



Politics

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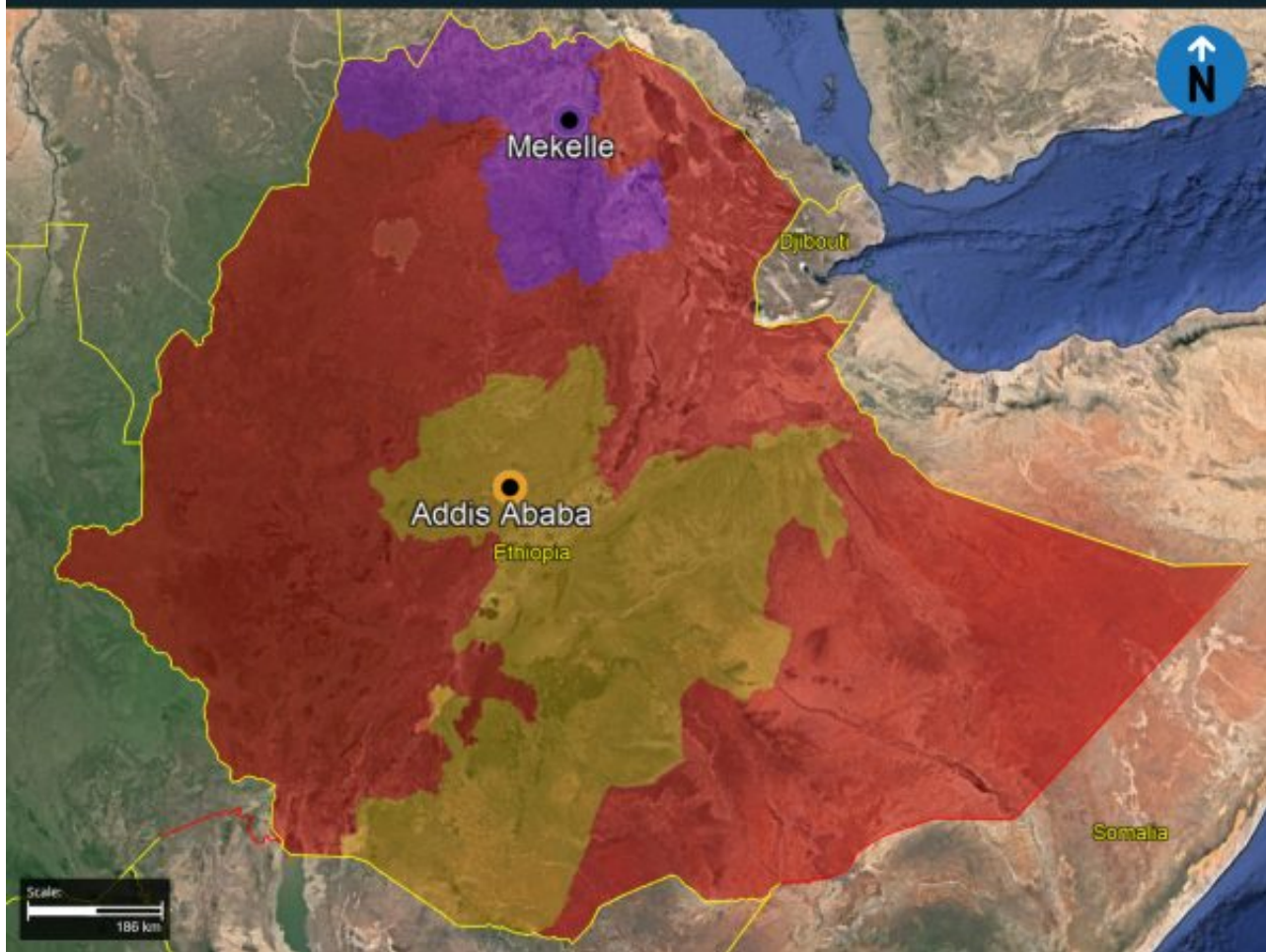
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Ethiopia Alert: MAX Security is changing the country risk level for Ethiopia from medium to high due to deteriorating conditions; review security protocols

Please be advised

- MAX Security is changing its country risk level for Ethiopia from medium to **high** as of September 1.
- This change reflects the deteriorating conditions in multiple areas of the country. **The instability is rooted in the ongoing war in Tigray Region that began in November 2020.** The Tigrayan Defense Forces (TDF) have pushed the front lines into Amhara and Afar regions as well as into western Tigray. The conflict is drawing more and more resources from the federal government, which has called for nationwide mobilization and recruitment and has sent growing numbers of ethnic and state militias to the front. This has necessarily left other parts of the country with fewer troops to secure other hotspots, raising the risks of conflict nationwide.
- Ethiopia has long had ethnic and intercommunal tensions across the country, which leads to cyclical disputes and violence. Some of these places have always been poorly secured, such as Benishangul-Gumuz Region's Metekel Zone. **However, the demands of the Tigrayan war have broadly left many areas under-resourced and it is thus more likely for localized ethnic conflicts to flare up without a government response.** This includes parts of Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Afar, and Somali regions.
- **In addition, other armed groups are seeing the federal government's focus on the Tigrayan front as an opportunity for planned and organized violence.** The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in particular has lately increased its activity in western Oromia, announcing an anti-government alliance with the TDF. Somewhat more notable has been their expansion into southeastern Oromia, where the group has claimed to take over pockets of the Bale, Guji, and Borena zones.
- **At this stage, the risks within Addis Ababa remain limited** with the government placing emphasis on securing the capital. However, **the overall security environment and the societal effects of the ongoing state sanctioned ethnic cleansing of Tigrayans both in Tigray Region and across the country, including in Addis Ababa, have been destabilizing on a national level.** All sides frame this as an existential conflict, which makes negotiations more difficult and less likely, thus prolonging and intensifying the war.

ETHIOPIA RISK MAP – SEPTEMBER 1, 2021



Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Ethiopia are advised to review security protocols and procedures given the increasingly volatile environment. Consult with us at operations@max-security.com.
2. Travel to Addis Ababa may continue while maintaining heightened vigilance in crowded areas due to the high risks of non-violent personal property crime.
3. Avoid all travel to Tigray Region as well as northwestern Amhara Region and eastern Afar Region due to the ongoing armed conflict and changing frontlines.
4. Avoid nonessential travel to rural Amhara Region due to the potential for ethnic violence, civil unrest, and shifting frontlines with Tigray as well as the latent border conflict with Sudan over the El-Fashaga Triangle.
5. Avoid nonessential travel to Benishangul-Gumuz's Metekel and Kamashi zones due to high rates of ethnic violence.
6. Avoid nonessential travel to rural areas of Gambella, SNNPR, and Somali regions due to limited security presence.
7. Avoid nonessential travel to Oromia Region's East Welega, Illubabor, West Welega, and Kelem Welega zones due to ongoing attacks by armed groups as well as ethnic violence. Maintain heightened vigilance throughout eastern and southern Oromia, remaining cognizant of the growing presence of armed groups in Bale, Guji, and Borena zones.