

# **Ethiopia & Eritrea Peace Treaty and End of UN-Sanctions**

**Documentation**

**Compiled by Hans-Ulrich Stauffer**



**Afrika-Komitee Basel, Switzerland  
December 2018**

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# Introduction

**By Hans-Ulrich Stauffer, Afrika-Komitee, Basel**

Two events dominated the development of the last three months in the Horn of Africa: Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace treaty and the United Nations lifted the sanctions imposed on Eritrea. Both events are to be welcomed and will promote development in the Horn of Africa.

After the new Ethiopian Prime Minister Ahmed Abiy announced in June 2018 that he would accept the ruling of the International Arbitration Court on the demarcation of borders, relations between the two countries have changed dramatically. In September, a peace treaty was signed between the two countries that puts an end to the 20 years of war.

The border between Eritrea and the northern Ethiopian province of Tigray is open and can be crossed freely. There are daily flights between the two capitals Asmara and Addis Ababa; Ethiopian Airlines has acquired a 20 per cent stake in Eritrean Airlines. Ethiopian ships dock in Massawa and transport copper and zinc extracted from the Bisha mine. The momentum continues unabated.

In December, Ethiopian troops began withdrawing from the border area with Eritrea. On the Eritrean side, the withdrawal of troops has not yet taken place. Eritrea is in the process of drawing up a demobilisation plan to facilitate the return of troops to civilian life.

With the lifting of the UN sanctions against Eritrea, Eritrea is now returning to the international community as a full and equal member. The reasons that led to the imposition of sanctions have not yet been worked out. What is striking, however, is that the lifting of the sanctions coincides with the new momentum for peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia, while at the time the sanctions were justified on the grounds of alleged support for Eritrea for the al-Shabaab militias in Somalia. However, this accusation could not be proven.

In Ethiopia, the reconstruction and, above all, the replacement of the administration and the military are continuing. The old rope teams of the former central government dominated by TPLF are still active and are resisting change. The position of Prime Minister Abiy has not yet been consolidated. Again and again there are local uprisings and attacks on the life of Abiy himself.

Basel, Switzerland, December 15, 2018

An overview of the most important developments can also be found in our two previous documentations:

- A New Aera. Ethiopia - Eritrea in Peace (August 2018)
- Horn of Africa. A Region of Changes and Challenges (October 2018)

Both are available at: [afrikakomitee.ch/category/eritrea-aethiopien/](http://afrikakomitee.ch/category/eritrea-aethiopien/)

## The Jeddah Peace Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 18, 2018 |



Full text of the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea signed in Jeddah, also known as the Jeddah Peace Agreement.

The Seven Article Jeddah Peace Agreement signed between the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia on the 16th of September 2018 before King Salman bin Abdul Aziz of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the presence of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in Jeddah, is, therefore, the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

### **Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between Eritrea and Ethiopia**

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea hereinafter referred to as the Two Parties;

Considering the close bonds of geography, history, culture, and religion between the two countries and their peoples;

Respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity;

Desiring to achieve lasting peace and cement their historical ties to achieve their lofty objectives;

Determined to establish comprehensive cooperation on the basis of complementarity and synergy;

Determined further to contribute actively to regional and global peace and security;

Reaffirming the Joint Declaration on Peace and Friendship that they signed on July 9, 2018, in Asmara;

Reiterating their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations;

**The Two Parties agree as follows:**

**Article One**

The state of war between the two countries has ended and a new era of peace, friendship and comprehensive cooperation has started.

**Article Two**

The two countries will promote comprehensive cooperation in the political, security, defense, economic, trade, investment, cultural and social fields on the basis of complementarity and synergy.

**Article Three**

The two countries will develop Joint Investment Projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones.

**Article Four**

The two countries will implement the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission decision.

**Article Five**

The two countries will promote regional and global peace, security and cooperation.

**Article Six**

The two countries will combat terrorism as well as trafficking in people, arms and drugs in accordance with international covenants and conventions.

