COUNTRY GUIDE



AFRICA

Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's Criminal Code of 2004 includes an offense of failing to lend aid to a person in grave peril when help could be given without risk. Proclamation No. 1113/2019 on civil society organizations lists fostering philanthropy and volunteerism among the objectives of the regulating Agency and creates a Civil Societies Fund. Government ministries run national volunteer service programs for young people.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER

Limited

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS

None found

GIVING AND SERVICE

5 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

LIMITED

Article 575 of the Criminal Code (headed Failure to Lend Aid to Another in the English translation) punishes whoever intentionally leaves without help a person in imminent and grave peril of life, person or health, when assistance could have been given without risk to himself or third parties, with simple imprisonment not exceeding six months or a fine. The penalty is higher where the criminal injured the victim or was under a professional or contractual obligation to help. Article 537 separately covers refusal of medical services by professionals.

Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2004 (Proclamation No. 414/2004), English translation (UNHCR Refworld copy, via ecoi.net)

Are people who help protected?

NONE FOUND

No statute giving legal protection to people who help in good faith was found in this review. Article 575 itself limits the duty to cases where help is possible without risk to the helper or third parties.

Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2004 (Proclamation No. 414/2004), English translation (UNHCR Refworld copy, via ecoi.net)

How the government promotes giving and service

Objectives of the Agency (Proclamation No. 1113/2019, Article 5)
Article 5(4) lists among the Agency's objectives to foster the culture of philanthropy and volunteerism in society. The preamble also records the importance of

nurturing that culture.

FEDERAL NEGARIT GAZETTE COPY (FJLI.GOV.ET)

Agency functions on volunteerism (Article 6)

Among the Agency's powers and functions, Article 6(19) provides for promoting a culture of volunteerism and voluntary activities and disseminating the same.

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Civil Societies Fund (Article 86)

Article 86 establishes a Civil Societies Fund administered by the Agency; paragraph 2 says it shall be used to encourage volunteerism and development in the sector and to provide incentives to organizations serving communities in need of support.

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Ethiopian National Volunteer Community Service Programme

UNDP describes a Government of Ethiopia program, led by the Ministry of Peace, that deploys youth for a ten-month community service period and aims to promote a culture of voluntarism and social cohesion; UNDP reports 9,646 deployed youth at the time of its page.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Summer Youth Volunteer Service Program

The Ethiopian Herald reports that the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs announced a 2025 summer youth volunteer program lasting over three weeks, closing with a recognition ceremony. Only the opening of the article was accessible without a subscription.

THE ETHIOPIAN HERALD VIA ALLAFRICA

Ways to give and volunteer

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society is the main national volunteer body, and many other groups work under a 2019 law that requires registration with a government agency. Stick to registered organizations and confirm current rules.

Check a charity before you give

The federal agency that registers and supervises civil society organizations; ask it or the group to confirm registration.

Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO)

Give your time

Ethiopian Red Cross Society: Be a Volunteer
How to register as a volunteer, with branch offices across the country.

UN Volunteers (UNV)
The United Nations volunteer program, which lists international and national volunteer assignments and country information.

Give money, blood or a donation

Ethiopian Red Cross Society: Donate
The national society's page for giving money.

In an emergency or a crisis

Ethiopian Red Cross ambulance services
Lists ambulance numbers, including toll-free 907 for Addis Ababa.

Before you act

- Civil society groups must be registered and follow rules on funding and reporting, and foreign funding and foreign organizations face extra rules, so check before raising or sending money.
- Foreign visitors should volunteer only through a registered organization and ask about permit requirements first.
- Avoid anyone collecting cash in person or by personal mobile money, and look for travel advisories in conflict areas.

This list does not cover local community groups, religious charities or private hospitals. Checked 2026-10-28. Listing an organization is not an endorsement, and none of them has endorsed this site. Some official sites block automatic checks, so a link may need a second try.

One thing worth knowing

The 2019 Proclamation names volunteerism as an objective of the regulator, and also funds it, while a separate ministry-led national service program places youth in communities.

What this does not mean

The Criminal Code text relied on is an English translation; the Amharic text is authoritative and wording may differ. The brief's reference to the Ethiopian Red Cross was not verified from primary sources and is omitted. This guide does not assess how these provisions are applied in practice, and is not legal advice. This is a plain-language summary of public sources, not legal advice, and it does not rank countries. No government named here has endorsed this site. Not reviewed by a lawyer. Statutes were read in public sources and may have changed. Last checked October 26, 2026.

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