



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Distr.: General
6 November 2025

English only

Human Rights Committee

Information received from Ethiopia on follow-up to the concluding observations on its second periodic report*

[Date received: 3 November 2025]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Follow-up information on the concluding observations (CCPR/C/ETH/CO/2)

Information relating to paragraph 14

(a) Supporting Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Conflict-Affected Areas

1. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia reiterates its unwavering commitment to justice, recovery, and the non-recurrence of human rights violations. In line with the 2021 Joint Investigation Report of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Government has prioritized survivor-centered interventions that integrate immediate humanitarian assistance with long-term rehabilitation and justice measures.
2. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and in close collaboration with national and international partners as well as civil society organizations, multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms have been reinforced to ensure that survivors receive comprehensive, compassionate and timely support services.
3. One-Stop Centers established across multiple regions provide integrated medical care, psychosocial counseling, legal aid, and referral services within safe and confidential environments. Furthermore, adolescent-friendly health facilities and community-based social service programs have been expanded to ensure that young survivors – both in urban and rural settings – have access to essential protection and recovery services.
4. A trauma-informed, survivor-centered approach has been adopted nationwide. Health professionals, social workers, and law enforcement officers receive continuous training to listen without judgment, uphold confidentiality, and respond to survivors with empathy, professionalism, and respect. In humanitarian settings such as Afar, Amhara, and Tigray, mobile health and social work teams have been deployed to reach survivors who are unable to access fixed facilities due to displacement or security constraints.
5. Through these sustained efforts, the Government of Ethiopia seeks not only to heal the wounds of the past but also to restore hope, dignity, and self-reliance among survivors. Livelihood support initiatives, community reintegration activities, and psychosocial rehabilitation programs continue to assist survivors in rebuilding their lives.
6. Ethiopia's comprehensive approach reflects its firm conviction that every woman and girl is entitled to justice, compassion, and a future free from fear and violence. The Government remains resolute in advancing accountability, promoting recovery, and ensuring that such violations do not recur.

(b) Continuing the National Effort to End Harmful Practices against Women and Girls

7. Ethiopia continues to make steady and meaningful progress in its national efforts to eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). The National Costed Roadmap (2020–2025) has provided a coherent and coordinated framework bringing together government institutions, community structures and development partners under a common vision: to ensure that every girl in Ethiopia grows up safe, healthy and empowered.
8. Over the past five years, implementation of the Roadmap has enabled thousands of girls to be reached through life-skills programming, mentorship platforms, community dialogues and vocational training. These interventions have equipped girls with the confidence and capacities to resist early marriage and to pursue education and livelihood pathways of their choice.
9. In parallel, the Government has prioritized social and behavior change interventions aimed at transforming deeply rooted beliefs and norms. Religious and community leaders continue to play a decisive role in this transformation. Mosques, churches and community

forums are now increasingly used as platforms for open dialogue, replacing silence and stigma with shared community accountability.

10. Significantly, many communities have issued public declarations affirming their collective decision to abandon FGM/C and child marriage. These culturally respectful approaches are demonstrating strong results in replacing harmful traditions with community-wide celebration of education, health, and the dignity of girls.

11. Local administrations have further adopted by-laws and community charters reinforcing national legislation and protecting girls from harmful practices. Through the National Alliance, led by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, regions including Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Afar have established robust coordination mechanisms bringing together schools, women's groups, health workers and faith-based organizations to sustain change at the community level.

12. As Ethiopia transitions to the second phase of the National Roadmap (2025–2030), the focus will be on further strengthening inclusivity and sustainability. Special attention will be accorded to adolescent mothers, girls with disabilities, and girls from displaced or pastoralist communities, thereby ensuring that no girl is left behind in the national effort to end child marriage and FGM/C once and for all.

(c) Promoting Equality in Marriage and Ending Polygamy

13. The Government of Ethiopia continues to uphold equality and mutual respect as fundamental principles of family life. In accordance with Article 11 of the Revised Family Code and Article 650 of the Criminal Code, polygamy is prohibited and is recognized as inconsistent with women's constitutional rights to equality and dignity.

14. National and regional authorities continue to work collaboratively to promote public awareness of these legal provisions through community dialogues, media campaigns, and structured engagement with religious and cultural institutions. These initiatives underscore that strong families are built on mutual respect, understanding and partnership, rather than hierarchy or inequality.

15. Religious and community leaders have increasingly become key advocates for monogamous marriage as a foundation for peace, stability and well-being within households. Their messages, rooted in moral and cultural teachings, are contributing to gradual shifts in traditional attitudes that previously normalized polygamy, particularly in rural and pastoralist communities.