**Article Seven**

The two countries will establish a High-Level Joint Committee, as well as Sub-committees as required, to guide and oversee the implementation of this Agreement. This Agreement is made at Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this day of September 16, 2018, in two original copies in Amharic, Tigrinya, Arabic and English languages; in case of discrepancy in interpretation, the English version shall prevail.

For

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The State of Eritrea

Abiy Ahmed Ali; Prime Minister

Isaias Afwerki; President

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Eritrea

## Eritrea's Context, Motivation, Sustainability and Intergenerational Equity

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

**Eritrea's context needs to be respected to ensure the genuine protection of the human rights of the Eritrean people**

BY RUBY SANDHU



Any engagement with Eritrea, requires genuine concern – to ensure the protection of human rights through capacity building and best practices, that are fit for purpose – and for a nation that was built on the very premise and foundation of protecting human rights.

Any intelligent, meaningful engagement in the 21st century with a sovereign state can only occur first by understanding its context and hence a nation's motivation.

Engagement otherwise, especially when utilizing just the lens of human rights cannot provide generative, sustainable and/or context-specific solutions and importantly peace.

Academics have long criticised the failure of international law, especially post-cold war, to recognize "collective rights". That is the continued subordination of collective rights in favour of individual and political rights. Today, NGOs are deliberately funded and with mandates to engage prescriptively, without context, and through a myopic lens of individual and political rights only – a convenient western lens for a convenient western agenda.

Such engagement does more harm than good as it fails to address the context and protect the collective rights of the nation's people and thus creates further violations of human rights.

### **Eritrea's Context**

Eritrea is one of nine youngest sovereign nations in the international community in the last 25 years. Also, one of the poorest, as it emerged from thirty years of struggle for independence, and yearning for its human rights and human dignity.

The struggle was a collective one, and engaged all ethnicities, Christians and Muslims alike. The Eritrean diaspora supported the war efforts through charitable donations, organisations and institutions set up abroad to support the Eritrean struggle and war effort.

After independence in 1993, there was rapid economic development. However, this was not to last. This rapid economic development was debilitated by deliberate and subversive campaigns to stall the Eritrean people's right to development.

The first of these campaigns was Ethiopia's laying of facts on Eritrean sovereign territory and the ensuing border war in 1998-2000. And then the international community's failure to enforce Ethiopia's implementation of the Ethiopia Eritrea Boundary Commission (EEBC) decision pursuant to the Algiers Peace Treaty, 2000.

The second campaign, the unjustified sanctions – albeit an arms embargo, were designed to prevent investment into the country. And today as if this was not enough, and in an attempt to bring this young country to its knees – the third campaign.

This third campaign – is the most vicious of them all – the disingenuous media, and activism premised on secondary information and with the sole agenda of destabilizing Eritrea through regime change. And thus, violating the collective human rights of the Eritrean people and their vision for an ethical, non-corrupt, sustainable, inter-generational, equitable development of the nation, by its people and for its people.

Of course, the genuine protection of human rights of the Eritrean people is not in accord with subversive activists who have deliberately created a campaign against Eritrea, thus muddying the water using individual human rights as a ploy to destroy genuine dialogue, lock out any other perspectives, hijack politicians with lazy, rehashed, unsubstantiated accounts and access a media filled with fake news to create further hyperbole.

Furthermore, such activism has no interest in respecting the context as the activism is promoted on short-termism.

This short-termism is like its activism, to ensure that the destabilization will create rehashed economic models leading to unsustainable development and superficial consumption and consumerism, planetary degradation – the creation of a few super wealthy individuals who have as much interest in the collective rights of the Eritrean people as their activism did.

My conclusions on such activism are evident from the behaviour of other similar activists – who have left countries at the stranglehold of corruption, crippling foreign debt, unsustainable development, pretence of elections and democracy, lack of genuine press freedom, greed, disgruntled youth, and a destroyed national identity.

Eritrea's future trajectory at the behest of such activists, activism which is unwholesome and lacks integrity is a deeply shoddy and grim one.

Genuine activists / activism would have engaged – and through the appropriate mechanisms instead of politicised ones which always have a subversive agenda. Further, there are no alternatives or solutions offered. These disingenuous activists have never set foot in Eritrea or at least in the last couple of decades, repeat rehashed accounts without any ground reality and worse still have used false testimonies to bolster their accounts. It is high time that such unethical activism is held accountable for its actions.

