

## Health under Siege: The Far-Reaching Impact of Conflict on Health Services

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In recent years, the Amhara region has faced unprecedented challenges in its healthcare delivery system. This special issue of the Ethiopian Journal of Translational Science focuses on the impact of conflict on healthcare. Health during a siege presents severe challenges and humanitarian crises, as prolonged blockades or military encirclements restrict civilians' access to essential healthcare services, medicines, and facilities. This exacerbates existing health vulnerabilities, particularly among women, children, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses who struggle to obtain necessary health care services. The lack of adequate food, water, and sanitation further worsens health issues, leading to malnutrition, dehydration, and increased susceptibility to infectious diseases like cholera and respiratory infections. The psychological toll is also significant, with civilians experiencing fear, anxiety, and trauma due to the ongoing threat and uncertainty<sup>1-3</sup>.

Addressing health needs during a siege necessitates urgent humanitarian response efforts to provide medical supplies, food, and essential aid. International organizations and humanitarian agencies are crucial in mitigating health crises, supporting communities, and safeguarding public health under these dire circumstances<sup>4</sup>. The conflict in the Amhara region has resulted in the displacement and illness of many children, with a significant number not receiving treatment, experiencing various forms of violence, and suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Additionally, there has been a high incidence of gender-based violence<sup>5</sup>. The articles in this issue highlight critical areas such as the consequences of war on the TB program and violence against healthcare during the war. For example, Melashu et al., 2024 analyze the impact of war on the tuberculosis program in war-affected zones of the Amhara region, noting that TB case detection and treatment outcomes were severely disrupted due to looted medicines, displacement of TB patients and healthcare providers, and the destruction of healthcare infrastructure. Similarly, Molalign et al., 2024 emphasize the significant damage to health services and the disruptions caused in the Amhara region's war-affected zones.

In summary, addressing these complex issues requires collaboration and innovation among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. We hope this issue inspires further research and action to improve health outcomes in conflict-related settings. The findings highlight the urgent need for humanitarian response efforts to mitigate health crises in conflict-affected areas, underscoring the essential role of international organizations and humanitarian agencies in providing medical supplies, food, and essential aid to protect public health and support communities in the Amhara region.



Figure 1 Illustrate the multifaceted impact of conflict on health services, highlighting both the challenges and the urgent need for humanitarian intervention.

## REFERENCES

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