Modern slavery in Ethiopia
Global Slavery Index 2023
Country Snapshot

The scale of modern slavery

According to the 2023 Global Slavery Index, an estimated 6.3 in every thousand people were in modern slavery in Ethiopia at any point in 2021. In other words, 727,000 people experienced forced labour or forced marriage in Ethiopia in 2021. In terms of prevalence of modern slavery, Ethiopia ranks 71st globally and 13th within Africa.
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Vulnerability to modern slavery
How vulnerable a country’s people are to modern slavery is dependent on a range of factors which reflect the strength of governance, access to basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict. On a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest vulnerability, Ethiopia is rated as 67 and has above average vulnerability for the region. Vulnerability is highest in terms of disenfranchised groups.

Figure 3.
Vulnerability of Ethiopia to modern slavery by dimension, compared to the regional average

Government response to modern slavery
The government of Ethiopia scored 45 out of 100 in their response to modern slavery. This places the government’s response above the average regional response. Of the five areas of response assessed (milestones), the government has taken most action on addressing risk factors of modern slavery and the least action on addressing risk in government and business supply chains.

Figure 4.
Government of Ethiopia’s responses to modern slavery by milestone, compared with the regional average

Priority Recommendations for the government of Ethiopia
1. Criminalise commercial sexual exploitation of children in line with international conventions.
2. Increase the legal age of marriage for males and females to 18 years without exceptions.
3. Ensure support services are available for all victims of modern slavery, regardless of gender, age, nationality, or sexuality.