



ETHIOPIA

WHAT HAPPENED?

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, sworn in on 4 October after his election win, launched a federal offensive in the north. When that sputtered, Tigray forces advanced in eastern Amhara. Clashes between insurgents and government forces spiked in Oromia.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Ethiopia's year-old war has entered a **dangerous new phase**. Fighting could intensify as Tigray forces advance south and threaten the capital, Addis Ababa. There is potential for thousands more deaths and greater instability countrywide, which could extend beyond Ethiopia's borders.

SEPTEMBER TRENDS

Tigray forces faced resistance from government troops and their allies in Ethiopia's north amid a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Violence rose in Oromia, killing dozens, and more federal troops reinforced operations in Benishangul-Gumuz.

1 ↘ Tigray forces gained new territory in Amhara

On 11 October, federal troops alongside allied Amhara forces launched a ground offensive against Tigray positions in Amhara region. In subsequent days, clashes caused numerous casualties. Tigray forces pushed back against the assault, **capturing several areas**, including Dessie and Kombolcha cities.

In Tigray region, federal jets launched airstrikes on the regional capital Mekelle and other locations from 18-28 October, for the first time since Addis Ababa pulled out of most of Tigray in June.

2 ↘ Violence spiked in Oromia

Clashes between the insurgent Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and government forces rose in Oromia region. The Guji Zone saw the fiercest clashes, with numerous insurgents reportedly killed between 2-6 October. Meanwhile, OLA rebels **claimed 700 security forces were killed** and hundreds more injured in September-October, mostly in western and southern Oromia.

In Oromia's East Wollega Zone, unidentified attackers killed 22 civilians and displaced over 900 households on 10-11 October; regional officials blamed the OLA, while residents accused ethnic Amhara gunmen.

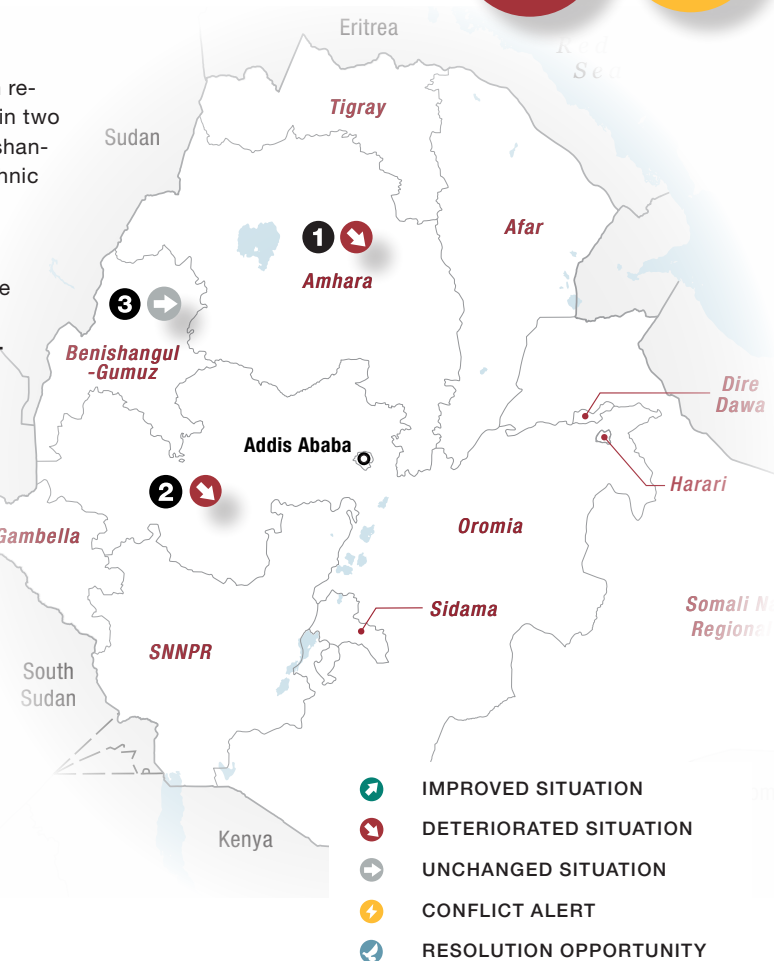
3 ⇨ Insecurity persisted in Benishangul-Gumuz

On 19 October, unidentified gunmen reportedly killed at least four civilians in two attacks in the Metekel Zone in Benishangul-Gumuz region, an area where ethnic Gumuz militants have been active.

WHAT TO WATCH

Tigray forces may seek to control the **Djibouti trade corridor**, or, alongside the OLA, **march on Addis Ababa**, to pressure Abiy into accepting their demands or step down. This could fuel widespread resistance, increased intercommunal violence – including attacks on Tigrayans – and further destabilisation.

Tigray forces may also try to push Amhara, federal and Eritrean forces out of western Tigray, which risks aggravating regional tensions, notably between Addis Ababa and Khartoum.



TRENDS TIMELINE

