

Southwest Ethiopia Region/*Kilil*

Based on a GIS overlay of Zone and Region/*Kilil* maps, the new Southwest Ethiopia Region is a gathering of six geographic entities named Bench Sheko, Dawro, Keffa, Sheka, West Omo, and Konta Zones that formed a Region/*Kilil* in 2021 following a public referendum.

The idea of a new *Kilil* covering Ethiopia’s southwestern corner appears to have come into sharp focus over an apparent slight by the federal tea and coffee authority’s tourism advertisementⁱ which appeared to have undermined the status of Keffa region as the birthplace of coffee, a world-famous stimulant seed that owes its name to the Keffa region where it was found.

The population of the newly formed Southwest *Kilil* is estimated to be approximately 2.5 million based on extrapolations from the 1994 census, a 30-year forward projection. We did not use the 2007 census estimates due to the unreliability of results from that census. The best way to verify this estimate is to conduct a national housing and population census in Ethiopia.

Table 1. *Kilil* Population (January 1, 2024)*

REGION/ <i>Kilil</i>	Census_1994	PERCENT_94	Jan1ST_2024	
Addis Ababa	2,112,737	3.95	4,956,700	
Afar	1,060,573	1.98	2,488,200	
Amhara	13,834,301	25.87	32,456,300	Excludes populations of Wolkait and Raya
Benishangul Gumuz	460,459	0.86	1,080,300	
Central	3,999,307	7.48	9,382,700	
Dire Dawa	251,864	0.47	590,900	
Gambella	181,862	0.34	426,700	
Hareri	131,139	0.25	307,700	
Oromiya	18,732,525	35.03	43,947,900	
Sidama	2,044,836	3.82	4,797,300	
South	3,294,026	6.16	7,728,100	
South West	1,038,859	1.94	2,437,200	
Somali	3,198,514	5.98	7,503,900	
Tigray	3,136,267	5.86	7,357,900	Includes populations of Wolkait and Raya
Total	53,477,269	100.00	125,461,800	

*Extrapolated based on zonal population percentages in the 1994 census.

ⁱ The spark that ignited calls to form a new Ethiopian region was a dispute over coffee, <https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2023/01/23/in-federal-ethiopias-diverse-south-west-its-time-to-wake-up-and-smell-the-coffee/>