO staff member beaten and robbed in street at night by four people while walking home from work.
2017-01	SNNP region	Male NGO staff member reported missing after failing to return to work after holiday leave.
2016-10	Gambella region	NGO staff member physically assaulted in a street robbery by four people while waiting for public transport.
2016-10	Oromia region	NGO security guard physically assaulted by police while walking home after imposed curfew.
2016-09	Location unknown	NGO staff member dragged from NGO vehicle and physically assaulted by unidentified men.
2016-08	Addis Ababa	NGO staff member physically assaulted and robbed outside compound
2016-07	Location unknown	NGO staff member physically assaulted by beneficiary.
2016-07	Location unknown	NGO staff member stoned by local; hospital treatment required.
2016-07	Location unknown	NGO staff member injured by stones thrown at NGO vehicle by unidentified perpetrators.
2016-05	Location unknown	Physical fight between two NGO staff members.
2016-04	Location unknown	NGO security guard sustained gunshot injuries after participating in fighting Murley gunmen from South Sudan who had launched an earlier attack on Nuers.
2016-01	Oromia region	NGO guard beaten with sticks by three policemen during demonstrations.
2015-11	Oromia region	Physical fight between two NGO staff members.
2015-11	Gambella region	Two NGO staff members sustained unspecified injuries inflicted by beneficiaries in retaliation for fatal NGO-linked RTA.
2015-09	Location unknown	NGO staff member wounded by stones during street robbery by two unidentified perpetrators while returning to guesthouse.
2015-09	Gambella region	Male NGO staff member shot in leg during morning street robbery by unidentified perpetrators.
2015-07	Gambella region	NGO driver assaulted by police after he refused to transport them.
2015-03	Gambella region	Staff and driver physically and verbally assaulted by three refugees disgruntled over employment payment.
2015-02	Addis Ababa	Male NGO staff member physically assaulted. No further information available.
2015-01	Addis Ababa	Male NGO staff member physically assaulted in an evening street robbery by gang while walking home; hospital treatment required.



Weapon use in KIK incidents

- 17% of KIK incidents involved weapons use.
- Two KIK incidents reported perpetrators being armed with firearms; two with stones; and one with machetes and spears.
- No reports of explosive weapons use killing or injuring an NGO staff member.



Road traffic accidents (RTAs): Pedestrians and livestock on roads.



- Country statistics show an upward trend in the number of RTA injuries and fatalities.
- Poor infrastructure, dangerous driving practices, poorly maintained vehicles and roads, and livestock and pedestrians on roads all contribute to RTAs.
- Landmines and other anti-personnel devices can be encountered on isolated dirt roads that were targeted during various conflicts, especially along the Eritrean border.
- Unauthorised and/or official roadblocks can appear without warning.



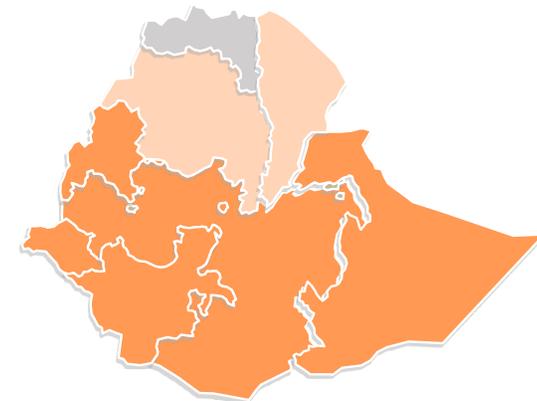
- 38 aid-worker-related RTA incidents were identified by the Aid in Danger project.
- 3% of reported RTA incidents caused NGO staff injuries.
- Six reported RTAs caused by livestock on the road.
- 15 RTAs reportedly caused seven child and two adult deaths, and eight child and five adult injuries.
- Two NGO staff members were physically assaulted by beneficiaries in retaliation for fatal NGO-related RTA.
- Over a quarter of reported RTA incidents led to NGO staff members being detained.

Aid in Danger project identified RTA incidents, by year

	2015	2016	2017
Fatal injuries	0	0	0
Major injuries	1	0	0
Minor injuries	0	0	0
No injuries	6	21	10
Total incidents per year	7	21	10

Aid in Danger project-reported locations of RTAs

■ 9 or more reported incidents
 ■ 3-8 reported incidents
 ■ 1-2 reported incidents





Conflict: Concerns about ethnic conflicts in Oromia, SNNP regions.



- Cross-border tensions, active armed militant groups, risks of kidnapping and armed banditry, landmines. These occurred in:
- Oromia region – Abala, Karma, Kore, Safule, Suluko.
- SNNP region – Amaro, Dilla, Kele, Yirgacheffe.
- Gambella region – Akobo, Jikawo and Lare districts, Wantawo (Nuer zone), Jore district (Agnuak zone).



- NGO security guard was shot in the leg after he reportedly participated in a counter-attack against Murley gunmen from South Sudan who had earlier attacked Nuers (2016-04).
- NGO security guard was physically assaulted by five Anuak members armed with spears and machetes in Gambella region (2017-02).
- Security measures to protect staff, assets and programmes taken on 15 occasions following inter-communal-conflict-related incidents (from 2015-02 to 2017-05).



Unrest: Civil unrest, motivated by unresolved political issues or socio-economic grievances, can disrupt the delivery of aid.

Demonstrations

- Demonstrations have the potential to turn violent. Bystanders can also be easily caught up in police response that may include use of force and live ammunition.
- Common in Gonder, Bahir Dar, Debretabor (Amhara region), and Chelenko, Shashemene Ambo, Dodola, Woliso (Oromia region).



- NGO security guard beaten by police during curfew hours (2016-01); NGO staff member stoned by local community member (2016-07); NGO guard beaten with sticks by three policemen during demonstrations (2016-10).
- Three NGO staff members were arrested over alleged links to opposition parties (2015-01, 2016-08, 2016-11).
- Arson attacks and property damage targeting NGO compounds and vehicles during demonstrations, Amhara and Oromia regions.
- Protests in October 2016 restricted delivery of food aid in Afar, Amhara, Oromia and SNNP regions.



- Active presence of Al-Shabaab militants reported along Somalia-Ethiopia border.
- Ethiopia is a leading troop contributor to AMISOM in Somalia and therefore an enemy of al-Shabaab.
- Reported risk of abduction between Afder and Liben.



- NGO staff member was arrested over alleged link to al-Shabaab (2015-10).