FAQs: Ethiopia Peace Observatory

Please click on a question to jump to the answer.

For more on ACLED methodology, check the [Codebook](#) and full [Resource Library](#).

About the EPO Project

What is the Ethiopia Peace Observatory (EPO)?

The EPO is a local conflict observatory launched by the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)](#) to enhance data collection on political violence and protest activity in Ethiopia. It monitors conflict trends, tracks information on cooperation and peace processes, and supports data-driven peacebuilding efforts around the country.

Why the 'Ethiopia Peace Observatory'?

The EPO not only monitors conflict across Ethiopia, but also peace processes. It aims to serve as a dedicated platform for governments, media, civil society, and the public to access reliable information and analysis about political violence, unrest, and peacebuilding initiatives around the country. By making data and analysis openly available, the EPO will foster connections and shared understanding between government institutions, humanitarian organizations, local civil society, the international community, and more.

Why monitor Ethiopia?

Ethiopia is currently experiencing high levels of conflict and instability. After popular uprisings brought seismic changes to Ethiopian politics, the country is now at a crossroads, with intense debate over questions of identity and governance under Ethiopia's ethno-federalist system. The opening of political space has led to multiple violent administrative contests as groups driven by ethno-regional nationalism compete for formal recognition, authority, and territory. These conflicts have only been exacerbated as the country moves toward a national election set for in June 2021.

At the same time, a host of factors including misinformation, disinformation, and severe security challenges have made it extremely difficult to access reliable, up-to-date reports on conflict in Ethiopia. The EPO intends to fill this gap by expanding ACLED's existing sourcing networks and improving local data collection. *Find more information about EPO methodology [here](#).*

Where does EPO information come from? How are data and analysis produced?

All data are gathered by ACLED and drawn from a network of [trusted sources](#) that are reliable, robust, and thorough. Information for Ethiopia is sourced in Amharic, Oromiffa, Tigrinya, and English. *Find more information about ACLED's sourcing methodology [here](#).*

Data and analysis produced by ACLED and the EPO are reviewed through a [rigorous internal system](#) to ensure that they represent the most accurate, confirmed information available. ACLED and the EPO strive to produce all data and analysis in a manner that is transparent, unbiased, and accessible.

What are the EPO's core outputs?

The EPO enhances ACLED data collection in Ethiopia and publishes regular analysis of key updates and conflict developments. Outputs include the [EPO Bulletin](#) highlighting the latest conflict news, [EPO Weekly](#) updates on the past week of conflict events, [EPO Monthly](#) analysis of broader month-to-month conflict patterns, and [EPO Special Reports](#) on emerging trends and thematic issue areas. An [interactive tracker](#) maps the latest data and links to reviews of current conflicts, actors, regional issues, and cooperation efforts, in addition to an [interactive dashboard](#) that allows for deeper analysis and customizable data visualization, all updated weekly.

The EPO also works to facilitate open dialogue about the project's data and analysis through public workshops, discussions, and interviews.

What challenges are faced by the EPO?

Conflict environments are 'low information' spaces, as the identity of perpetrators, victims, the intensity of violence, and its outcomes are difficult to accurately ascertain in real time. In Ethiopia, the media landscape is particularly distorted by biased sources and disinformation, creating challenges for collecting reliable, up-to-date data. Government-imposed media blackouts and access constraints have also contributed to news that is neither detailed nor confirmed, resulting in reports that often emerge with incomplete, contradictory, and exaggerated information.

What mitigation efforts are taken to address these challenges?

In an effort to overcome these obstacles, the EPO examines and triangulates the details of all reported conflict events across the country. Data and analysis are reviewed through a rigorous internal system to ensure that they represent the most accurate, confirmed information available at the time. Records of unconfirmed accounts are only incorporated into the dataset when sources, information, or confirmation becomes available. ACLED is a living dataset, and data collected as part of the EPO project are continuously updated with the latest reports as they emerge. To minimize the spread of mis- or disinformation around contentious events, the EPO requires multiple sources that specify relevant dates, places, and perpetrators in order to meet the standards for inclusion in the dataset. *Find more information about EPO methodology here. Access the full ACLED Resource Library here.*

Who can access the information?

Everyone. The government, international community, media, civil society groups, and the public can access reliable data and analysis through the EPO website, updated weekly. *Additional data is available through the ACLED website.*

Does the EPO have any political affiliations?

No. The EPO is a project of ACLED, an independent, global data and analysis project and registered non-profit organization based in the United States. ACLED is led by Clionadh Raleigh, Senior Professor of Political Violence and Geography in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex. *Find more information about ACLED here.*

Has ACLED covered Ethiopia before?

Yes. ACLED coverage of Ethiopia extends from 1997 to the present.

About ACLED

What is ACLED?

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project.

Who codes ACLED data?

All ACLED data are coded by a team of over 150 Researchers based all over the world, recruited for their specific language and context knowledge. They review thousands of sources in over 75 different languages on a weekly basis. Each Researcher collects data for a specific country or set of countries.

Does ACLED use crowdsourcing?

No. ACLED does not crowdsource information as not all sources of information online can be verified. While ACLED does use social media in its coverage, this is limited to trusted and verified accounts. *Find more information about ACLED's sourcing methodology here.*

What does ACLED capture?

ACLED codes reported information on the type, agents, location, date, and other characteristics of political violence events, demonstrations and select politically relevant non-violent events. ACLED focuses on tracking a range of violent and non-violent actions by political agents, including governments, rebels, militias, identity groups, political parties, external actors, rioters, protesters, and civilians.

How does ACLED define political violence?

Political violence is defined as the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation. ACLED records political violence through its constituent events, the intent of which is to produce a comprehensive overview of all forms of political disorder, expressed through violence and demonstrations, within and across states. A politically violent event is a single altercation where force is used by one or more groups toward a political end. ACLED employs this definition of political violence in every country we cover. It is a core component of ACLED's established global methodology. *For more on ACLED terminology, see the ACLED Codebook.*

How does ACLED attribute events to groups?

Attribution is primarily based on source reports. Reports often note the affiliation of an armed actor according to the perpetrator, as noted once the perpetrator is in custody, by a manifesto they may have left behind, through known associations, etc. ACLED uses these associations, regardless of whether a larger group or movement 'claims' an event or not. When there are events where actors remain unidentified, 'unidentified armed group' is used until the actor can be properly identified.

What is not captured by ACLED?

ACLED does not record all instances of violence. Criminal violence — violence that is motivated by personal or purely criminal motives — is excluded from the ACLED dataset. The violence that takes place in the private sphere, such as domestic or interpersonal violence, is also not recorded in the ACLED dataset, even when these events could have wider repercussions among the public. Similarly, events that are categorized as standard police enforcement are excluded from ACLED's coverage. These typically include incidents where law enforcement agencies appear to have used violence within the bounds of the legal constraints on their activity, either in reaction to an attempt on the life of a police officer or otherwise in the presence of a threat. Finally, ACLED only captures events that are reported to have actually occurred. Threats of violence or intimidation and non-physical violence, such as online or cyber-violence, are not recorded.

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