16. In addition, regional administrations are being supported to harmonize local and regional laws with the federal legal framework, thereby ensuring consistency and uniform protection of women's rights across the country. This inclusive and culturally sensitive approach seeks to balance Ethiopia's diverse social and cultural traditions with its firm and constitutional commitment to gender equality and family unity.

(d) Building the Capacity of Justice and Law Enforcement Systems

17. Justice that is fair, sensitive, and survivor-centered remains at the core of Ethiopia's response to gender-based violence. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Police University, the Federal Supreme Court, and development partners, have intensified efforts to ensure that judges, prosecutors and police officers are adequately trained and equipped to handle cases involving women and girls with professionalism and care.

18. Specialized training programmes have been developed and delivered on women's rights, gender-sensitive investigation, and survivor-centered prosecution techniques. These programmes support law enforcement personnel to better understand the psychological and emotional needs of survivors, and to apply trauma-informed procedures during interviews, evidence collection, and case handling.

19. Regional and woreda-level justice taskforces have also been established to improve coordination among the police, prosecutors, health facilities, and social service providers.

This integrated model aims to ensure that survivors are not re-traumatized by the justice process, and that access to justice is both effective and compassionate.

20. Beyond training, Ethiopia is working to embed these gender-sensitive practices within national justice system standards and procedures, in order to ensure they become part of institutional culture. The Government's vision is a justice system that listens with empathy, protects with integrity, and acts with accountability.

(e) Strengthening Data Collection and Transparency on Gender-Based Violence

21. Reliable, timely, and accurate data remain essential to protect women and girls and to design effective and evidence-based responses to violence. The Government of Ethiopia has made notable progress in establishing integrated data systems across key sectors – social affairs, health, justice, and education – to ensure that cases of gender-based violence are identified, documented, and addressed in a systematic and coordinated manner.

22. The Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) and the Health Management Information System (HMIS) now provide consistent platforms for the reporting and monitoring of cases related to child marriage, FGM/C and gender-based violence. These systems are interconnected with the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) to support coherent and harmonized national data management. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs is finalizing the national GBVIMS, with plans to roll it out soon.

23. Teachers, health workers, and social service providers have been trained on the use of these systems, which has improved early detection, referral and follow-up on reported cases. Periodic data reviews are conducted at regional and national levels to identify emerging trends, address gaps, and inform policy adaptation.

24. Going forward, the Government plans to enhance transparency and public engagement through the publication of annual national reports on gender-based violence. These reports will present progress, lessons learned and key indicators, enabling policymakers, partners and communities to monitor national achievements, while strictly upholding survivors' privacy and data protection standards.

Information relating to paragraph 20

25. The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has undertaken a series of concrete measures to ensure prompt, impartial and effective investigations into alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed in the context of the conflict in the Tigray region and surrounding areas by both State and non-State actors. Following the outbreak of the conflict, the GoE allowed the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to conduct a joint investigation into the alleged atrocities committed in the northern part of the country in March 2021. The findings and recommendations of the joint investigation informed the Government's subsequent actions and laid the foundation for the launch of a comprehensive Transitional Justice (TJ) Initiative.

26. As part of its accountability framework, the Government established an Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF) to coordinate national efforts in response to gross human rights violations reported during the conflict. Under the IMTF, an Investigation and Prosecution Committee (IPC) was formed to design and implement an investigation strategy aimed at identifying victims, witnesses and perpetrators, as well as preserving critical evidence. The IPC has collected an extensive body of evidence, including 10,069 witness testimonies – 9,552 from the Amhara region and 517 from the Afar region – as well as 3,087 written documents and 2,599 video and photographic records that provide proof of deaths, medical reports, and evidence of property destruction. These efforts demonstrate the Government's commitment to conducting comprehensive investigations and ensuring that perpetrators are identified, prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law.

27. To complement accountability measures, the GoE has embarked upon a broader and comprehensive transitional justice process led by an independent Working Group of experts. After extensive consultations with stakeholders, communities and victims across the country,

the Working Group prepared the Transitional Justice Policy, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 17 April 2024. The Policy identifies accountability, truth and fact-finding, reconciliation, reparation and institutional reform as its guiding principles, and provides that all grave human rights violations committed in Ethiopia since 1995 will be addressed through an independent transitional justice mechanism operating under the Policy's framework.

