



ETHIOPIA

WHAT HAPPENED?

While a lull in major hostilities continued, and central authorities lifted a state of emergency on 15 February, fighting between Tigray's fighters and Afar security forces **continued in north-eastern Afar** region. Insecurity also persisted elsewhere, especially in Oromia.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The fragile pause in large-scale fighting between the federal coalition and Tigray's forces continues to create an opportunity for dialogue. The parties must seize the moment if they are to **end hostilities** and move toward greater stability.

JANUARY TRENDS

Despite a drop-off in large-scale fighting since late December, the Tigray region's forces continued to clash with fighters in the neighbouring Afar region, where the humanitarian toll remained high. Meanwhile, the armed conflict in Ethiopia's largest region, Oromia, intensified.

1 ➔ Clashes occurred in Afar and Amhara regions

In Afar, fighting **spread from Abala town** into other areas of Kilbati Rasu-Zone 2 – pitting Tigray forces on one hand against Afar security forces and militias backed by the Ethiopian air force on the other. In early February, Tigray forces also reportedly **advanced toward Serdo checkpoint**, which regulates traffic from Tigray to Ethiopia's access to sea via Djibouti port.

In Amhara, Tigray forces and federal and Amhara forces reportedly fought in Raya Kobo Woreda, North Wollo Zone.

2 ↘ Oromia's security situation worsened

On 3 February, the rebel Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) launched an ambush near Bule Hora town in West Guji Zone on Oromia President Shimelis Abdissa's security team, **killing three**. Shimelis was not present. OLA and federal forces also clashed in West Guji and Guji Zones from 19 to 21 February.

Also in Oromia, ethnic Amhara militias launched several attacks on civilians, reportedly **killing at least 31 people** in Horo Guduru Wollega and East Wollega Zones from 12 to 25 February.

3 ➔ Tensions in Somali, Gambella regions; national dialogue criticised

Political tensions ran high in the Somali region as **ex-regional officials challenged the rule of the regional president, Mustafa Omar**, in early February. The regional government accused "anti-peace elements" of stoking unrest.

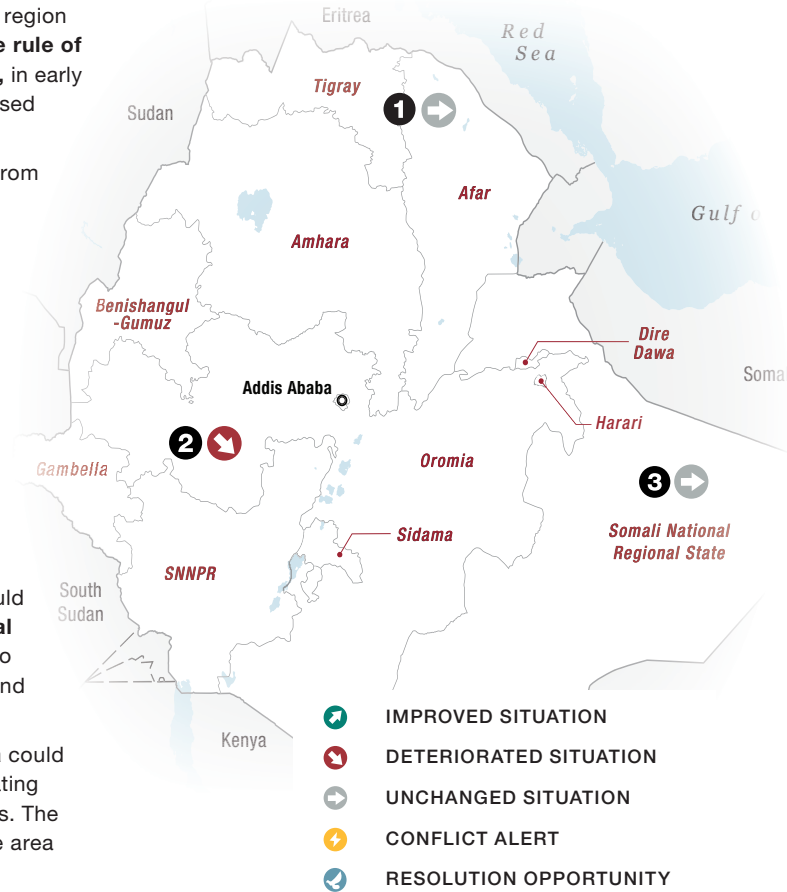
In Gambella region, ethnic Murle militia from South Sudan killed at least four people from 9 to 11 February.






With respect to national efforts to achieve political reconciliation, three opposition parties, including the Oromo Federalist Congress, said on 4 February that the national **dialogue lacked impartiality and transparency**.

WHAT TO WATCH

Amid reduced fighting, there's a modest chance the federal and Tigray governments agree on a cessation of hostilities. If that fails, federal troops could re-enter **Tigray to try to defeat regional forces**, and Tigray's leaders may seek to **reclaim western Tigray** from Amhara and Eritrean control.

Worsening drought in **southern Oromia** could intensify resource competition, exacerbating fighting between OLA and security forces. The near-collapse of local government in the area may boost support for the insurgents.



-  IMPROVED SITUATION
-  DETERIORATED SITUATION
-  UNCHANGED SITUATION
-  CONFLICT ALERT
-  RESOLUTION OPPORTUNITY

TRENDS TIMELINE

