

Supporting Police and Criminal Justice Reform in Ethiopia



Context

In 2018, in response to years of growing social unrest and escalating public calls for improved governance and inclusive socio-economic development, Ethiopia launched a process of political transition. As part of this process, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's government initiated important reforms aimed at improving security and justice sector institutions. This has included large-scale efforts aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Ethiopian Federal Police (EFP), and the Ministry of Justice. This transition process provided a unique window of opportunity for initiating long overdue reforms.

Despite important reform outcomes achieved since the onset of the transition process, there are significant challenges to peace and security in the country, including the emergence of several conflict hotspots and intensified intercommunal violence. Key drivers of conflict include growing ethnic tensions, a surge in the influence of local militias and unregulated regional special forces, frequent

deadly protests, and rising tensions over the ethno-federal system of governance. In this context of insecurity, the EFP is expected to play a pivotal role in maintaining peace and preserving law and order, while the broader criminal justice system is expected to provide citizens access to justice at a time when conflict and crime is on the rise.

The ability of the criminal justice system to effectively respond to these emerging threats and the demands placed on it hinges on addressing the remaining reform gaps in management, efficiency, accountability and service delivery. At the operational level, this includes improving the effectiveness of investigations, strengthening coordination among policing agencies, improving accountability safeguards and management systems for investigations and public order policing operations, strengthening gender equality in the criminal justice chain, and improving internal and external oversight within the criminal justice system, with a particular focus on the police.