### **Eritrea's Motivation**

Eritrea's context needs to be respected to ensure the genuine protection of the human rights of the Eritrean people. On the global stage, Eritrea is an outlier. It is a country that was born from a collective consciousness, a struggle where human rights were core to its liberation and development and her future.

This is evident in the Government's vision – where there is zero tolerance for corruption – where funding from institutions is carefully and strategically considered.

It is common knowledge that the integrity with which the Government operates with respect to funds whether, through grant, aid, investment is with extreme caution. Caution to ensure that such funds are not utilized for unnecessary and / or unsustainable projects.

Along with caution, there is due diligence which includes coordinated strategy meetings from all Ministries of the Government to ensure that the impact of the project and indicators of its success are relevant.

This can be frustrating and perceived as tedious by funders, investors and grantors but it is the Eritrean way. Haste makes waste.

Furthermore, it is evident from such discussions that a nation-wide policy for honest, just and fair economic development – “leaving no-one behind” is the underlying impetus.

And of course, It is premised first and foremost as a responsibility to the memory of the Eritrean martyrs who laid down their lives for Eritrean independence – to free themselves from the yoke of brutal colonization and tyranny and provide for the collective respect of human rights and human dignity.

This was a collective struggle and the development of Eritrea today is once again from a collective vision motivated from that history which permeates the subliminal memory of every Eritrean and thus a responsibility and importantly for future generations of Eritreans – and to

protect all human rights – through the just, fair, sustainable development and ensure inter-generational equity.

The Government’s focus on the 21st-century solution to the western lens of “individual rights” is the MDGs and the SDGs. These goals are pertinent and relevant and address the chronic concern with our western systems that do not address the genuine concern for the human rights of the people in the developing world.



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

When activists superficially talk of elections and constitution – they fail to hear the Ministers, their concerns on the west’s lack of access to justice for all, or the lack of media freedom, unsustainable consumption, planetary degradation, the incredible wealth divide, excessive corruption through tax havens and now the awareness of endemic modern slavery and in western supply chains – I am afraid that our systems are not the best of examples for the developing world.

And for activists to advocate from this human rights lens is farcical especially when they advocate without awareness of the truth, context, and the ground reality. In fact, a frustrating approach of rehashing textbook prescriptions to issues on human rights when we would do best instead – to engage – to support a young country at the behest of subversive policies and address poverty and infrastructural development issues to safeguard human rights.

**Eritrea, Sustainability and Intergenerational Equity**

Eritrea’s vision for economic development is careful and considered, that is, it is intended not only for the present generation but also provides for inter-generational equity – that is the sustainable exploitation of natural resources to protect development for future generations.

Eritrea is acutely aware of environmental externalities created by human-induced climate change from industrialization, polluted air, ozone depletion, soil and water depletion, deforestation and erosion of animal habitats and ensuing species extinction and of course impact

on human systems. And for this reason, the Government's strategy for development is careful, strategic, environmentally friendly and for long-term sustainable growth.

Unfortunately, I do not hear this from the disingenuous human rights activists – their idea of development is premised on rehashed models that have created disparity and further collectively violated human rights and have done little to protect the rights of future generations.

Eritrea is a country with genuine concerns for the protection of human rights and is at the forefront of its development. Further evidenced in the way mining rights have been carefully exploited and the protection of its natural resources through equitable ownership and considered development which no Eritrean would dare entrust to any opposition.

So, in summary, any engagement with Eritrea requires genuine concern – to ensure the protection of human rights through capacity building and best practices, that are fit for purpose – and for a nation that was built on the very premise and foundation of protecting human rights.

The map is not the territory.

And much of what is being rehashed about Eritrea is but a map – you would be best served as the Eritreans say to “come and see for yourself”.

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## **Eritrea: Why change abroad doesn't mean change at home**

By Salih Noor  
September 12, 2018

### **Eritrea's recent foreign policy shifts have been driven by President Afwerki and his Red Sea allies. Neither has an interest in Eritrea democratising.**

Over the past few years, alliances and rivalries across the Horn of Africa have shifted significantly. This is perhaps nowhere clearer than in Eritrea, which has embodied the truism that countries have no permanent friends or permanent enemies, but only permanent interests.

