ETHIOPIA
Humanitarian Access Snapshot

January - June 2021

During the first half of 2021, humanitarian access in Ethiopia became more complex due to insecurity related to the conflict in Tigray as well as the continuation of other situations of violence, including security operations against Unidentified Armed Groups (UAGs) in Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz regions (BGR), and localized inter-communal violence in Amhara, Afar, Somali and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regions (SNNPR).

Violence and conflict were the major impediments to relief operations, hindering access to people in need. In addition, partners faced multiple restrictions on their movements as a result of bureaucratic delays as well as restrictions by parties to the conflict, particularly in Tigray. In Tigray, the population faced major restrictions to access critical services, and systematic attacks on private property and public services such as health centres, schools, water systems and government offices. The **conflict in Tigray** has prompted a major humanitarian crisis, with over 2 million people displaced and over 60,000 fleeing to Sudan. Aid partners reported dozens of security incidents affecting the safety of aid workers. In Tigray alone, 12 aid workers were killed since the start of the conflict. The aid community has urged independent investigations of these crimes and perpetrators to be held accountable.

In **Amhara**, violence within the region and on its regional boundaries with BGR, Oromia, and Tigray reignited. In April, violence between Amhara and Qemant communities in Chilga, Central Gondar, displaced 17,000 people. In May, inter-communal violence in North Shewa and Oromia Special zones claimed dozens of casualties, and displaced over 200,000 people. Access restrictions related to insecurity in those areas gradually eased in June, allowing the displaced to return to areas of origin and partners to deliver assistance.

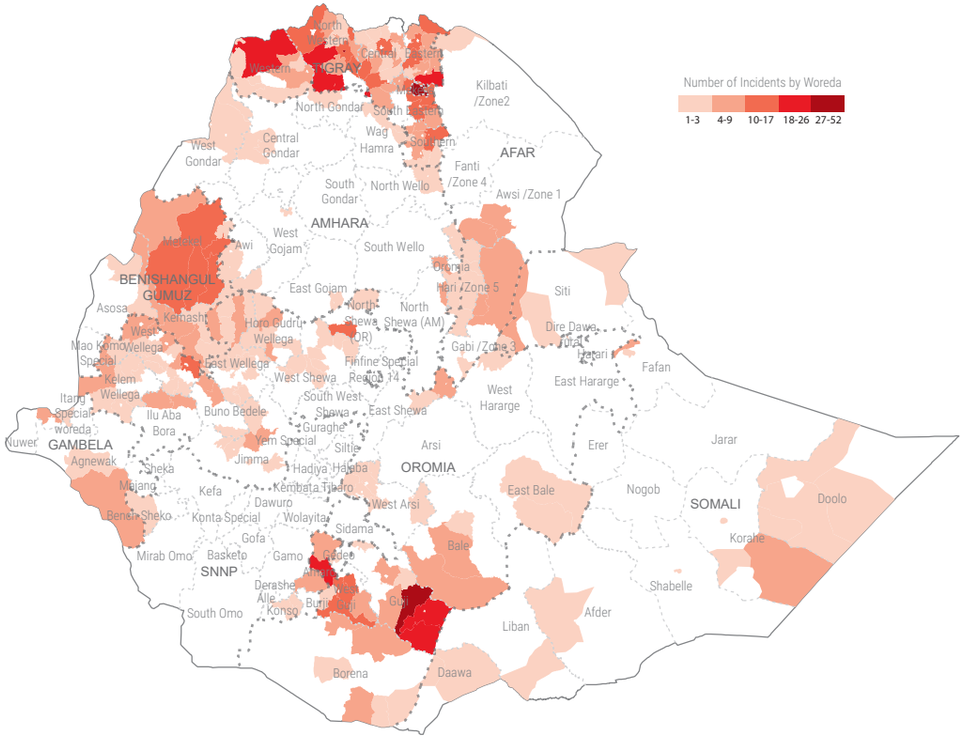
In **BGR**, the situation in **Metekel zone** shifted from inter-communal violence between Gumuz and other communities, including in border areas with West Gondar (Amhara), into a wider armed confrontation engaging Ethiopian security forces and UAGs, mainly composed by ethnic Gumuz. Cumulatively, since 2019, violence has displaced over 500,000 people within the region and into Awi (Amhara) and Western Oromia. In 2021, some 50,000 IDPs were returned by authorities from Awi to Metekel, remaining in various displacement sites and unable to return to areas of origin. In June, violence spread into Kamashi zone, displacing thousands into Oromia. At the time of writing, most of Metekel remains out-of-reach due to insecurity.

