



Eritrea Country Report: November 2025

By Grace Harris

Eritrea, a former Ethiopian state annexed in 1962, [gained independence](#) in 1993 following decades of civil war. Just a few years later, tensions escalated into another war in 1998. Conflict continued until 2018, when Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders negotiated a [peace deal](#) that strengthened relations between the two countries and promoted regional stabilization. Recently, however, [hostilities are flaring once more](#).

The Eritrean government once used the conflict with Ethiopia to justify state repression, but has maintained the same practices despite its resolution. It was listed as one of the [most repressive countries](#) by Human Rights Watch because of the [30-year](#) governance of President Isaias Afwerki, who refuses to follow the 1997 constitution or hold elections. Very little information leaves the country due to media suppression. Under his rule, political opponents, journalists, and perceived dissidents are [arbitrarily detained](#) for years and even decades. Many people have also disappeared without a trace, notably a group of 11 politicians who spoke out against Afwerki and 16 journalists associated with them. Forced labor and military conscription are also significant issues in the country.

The condition of minority groups in Eritrea is poor. Sunni Islam, Eritrean Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Evangelical Lutheranism are the only recognized religions, and followers of other denominations are targeted, detained, and denied religious liberty. The [Indigenous Afar people](#) have also been subject to decades of discrimination and violence as one of the nation's most disenfranchised groups. Government policies have pushed them off their land, banned their traditional occupation of fishing, and carried out mass arrests. 57,000 Afar have fled the country as refugees, seeking shelter in neighboring Ethiopia.

Alongside atrocities committed against its own people, Eritrea was heavily involved in the Tigrayan genocide in Ethiopia that left an estimated [600,000 people dead](#). Eritrea is not party to the 2022 peace agreement made between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, and its military has continued to commit [crimes against humanity](#) across Tigray to this day, particularly [systemic rape and sexual violence](#) alongside civilian massacres and arbitrary detentions. One particular point of contention in Ethiopia today is the continued presence of [Eritrean troops in Tigray](#).

Because of the violence towards dissidents and minority groups within the country, media suppression, and absolute power of President Afwerki, Genocide Watch considers Eritrea to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination**, **Stage 5: Organization**, and **Stage 6: Polarization**.

Genocide Watch Recommends:

- Eritrea should withdraw from Tigray immediately and sign on to the 2022 peace agreement
- The United States or another UN Member State should bring forth a case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to try Ethiopia and Eritrea for genocide in Tigray and investigate human rights abuses in Eritrea
- Eritrea should ratify its 1997 constitution and guarantee freedom of religion, speech, and assembly, and the right to vote to all citizens, particularly protecting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities
- The Eritrean government should free all political prisoners and hold fair elections