Recently, those interests have led Asmara to make peace with Ethiopia after twenty years and improve its relations with others in the region. These breakthroughs have led to hopes that the government may soon enact long overdue reforms at home. After all, for two decades, its oppressive behaviour and economic woes have been blamed on hostility with Ethiopia and living a “bad neighbourhood”.

A closer look at the factors leading to Eritrea's changing relations, however, dampen these expectations.

#### **Eritrea's changing allegiances**

In the first few years of independence in the 1990s, Eritrea built its foreign ties on principles and loyalties. Though not always completely consistent, it shunned governments that had supported its rival liberation movement as well as monarchies or Islamist regimes deemed to be a threat.



Eritrea's government building in Asmara.

Following the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia, these determinations quickly shifted. Tensions with neighbours Ethiopia, Djibouti and Sudan ratcheted up, while relations with the West took a turn for the worse. Under this growing international isolation and domestic pressure, foreign relations became more pragmatic. The goal became, first and foremost, about regime survival.

President Isaias Afwerki thus looked to cut deals with a range of other powers looking to extend their influence in the region. These partnerships range from China and Russia to Israel, Iran and Libya. From the mid-2000s, however, Qatar became particularly crucial to the maintenance of Afwerki's increasingly repressive rule. The small Gulf nation provided essential and extensive financial and military assistance and became the Horn of Africa country's most important economic partner.

In the early-2010s, this close relationship started to fray. Afwerki was reportedly angered by Qatar's attempts to tame his recalcitrant behaviour and break Asmara's long-running impasse with Ethiopia. He was additionally alarmed at the Gulf nation's catalysing role in popular uprisings in the 2011 Arab Spring.

Eritrea therefore took the opportunity of increasing interest from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to shift its alliances. In 2015, it signed a security partnership agreement allowing the UAE to build a military base in Assab for its war-effort in Yemen. Afwerki's new allies agreed to provide significant financial aid, build infrastructure in Eritrea, and increase fuel supplies to the country. Eritrea provided land, airspace and also reportedly deployed around 400 of its own troops to Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE quickly became essential partners as Eritrea switched allegiances. The extent of this change was clear in the 2017 Gulf crisis when the government threw its weight behind the Saudi-led camp in its attempts to isolate Qatar.

In the last couple of years, Asmara has also given the cold shoulder to this bloc's regional rivals. It has cut off military and diplomatic relations with Iran, whose nuclear programme Afwerki had publicly defended in 2009, and snubbed Turkey in its attempts to extend its influence in the Horn. At the same time, Afwerki has visited Egypt, an affiliate of the Arab axis, on several occasions and supported Cairo in its diplomatic row with Ethiopia and Sudan regarding the Nile waters.

### **Peace with Ethiopia**

All these foreign policy changes have been significant for Eritrea. But perhaps the most momentous shift has been its rapprochement with Ethiopia after twenty years of hostility. Beginning this June, the two neighbours ended their long-standing stalemate and promised to open a new chapter of peace.

This understandably rocked the region. The conflict has cast a shadow over the Horn of Africa for two decades. Ethiopia has used the dispute to encourage others to isolate Eritrea. Meanwhile, Afwerki has used Ethiopian hostility as a pretext for widespread prohibitions on freedoms, the banning of the free press, and the imposition of indefinite military service at home.

Following the announcement of peace, and Ethiopia's calls for the UN to lift sanctions on its neighbour, it was understandable that many were excited an opening up of Eritrea might be in the offing.

However, there are reasons to be sceptical this change is coming.

### **Change abroad, change at home?**

Firstly, this development is related to Eritrea's broader relations across the Red Sea, and therefore the dynamics and interests these contain.