28. With respect to transparency, the GoE has taken steps to make its investigations and accountability processes open and credible. The joint OHCHR–EHRC investigation was an important milestone in this regard, as it represented a transparent and cooperative approach with both international and national human rights institutions. Moreover, the preparation of the Transitional Justice Policy itself was based on broad-based and participatory consultations, ensuring inclusivity and openness in the policymaking process. Going forward, the Government is committed to further strengthening transparency by making public, to the extent permitted by law and without endangering victims or compromising ongoing legal processes, summaries and findings of investigations, including those of the IPC. It also plans to release public progress reports on the implementation of the Transitional Justice Policy and the establishment of related institutions.

29. The Government of Ethiopia remains committed to ensuring full accountability for serious human rights violations, providing effective remedies and reparations to victims, and promoting reconciliation and institutional reform. Through the implementation of the Transitional Justice Policy, in cooperation with national and international partners, the GoE will continue to strengthen impartial investigations, promote transparency, and uphold the rights and dignity of all victims in line with its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

30. Regarding taking appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of the population affected by the conflict and to prevent violations of their human rights by any party to the conflict, the Government of Ethiopia reiterates its firm commitment to its obligations under the ICCPR, and confirms that protection of civilians and prevention of human-rights violations in conflict-affected areas remain national priorities. Security forces are instructed to respect international human-rights and humanitarian law, including strict rules of engagement aimed at protecting non-combatants and civilian infrastructure. Humanitarian access has been facilitated in cooperation with UN agencies and partners, enabling delivery of lifesaving assistance to internally displaced and conflict-affected populations, while supporting durable solutions and recovery efforts.

31. The Government continues to strengthen monitoring, documentation, investigation and accountability mechanisms to address alleged violations. Relevant national institutions, including the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, undertake fact-finding and reporting, and all perpetrators – whether State or non-State actors – are subject to investigation and prosecution in accordance with Ethiopian law. Measures are also in place to provide protection and essential services to vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

32. The Government continues to enhance coordination between federal and regional authorities, justice organs, humanitarian actors, and communities to prevent violations and to ensure protection, reconciliation and community-based peacebuilding. Legal and policy reforms are ongoing to strengthen national safeguards and to harmonise domestic frameworks with international standards. Ethiopia remains committed to cooperation with the committee and partners, and will continue to report progress and implement relevant recommendations.

33. Concerning ensuring full and unconditional humanitarian access to all conflict-affected areas, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has continued to take concrete steps to ensure the provision of full and unconditional humanitarian access to all conflict-affected areas, including the Tigray region. In this regard, the Government declared an indefinite humanitarian truce on 24 March 2022, with the primary objective of facilitating the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. Following this decision, the Government worked closely with

humanitarian partners to reopen humanitarian corridors and enable the movement of aid convoys to previously inaccessible areas.

34. To further streamline humanitarian operations, the Government replaced the earlier case-by-case access clearance process with a blanket approval mechanism and introduced simplified visa and travel facilitation procedures for humanitarian personnel. In coordination with the World Food Programme and other partners, logistical capacity was enhanced to expedite the transportation and distribution of food and non-food items. Substantial allocations of food, cash, and essential commodities were made available to conflict-affected communities in Tigray and other regions. Parallel efforts were also undertaken to restore essential public services, including electricity, telecommunications, banking, and transportation, which are indispensable for humanitarian delivery and post-conflict recovery.

35. While notable progress has been achieved, the Government recognizes that challenges remain in ensuring comprehensive and sustainable humanitarian access in certain hard-to-reach or insecure areas. Continued efforts are therefore being made to strengthen coordination mechanisms, rebuild damaged infrastructure, and guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian workers. The Government remains firmly committed to upholding its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, to ensuring that assistance is delivered based solely on need, and to fostering transparency, accountability, and independent monitoring in all humanitarian operations.

36. Furthermore, with victim-centred interventions, the GoE, through the Ministry of Justice, has entered into partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to provide redress and economic rehabilitation to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict-affected areas, particularly in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions. This initiative aims to support approximately 770 victims of SGBV by facilitating both psychosocial and economic rehabilitation.

Information relating to paragraph 40

37. Regarding the concern raised in the Concluding Observations of the Committee under paragraph 40 concerning the use of broad terminologies under Proclamation 1176/2020 and Proclamation 1185/2020, which the Committee considers potentially to stifle legitimate expression, Ethiopia notes the concern but stresses that utmost precautions have been taken to provide clear definitions for terminologies so that their interpretation will not go beyond the intention of the legislator.