In **Western Oromia**, partners' activities were hampered by increased attacks by UAGs, prompting new population displacements in East and West Wellega, Horo Guduru and Kellem Wellega. At the time of writing, large areas remain inaccessible, especially those far from woreda centres, and including the road from Nekemte to Asosa (BGR). In February, one aid worker was killed in West Wellega allegedly by an UAG, while partners reported a number of attacks by UAGs on ambulances. The number of security incidents impacting relief operations and aid workers in **Southern Oromia** increased sharply, compromising assistance to 120,000 people in Guji and Borena zones, displaced since 2019. Further, violence propagated to some previously stable woredas in West Guji. In **Eastern Oromia**, tensions between Garri and Jarso communities lingered, causing casualties and impacting access to returned IDPs and local communities in Chinaksen (Oromia) and Tuliguled woredas (Somali).

The long-standing inter-ethnic conflict between **Afar and Somali (Issa clan) communities** over some disputed kebeles in boundary areas intensified in 2021, with the reported involvement of regional armed forces on both sides. Cumulatively in 2021, the ongoing conflict has displaced some 39,000 people in Afar and over 67,000 people in Somali Region. Reportedly, aid partners in Afar cannot access the disputed kebeles populated by Somali communities, while on the other side, partners in Somali region are unable to access areas hosting Somali IDPs due to insecurity. Further, the Djibouti - Addis highway was blocked at times.

In **SNNPR**, between the end of 2020 and early 2021, some 120,000 people were displaced as a result of inter-communal violence, i.e. 70,000 in Konso and 50,000 in Bench Sheko zones. Further, tensions persisted between Amaro and Guji communities along common border areas. At the height of violence, partners struggled to provide assistance, however, the situation has gradually improved. In Konso 50,000 IDPs have returned to places of origin, and government counterparts and aid partners continue to scale-up support schemes to affected communities.

Overview of Incidents by Location

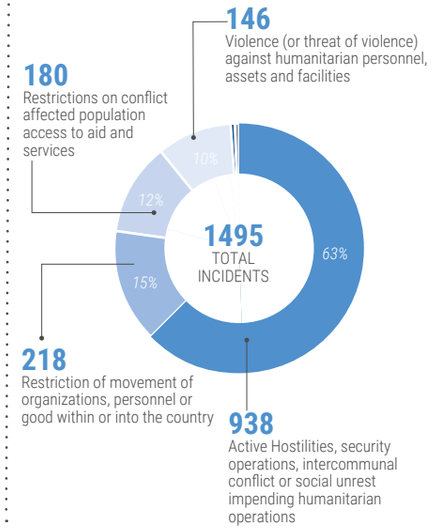


27 Incidents of violence against humanitarian Workers

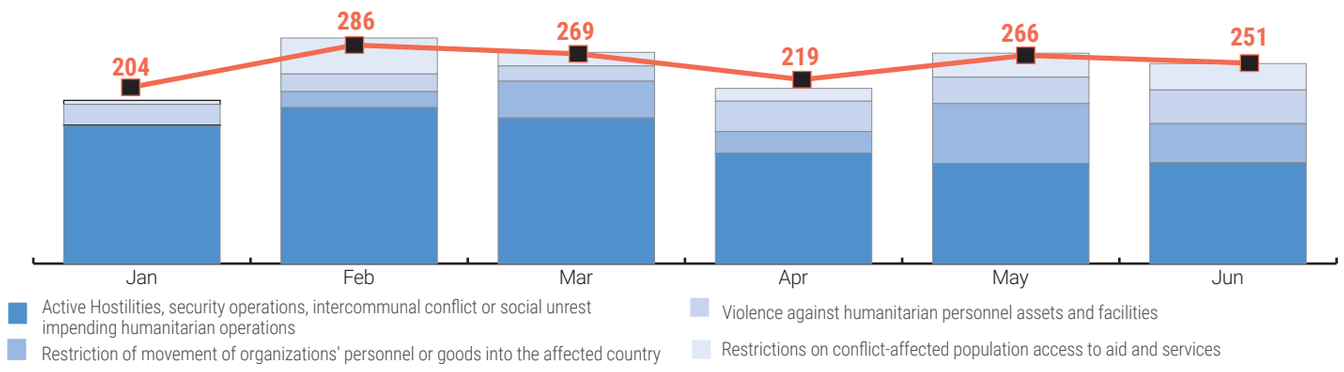
6 Aid workers killed

% of incidents by type

In line with the Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework: https://bit.ly/3vcab7e