As documented in the *Thin Red Line* series, the Red Sea has regained its geopolitical significance recently with rival powers scrambling for strategic footprints on the sea's western shores. Different competing blocs have built allegiances – bolstered by attractive economic deals – from Egypt down to Somalia, gaining leverage over many of their new partners. Some African countries, most notably Ethiopia, have been able to stay independent in the

face of this attention, but others have struggled. Eritrea has clearly thrown in its lot with the Saudi bloc to which it is reliant and indebted.

These patrons, however, have little interest in Eritrea undergoing reforms, which might risk its internal instability. After all, the Gulf's engagement is not based on principles but self-interest. For various reasons, a rapprochement between Addis Ababa and Asmara was deemed to serve these interests; Emirati leaders notably met with Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Afwerki on several occasions in the run-up to the announcement of peace. But democratisation in Eritrea is unlikely to. In fact, the opposite may be true.

In this way, Eritrea and Ethiopia's peace can be seen as part of wider Red Sea dynamics, rivalries and interests being projected onto the Horn, which are more likely to raise tensions in an already volatile region than encourage democratisation.

Secondly, the reality is that as long as Afwerki remains at the helm, it is difficult to see genuine reforms happening. For a whole generation, the president has suspended Eritrea's democratisation and cracked down on any dissenters in order to maintain his rule.

Former foreign minister Petros Solomon, a member of the G-15 opposition who disappeared in 2001, once claimed that Afwerki's foreign policy was erratic and that the ministry's main job was simply to do damage control. But this underplays the underlying logic of the president's approach to foreign relations, which has mostly been about his own survival. Previously, hostility with Ethiopia served this purpose. Under new circumstances, Afwerki has deemed that a UAE-brokered peace is advantageous. But the ultimate motivation is the same.

Eritrea's lucrative alliances with powers across the Red Sea may have precipitated some sweeping changes in its foreign policy, but they have also bolstered the president's position domestically. In fact, rather than pushing for change, they have given him a new lifeline. Afwerki's new partnerships have allowed him to avoid the economic and political liberalisation that Western donors or continued misery might have demanded, and they have fortified his security and military base against direct threats or internal demands for reforms.

(This is the fifth part of The Thin Red Line, an African Arguments series focusing on dynamics around the Red Sea.)

## Some Points on Eritrea: Making Amends, Better Coverage, and Tourism

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 6, 2018

BY FIKREJESUS AMHAZION (Ph.D.)

While there is certainly little doubt that Eritrea faces numerous and considerable challenges within many areas, it is too often criticized for or understood solely in terms of what it has not yet achieved. The significant advancements and important progress it has made in many areas within a short period are simply dismissed or overlooked.

Established in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations, the UN General Assembly occupies a central position as the chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the UN. Notably, the General Assembly is also the most representative organ of the UN, being the only one in which all 193 Member States have equal representation (each Member State has one vote).

Last week, Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh, addressed the seventy-third session of the UN General Assembly. During his address, in which he noted the encouraging recent peace initiatives unfolding across the Horn of Africa, Saleh called for sanctions against Eritrea to be lifted, describing them as "unwarranted."

This is hardly controversial, as the pretexts for the sanctions are – and have long been found to be – nonexistent. It is also worth bearing in mind that there have been numerous calls for the removal of the sanctions, first imposed in 2009 and then expanded in 2011, including from Eritrea's regional neighbors, Ethiopia and Somalia.



Interestingly, however, Saleh went on to conclude his address by asserting that Eritreans “are asking and deserve amends for the damage incurred and opportunities forfeited [due to the sanctions].”

While the Minister’s call for amends may at first raise some eyebrows, closer consideration reveals it is not unreasonable.

Specifically, with the sanctions being unwarranted, and unjustifiably broadened and extended, one could credibly argue that amends should be provided in order to address the years of lost opportunities and the loss of earning potential due to the sanctions.

Over the years since their initial implementation and subsequent maintenance, sanctions on Eritrea have “scared off” or discouraged many potential international investors, thus considerably hindering the country’s efforts at job creation, economic growth, and development.

It should also not be overlooked that the sanctions on Eritrea have been coupled with a wide-ranging campaign by some powerful states to dissuade interested countries and businesses from engaging with Eritrea (economically or otherwise) and to block the developing country’s participation in important economic or security forums.