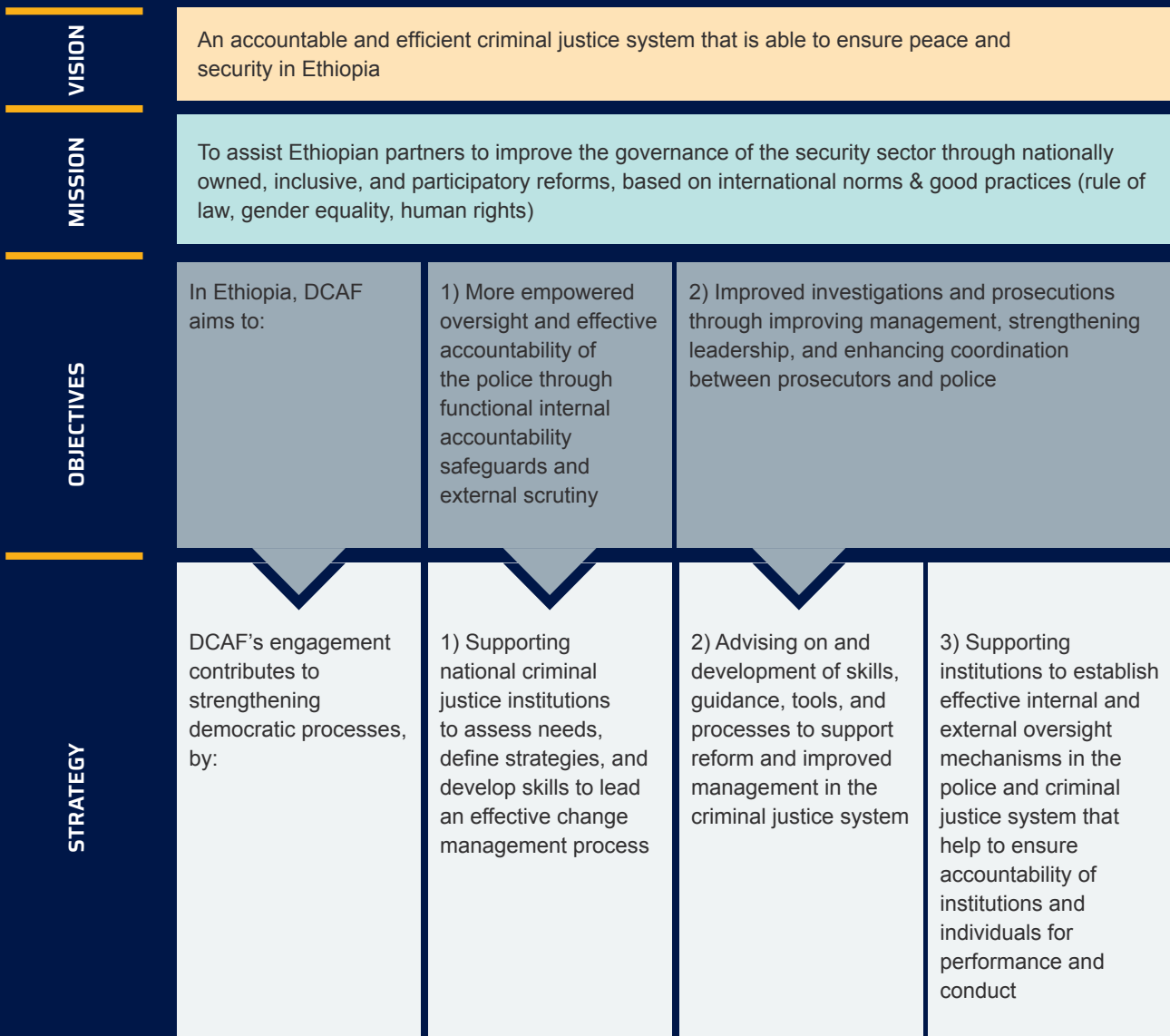
DCAF in Ethiopia

DCAF is a foundation under Swiss law and a member state-based organisation which seeks to enable lasting peace and sustainable development by contributing to improved security for states and its people.

DCAF's Sub-Saharan Africa Division has been engaged in supporting national partners in Ethiopia since 2019. This includes supporting two strategic assessments in 2019 by the European Union Security Sector Governance Facility: a Criminal Justice Sector Assessment and a Strategic Assessment of the EFP. In 2020, DCAF and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development co-

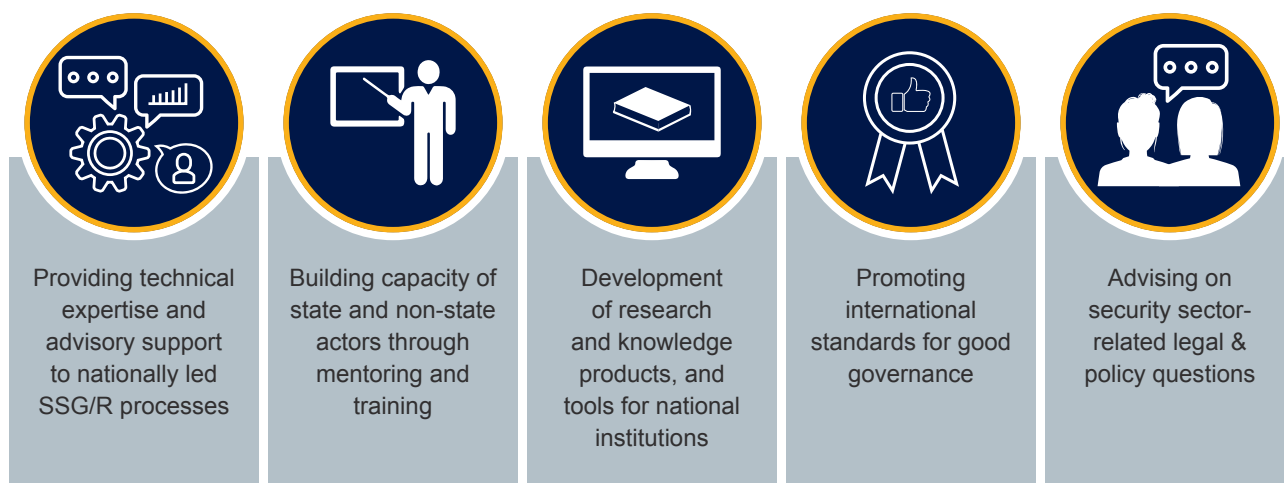
facilitated a high-level government workshop on SSG/R.

Since 2020, DCAF has been implementing a programme funded by the European Union (EU)'s Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, with a view to supporting the reform efforts of the EFP. Since 2021, DCAF together with GIZ has also been supporting the implementation of an EU-funded criminal justice reform programme which aims at building the capacities of federal and regional criminal justice institutions and those of the EHRC. The two distinct programmes have significant synergies.