Type of Incidents by Month



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Creation date: 30 July 2021 **Sources:** OCHA **Feedback:** ocha-eth-access@un.org www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int

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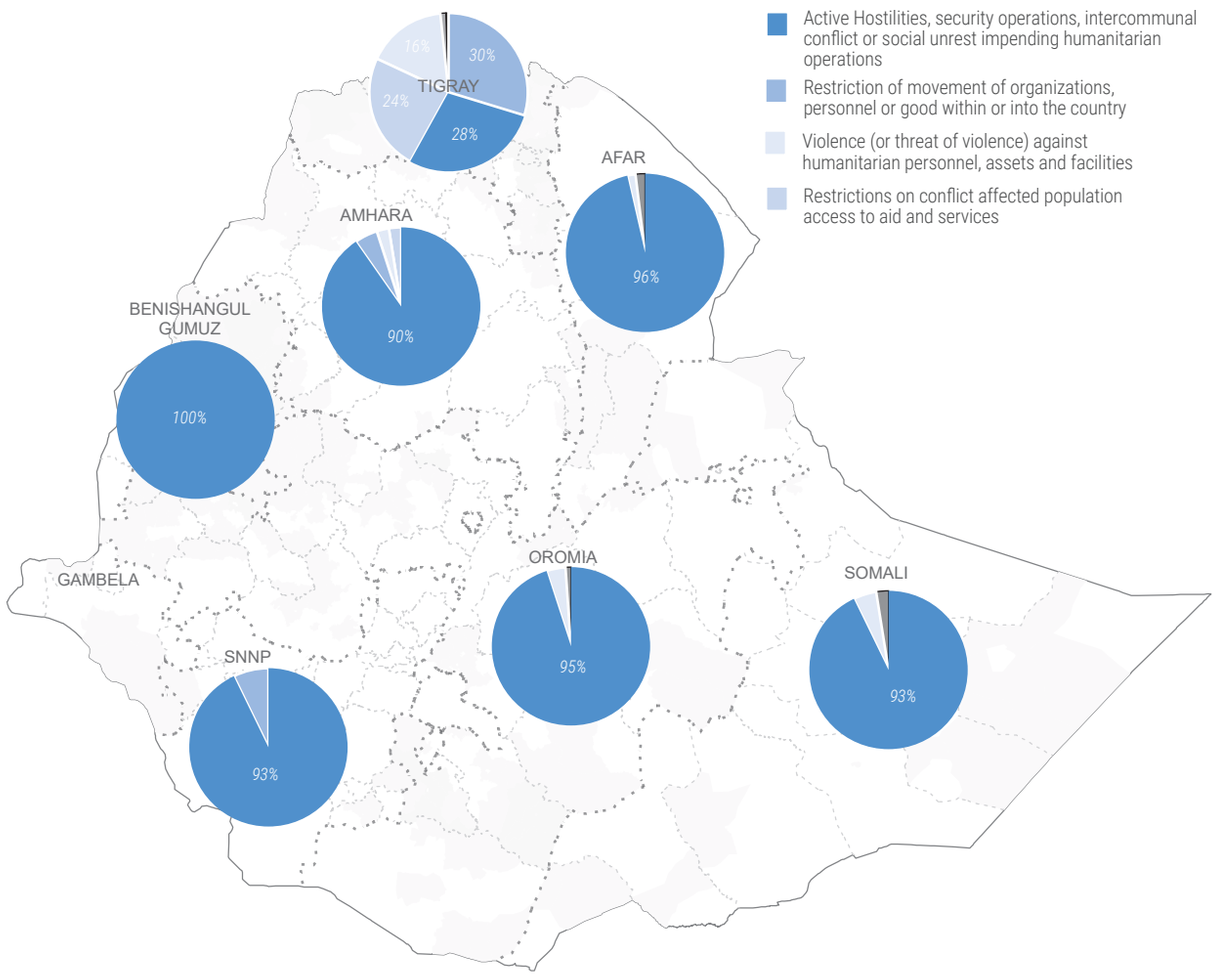
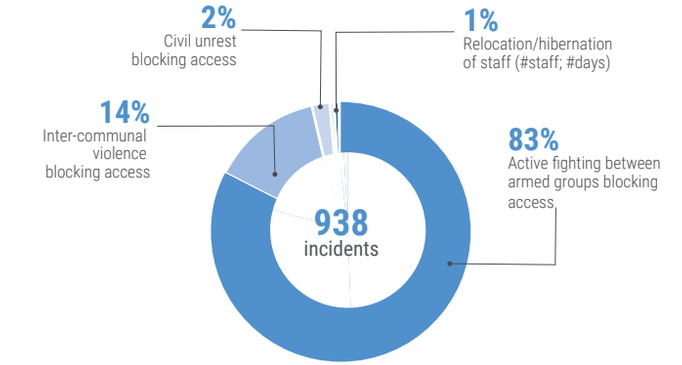
Through Ethiopia, **insecurity remains the main impediment to relief operations, followed by restrictions of movements and security threats to aid workers and humanitarian assets.** Most incidents reported are related to 'armed hostilities', followed by cases of inter-community violence. In some regions such as BGR, lack of access entails a substandard response to the needs of affected communities, and also limited information and reporting of access constraints due to limited partners being operational on the ground.