For example, according to leaked US embassy cables, the German government’s rescinding of a credit guarantee to Eritrean banks for a commercial loan of \$US146m to Eritrea’s Bisha mining project was the result of “caving in to...American pressure,” while other loans and assistance packages outlined for Eritrea (e.g. from the European Commission) were heavily questioned or discouraged.

Of course, international investment decisions are made based upon a variety of different criteria, not solely according to whether a country has been slapped with sanctions (such as local regulations, taxation policies, market size, crime, corruption, etc.). However, it is difficult to suggest that the unwarranted sanctions, as well as the efforts to dissuade potential partners, had no bearing upon the reluctance or apprehension on the part of some foreign companies or countries to invest in or engage with Eritrea.

Beyond financial compensation or other material support (e.g. reconstruction projects, livelihood assistance programs, community aid, etc.), amends for the unwarranted sanctions could involve any of a number of different measures. For example, amends could involve a public apology, including the acknowledgment and acceptance of responsibility, for violating the country’s sovereignty and the rights of its people.

Amends could also be providing clear verification of the facts and a full and public disclosure of the process that led to the initial implementation and subsequent maintenance of unwarranted sanctions against Eritrea.

Last, amends could involve the establishment of accountability measures or creation of reformed transparent frameworks, guidelines, and mechanisms to ensure that similar unwarranted, unjustified actions do not occur in the future.

## **Better Coverage**

Kudos to Fredrick Golooba- Mutebi, author of the recent article, *“Ignore the Naysayers, Asmara is not Reclusive and Is Open for Business”*, featured in *The East African*. Golooba- Mutebi recently spent several days in Eritrea exploring the country and speaking with its people. Compared to the usual coverage of Eritrea, which regurgitates tired clichés and promotes prejudices, ultimately providing a biased, skewed vision of the country, Golooba-Mutebi’s article was a reinvigorating breath of fresh air.

Generally, the discourse on Eritrea is sensationalist, one-sided, inaccurate, marked with half-truths and devoid of context or nuance, serving to characterize the country as an arena of barbarity and completely lacking in basic humanity.

While there is certainly little doubt that Eritrea faces numerous and considerable challenges within many areas, it is too often criticized for or understood solely in terms of what it has not yet achieved. The significant advancements and important progress it has made in many areas within a short period are simply dismissed or overlooked.

However, Golooba-Mutebi debunks many of the clichés, nauseating stereotypes, and longstanding assumptions and distortions plaguing most mainstream coverage of Eritrea to provide a more accurate, reliable account of the country.

In an age of fake news, where there is a growing – and often justified – public suspicion about the impartiality, accuracy, and integrity of the news, it is good to see journalists that recall that the highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public and provide coverage that is balanced, honest, and contextualized.

## **Tourism**

I thoroughly enjoyed the article, *“Tourism for Peace and Peace for Tourism”*, featured in last week’s edition of Eritrea Profile. Here, I briefly discuss some of the points raised in the article, primarily to extend the conversation about these significant topics.

Indeed, Eritrea’s travel and tourism industry has incredible potential to help generate growth, create much-needed jobs, and support socio-economic development. However, although it is abundantly clear that Eritrea has enormous potential through its rich natural resources and cultural heritage, pristine beaches and beautiful coastline, warm and hospitable climate, general cleanliness and security, welcoming people, and considerable archaeological and historical sites, the country is still, for the most part, in the early stages of its development for travel and tourism.

Importantly, the peace initiatives rapidly unfolding throughout the Horn of Africa are a significant development and hold much promise. Peace and stability, for obvious reasons, are prerequisites for tourist visitation, while increased tourism, particularly at the regional level, should have a positive impact on peace.

Research suggests that tourism can be a strong force for peace, with causal mechanisms operating both at the individual and state level. Meeting diverse peoples and experiencing other cultures via tourism can play a critical role in broadening minds and opinions, promoting tolerance, and supporting intercultural understanding (D'Amore 1988; WTTC 2016).

