



Ethiopia

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



Key Facts



World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall) Ranked 110 (35.11)

Head of State / Head of Government: President SAHLE-WORK Zewde (since 25 October 2018) & Prime Minister ABIY Ahmed (since 2 April 2018)

Capital city: Addis Ababa

Population: 108,386,391 (July 2018 est.)

Official Language(s): Amharic (official national language, Note: there are several working languages that are commonly used in various provinces)

Ethnic Groups: Oromo 34.4%, Amhara (Amara) 27%, Somali (Somalie) 6.2%, Tigray (Tigrinya) 6.1%, Sidama 4%, Gurage 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Afar (Afar) 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, Silte 1.3%, Kefficho 1.2%, other 8.8% (2007 est.)

Currency: Ethiopian birr

Gross domestic product (PPP): 80.56 billion USD (2017)

Internet penetration: 15.4% (July 2016 est.)

Most trusted medium of information: N/A

Legal System: civil law system

Government system: federal parliamentary republic

Journalists Killed/Imprisoned 2019: 0

Media Environment: 6 public TV stations broadcasting nationally and 10 public radio broadcasters; 7 private radio stations and 19 community radio stations as of 2017. After languishing in the bottom quarter of the World Press Freedom Index for years, Ethiopia is making spectacular progress thanks to a change of government. Since taking office in April 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali has allowed the many detained journalists and bloggers to be released and, for the first time in more than ten years, no media professional was in prison at the end of 2018. The new authorities have 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. A commission has been set up to overhaul repressive legislation, including a 2009 terrorism law that was used to jail journalists, but the much-needed legislative changes have yet to materialize. Frequent Internet cuts have meanwhile made it hard for reporters to cover certain events or communicate with their sources.

Media Issues: In 2016, Ethiopia was racked by antigovernment protests, which primarily took place in the Oromia and Amhara regions; more than 800 people were killed in the government's disproportionate response, according to some estimates, and thousands more were detained. As protests continued, authorities in October imposed a severely restrictive state of emergency that banned many forms of speech. Among other actions taken under the state of emergency, the government prohibited the use of social media to share information about the situation, blocked access to two important diaspora television channels that were deemed terrorist organizations and banned political parties from issuing any press statements that authorities deemed incendiary. A number of reporters were swept up in the mass detentions that followed the emergency declaration. The state of emergency significantly limited independent journalists' activities and contributed to a pervasive atmosphere of self-censorship, allowing state-run and government-friendly private outlets to fill the resulting information vacuum. In October 2016, in response to ongoing antigovernment protests, the authorities enacted a state of emergency that allowed them to restrict internet access and social media use. The Addis Standard magazine halted publication of its print edition, citing restrictions linked to the state of emergency. Ethiopia was the second-worst jailer of journalists in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), which counted 16 journalists behind bars in December 2016. Authorities continued to restrict free movement and reporting outside Addis Ababa. In August, three journalists, including two from the U.S. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), were detained while reporting on a severe drought from the town of Shashamene and escorted back to the capital, where they were ordered to remain.

Popular Forms of Media Consumption

Print: The number of print outlets covering politics has decreased significantly over the last decade, while weekly papers and magazines on business and lifestyle topics have multiplied.

Television/Radio: The state operates the only national television station and owns almost all radio outlets, the primary sources of information for Ethiopians. State-controlled media are biased in favor of the government and the ruling party. Broadcasting law prohibits any political, religious, or foreign entities from owning stations, and the owners of the few private radio stations that operate are generally seen as friendly towards the government.

Digital Media: A nationwide internet blackout in August lasted two days. Internet access in Oromia and Amhara was frequently blocked as mass protests took place. Mobile access to the internet was blocked in number of places following the declaration of the state of emergency. Just over 15 percent of people in

Ethiopia accessed the internet in 2016. As of 2019 the sole internet service provider is Ethio Telecom. There are about 4,300,000 people who can access internet at their home. It is harder to estimate the number of people who access the internet through internet café's which are much more popular and affordable.