38. The Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes No. 1176/2020, which is one of the laws Ethiopia has enacted following the far-reaching and on-going political reform since April 2018, defines “terrorist act” as an act which causes serious bodily injury to a person; endangers the life of a person; hostage taking or kidnapping; causes damage to property, natural resource or environment; or obstructs public or social service with the intention of advancing political, religious or ideological causes for terrorizing or spreading fear among the public or section of the public or coercing or compelling the government, foreign government or international organization.

39. Accordingly, all acts are punishable only if they are committed to pursue ideological or political objectives using violence. It is the primary purpose of the legislation to punish the intent of the offender to use violence to advance political objectives. We believe the concern that the legislation could be used to criminalize acts of peaceful political dissent that result in disruption of public services is erroneous as the legislation clearly states that the mental element behind the commission of any of the acts constituting terrorism should be done with intent to advance a political or ideological cause by coercing the government and others provided under Article 3 paragraph one of the legislation.

40. Moreover, taking such criticisms which were raised on the former anti-terrorism proclamation, Proclamation No. 1176/2020 clearly provides under Article 4 that where the obstruction to public service resulted from a legal strike, peaceful demonstration, assembly or similar exercise of a legal right, the act shall not be considered an act of terrorism.

41. From the freedom of expression perspective, an individual seeking to express political dissent or expressing comments cannot be penalized on the pretext of incitement of terrorism. Any opinion expressed will have to constitute an actual incitement of a terrorist act beyond mere expression. As a matter of fact, the prosecution of incitement has to be aligned with paragraph 1 of article 3 of the legislation.

42. Similarly, utmost care has been taken to ensure that Hate Speech and Disinformation legislation does not use terminologies which are vague and the law is not abused during implementation. Successive trainings have been also provided to law enforcement, the judiciary and the general public on the objective, content and proper application of the law.

43. While we acknowledge that a lot remains to be done to fully implement freedom of expression, the Government has taken considerable measures which significantly improved the enjoyment of the right, including amending legislations that used to be criticized for falling to meet international standards, which includes the proclamations cited above.

44. For instance, Proclamation No. 1176/2020 has several changes in terms of ensuring the rights citizens. Compared to the broad definition of acts of terrorism under the previous Proclamation No. 652/2009 such as for example, acts of non-violent protest that normally fall within the ambit of free expression, the new Proclamation offers exceptions for such activities resulting in obstruction of public service when these are a result of a strike, and the obstruction is related to the institution or profession of the strikers, or when the obstruction is caused by people exercising rights recognized by law, such as demonstration and assembly. It also offers a great deal in terms of admissibility of evidence. In the previous law, hearsay evidence and intelligence reports, which did not disclose their sources or how information was gathered, were considered by courts as admissible evidence. However, the new proclamation makes hearsay evidence inadmissible and also qualifies the criteria for intelligence reports to be admissible. Moreover, the vague criteria of encouraging acts of terrorism under the previous law depriving journalists and citizens of their right to publicly express any opposition towards the ruling party has now been replaced for an incitement giving due consideration to the intention of the inciting party and whether or not the intended outcome is occurred. It is important to reiterate that the Government of Ethiopia will continue to effectively implement the law.

45. On the other hand, before the reform period activities amounting hate speech and disinformation were not regulated and in some instances these acts had been easily characterized as terrorist acts while in some others they even were considered legitimate. With the broadening of the space for freedom of expression after the reform period, the magnitude of such acts has increased alarming the government to regulate by law for the prevention and suppression of hate speech and disinformation. Understanding the threat hate speech and disinformation pose to social harmony, political stability, national unity, human dignity, diversity and equality, the hate speech and disinformation legislation was enacted in 2020. This law was enacted with full understanding that limitations on fundamental rights should be proportionate, narrowly tailored and prescribed by law in pursuit of aims that are legitimate in a democratic society.

46. In this line, as part of the deep-rooted political reform, the government has shone its commitment by broadening the space for the enjoyment of freedom of expression. Among the actions taken unblocking dozens of websites and TV channels including print news outlets and the release of large numbers of journalists, bloggers, members and leaders of opposition or formerly banned political groups are some examples. However, as part of the regular law enforcement measure some journalists, bloggers, political activists, leaders and members of some political groups might have been arrested and prosecuted with due process for their criminal activities.

47. The investigation or prosecution of journalists, human rights defenders, and other groups of people is not qualified against their status, rather it has been conducted based only on their conduct that has resulted in the injury and death of citizens.