As well, in order to help fulfill Eritrea's considerable tourism and travel potential and make it (more) attractive to international tourists, the country can focus on addressing several key issues, including: travel facilitation and ease of travel policies (this challenge is not unique to Eritrea, as air travel remains inefficient throughout the region); delivering the highest standards of customer service to visitors, particularly within accommodation, food, and transport services; continuing to improve the country's infrastructure, such as roads, hotels, and airport facilities, in order to deal with increasing arrivals and improve visitor experiences; and better communicating, marketing, and leveraging the country's rich cultural resources, numerous archaeological and historical sites, and various other attractions.

Ultimately, peace and stability across the Horn of Africa should significantly contribute to tourism and travel, while tourism and travel should help to strengthen peace. Moreover, through addressing the issues and challenges outlined above, Eritrea may hopefully be able to fully achieve its vast travel and tourism potential and become a highly competitive travel destination.

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## **Danakali's Colluli Asset Recognized as World's Superlative Potash Deposit: Daniel Stewart**

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 11, 2018

BY PROACTIVE INVESTORS

**Danakali Limited is set to become the world's largest player in the potash field, broker Daniel Stewart said in his research note entitled "Danakali Limited: Probably the best mine in the world"**

Never mind Sirius Minerals, Danakali Limited (LON:DNK) is set to become the world's largest player in the potash field, broker Daniel Stewart said.

In a research note entitled "Danakali Limited: Probably the best mine in the world", the broker said the company's 50 percent owned Colluli asset in Eritrea is "recognized as the world's superlative potash deposit".

"With an estimated 200-year mine life, Colluli's shallow nature (from 16m), will contribute to a lower capital development cost and lower operating cost, enabling Danakali to reduce investor risk by coming down the industry cost curve," the broker said.

The Colulli project is further de-risked by its relatively close proximity – 143 miles – to the Massawa port for shipping. This has attracted an off-take agreement with EuroChem Trading, a leading global producer of nitrogen, phosphate and potash fertilizers.



Under the 10-year agreement, EuroChem Trading has the right to purchase no less than 87% of sulphate of potash (SOP) from the first phase of production (known as Module I).

“As the world’s population marches to an estimated 9.8 billion people by 2050, and the availability of arable land decreases, potash will become a critically important commodity by virtue of its ability to increase both yield and crop quality in order to feed the world,” the broker said.



Colluli is not only the shallowest known potash deposit in the world but also the closest to coast – 75km from the Red Sea coast – providing unrivalled logistics advantage over the other potash development projects in the Danakil Depression.

# “Eritrean Values are my Passion”: Stefano Pettini

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 12, 2018

BY BILLION TEMESGHEN | ERITREA PROFILE

Meet Stefano Pettini, a man who has a long, strong bond with Eritrea and Eritreans. He was introduced to Eritrea while serving in the peacekeeping forces in 2001. After seeing Eritrea firsthand and learning about its history, people, and values, Pettini established a website to share its story and provide factual, objective reports.



“For the very same reason that I was here during the peacekeeping mission, I felt responsible to tell what I saw. I am not a journalist by profession, I am a military man, but I started my battle against fake news about Eritrea” – Stefano Pettini

Pettini has also been engaged with Eritrea’s national railway rehabilitation project and he was part of a team that recently installed eight locomotives.

*Q : When did you first come to know about Eritrea?*

In 2001. I served as a technician for the UN and was stationed at the Asmara airport when peacekeeping forces were stationed along the Eritrea and Ethiopia border. Immediately after the *Algiers Agreement*, an international mission was established to ensure that the two countries would abide by the agreements reached in Algiers during the transitory period. This was the period in which the two were to withdraw to their respective borders prior to the conflict and wait for the final and binding decision of the Border Commission.

*Q : So when did your fondness for or “pact of friendship” with Eritrea start?*

After the EEBC passed its final and binding verdict, we moved out of Eritrea. I went back home to Italy. At that point, I began reading the distorted stories that were being published in the mainstream media. Things like how Eritrea started the war by invading Ethiopia, untruthful news of how Eritrea was defeated, fabricated famine reports, and many other things that totally contradicted what was really going on in the newly-liberated African nation.