The **population continues to bear the brunt of violence in Ethiopia**, with restricted access to essential services such as health, water and sanitation, education or livelihoods. Albeit at different scale, access restrictions have impacted local communities in Amhara, Afar, BGR, Oromia and Somali regions. In these regions, hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced since 2018-19, and are yet to access durable solutions to their displacement.

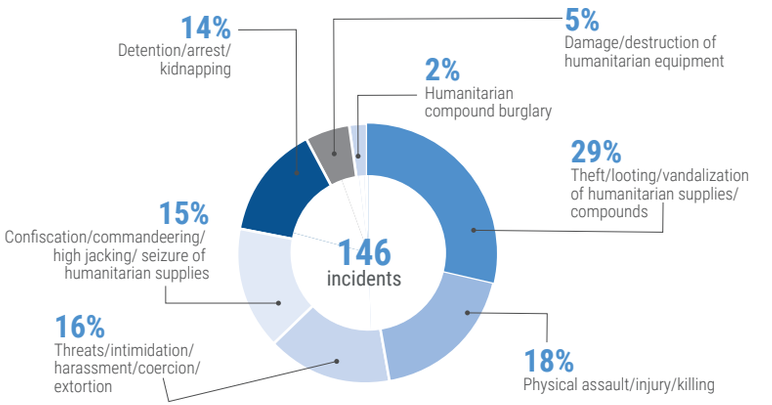
The **safety and security of aid workers has deteriorated significantly in 2021**, as a result of the conflict in Tigray as well as ongoing security operations against UAGs in Southern and Western Oromia. Partners have denounced the looting of dozens of vehicles, ambulances, warehouses, etc. In addition, partners' vehicles have been misappropriated by weapon bearers. The aid community is dismayed about unfounded accusations made against aid workers in Ethiopia, which would question their neutrality in regards to the conflict in Tigray, and which compromise the safety of aid workers in field locations.



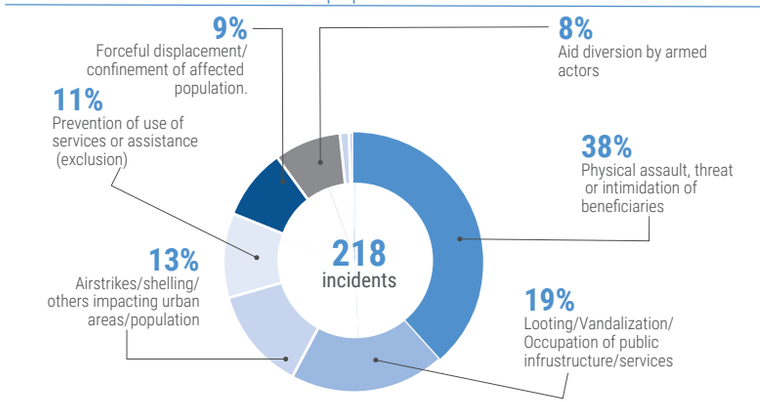
Active Hostilities, security operations, intercommunal conflict or social unrest impending humanitarian operations



Violence (or threat of violence) against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities



Restrictions on conflict affected population access to aid and services



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