Approach and activities

To achieve our two objectives, the following measures are implemented, in line with DCAF's fields of intervention:



› OBJECTIVE 1:

More empowered oversight and effective accountability of the police through functional internal accountability safeguards and external scrutiny

› APPROACH:

Approach: Supporting the development of a functional public complaints mechanism, exploring opportunities to create legal and procedural safeguards in investigations and public order, and strengthening external oversight through an empowered and capacitated human rights commission and civil society

› ACTIVITIES:

- › Training on investigations for the EHRC and the EFP complaints department
- › Development of standard operating procedures for complaints handling and development of a system for complaints handling
- › Building a training system within the EFP on human rights, integrity, and accountability
- › Ensuring that there are procedural safeguards and audit trails for EFP investigations and public order policing operations
- › Gender audit of the Ethiopian Police University (EPU)
- › Strategic review of the EPU's curriculum and support to the development of an improved quality assurance framework
- › Support to the EHRC to develop the concept, methodology and skills to manage a national human rights inquiry

› **OBJECTIVE 2:**

Improved investigations and prosecutions through improving management, strengthening leadership, and enhancing coordination between prosecutors and police

› **APPROACH:**

Building tools and frameworks that improve joint planning between prosecutors and police during investigations, improving supervision of complex investigations, and defining strategic investigation models and concepts

› **ACTIVITIES:**

- › Training investigators and prosecutors on supervision of complex investigations
- › Development of a concept and policy on intelligence-led investigations and a forensic reform strategy
- › Strengthening key tools for planning of investigations and documenting strategic decisions during investigations
- › Mentoring of key investigators on change management
- › Working on strengthening a strategic concept of professional development/training for investigators and prosecutors



Key achievements

DCAF has focused on developing a foundation for advancing police reform in Ethiopia by providing a strategic sounding board for conceptualising and developing reform concepts. This has included working with senior leadership to define a change management process aimed at strengthening efficiency and accountability of the police in Ethiopia.

DCAF has supported the EFP in developing its first comprehensive approach to managing public complaints relating to police performance, misconduct or even reform issues. This includes drafting comprehensive guidance and regulations to provide the first dedicated framework for handling public complaints.

DCAF is supporting the EFP with the development of its first dedicated forensic development strategy. The aim of the strategy, which will be one of the first of its kind in the region, is to develop both a strategic framework and a concept for management of forensics, to identify priority forensic capability requirements, to ensure a clear framework is developed for collection and analysis of forensic evidence from crime scene to court, and to guarantee the development model is affordable and sustainable. This work is complemented by a new intelligence-led investigation concept through training and advisory support. Together these two elements should lead to a more evidence-based approach to investigations.

DCAF has provided support to enhancing key management tools for investigations to ensure effective supervision, quality control and accountability. This includes support to enhancing key management tools like decision logs/investigation journals, a new planning framework and training for senior investigators on how to manage and supervise complex cases. These tools should provide key safeguards to ensure that relevant procedures and laws are followed during all phases of the investigation and that there is more active and transparent supervision of complex investigations.

Through a number of institutional assessments, DCAF has provided an important evidence base for advancing reforms both within the criminal justice system and within the police. The 2019 assessment of the EFP remains a key guide for identifying reform priorities for the EFP and is used as a framework for DCAF's own mentoring and coaching programme for senior EFP leadership with a number of key recommendations leading to specific reform initiatives. In addition, the gender audit of the EPU should contribute to the first dedicated gender action plan for advancing gender equality and equity within the police.

DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is committed to making people more secure through accountable and effective security and justice. We help national and international entities to deliver security that respects human rights, upholds the rule of law, and is democratically controlled, by:



Helping to improve the way national security sectors are governed



Guiding the development of sound, sustainable security governance policies



Promoting locally owned reforms that are inclusive, participatory, and gender responsive

DCAF's engagement consists of:



Providing technical expertise to nationally led SSG/R processes



Capacity building for state and non-state actors



Publishing research and knowledge products



Promoting internationally recommended good governance practices



Advising on security sector-related legal and policy questions

DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

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