For the very same reason that I was here during the peacekeeping mission, I felt responsible to tell what I saw. I am not a journalist by profession, I am a military man, but I started my battle against fake news about Eritrea. I developed a website to counter the stories and journalists that were spreading baseless information. Every time there was something negative out there, I would write a piece or simply put up a photograph to contradict it and somewhat put a slice of truth out there.

*Q : Any examples?*

For example, say if something was circulating under the heading of *“University Shut Down; Dispersed Students”*, I would post pictures and share brief articles about the opening of colleges around the country.

If the header was of drought, I would post photographs of dams which, by the way, were much fewer compared to the extensive chain of dams dotted throughout the country and activities carried out nationwide towards water conservation.

I was collecting my material, studying about Eritrea and its people, integrating with the extremely humble society, and fighting fake news as much as I could.

*Q : You are passionate about the unique traits of the Eritrean Railway. Did you, perhaps, notice the Eritrean railway from above during your mission in 2001?*

I grew up in Rome with a big passion for trains, especially the Eritrean type. I like the old, classic railways. When I first came to Asmara, I sensed the scent of the trains in the outskirts of Asmara. I went to see and it was just so beautiful!

I met the director of the railway who was assigned to the post soon after independence. The rehabilitation project for the railway was highly organized and planned. The first step was the inspection. A thorough assessment of what was left after decades of war was conducted. The second phase consisted of restoration, followed by attaining whatever was needed to completely restore and expand the railway to eventually integrate it into the country’s overall developmental drive.

For the overall project, three commissions were established. One was assigned to track the railway, the second commission was to assess the dispersed materials, and the third was to locate and organize the senior employees of the railway.

At that time, they were old, and over the years most of them have passed away. Slowly, one kilometer after another, bolt after bolt, the Asmara-Massawa railway was finally completed.

*Q : What was your impression?*

It was great. As I said, I had the great fortune of meeting the former director of the railway. Unfortunately, he has since passed away. I knew his office was being encouraged to fully engage in the restoration of the railway.

The Eritrean landscape is amazing. And the uniqueness of the Eritrean railway with the beautiful landscape in the highland will surely promote tourism in the country, especially now that the “no war, no peace” situation is finally over.

I know there are national plans to extend the railway nationwide to boost the national development drive.

Moreover, wait until the train starts running through the capital. It will be great!



*Q : Why is Eritrea so special to you?*

Eritrea is a place of great values. The people are nice and humble. The history is wonderful and only a few people in the world know the true image of the country. The young people offer help to the elderly, and in buses, they give up their seat for someone older than they are. The values here are incredible and what fascinates me most is that the whole identity of the nation revolves around such values.

Eritrean values are my passion.

*Thank you!*

(Note: Stefano Pettini has been, and is still, highly involved in the national railway rehabilitation project).

# General Assembly Elects Eritrea to Human Rights Council

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 13, 2018

BY UNITED NATIONS

**The UN General Assembly plenary meeting today elects 18 member states, including Eritrea, to the 47-member UN Human Rights Council based in Geneva.**

The General Assembly today elected 18 States to the Human Rights Council, the United Nations body responsible for promoting and protecting all human rights around the globe.

By secret ballot, the Assembly elected Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Czechia, Denmark, Eritrea, Fiji, India, Italy, Philippines, Somalia, Togo and Uruguay. All 18 members will serve three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2019.

The 18 outgoing members are Belgium, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. In accordance with Assembly resolution 60/251, those Member States were eligible for immediate re-election except delegations which had already served two consecutive terms – Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Germany, Kenya, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

The 18 new members were elected according to the following pattern: 5 seats for African States; 5 seats for Asia-Pacific States; 2 seats for Eastern European States; 3 seats for Latin American and Caribbean States; and 3 seats for Western European and other States.



Of the 193 eligible number of ballots, 160 votes collected for Eritrea to be elected as a member of the UN Human Rights Council for the coming three years.

Newly elected to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council were Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Czechia, Denmark, Eritrea, Fiji, India, Italy, Somalia and Uruguay. The Philippines and Togo were re-elected for an additional term.

Assembly President María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés (Ecuador) announced that the following States will also continue as members of the Council: Afghanistan, Angola, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Tunisia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Created by the General Assembly in March 2006 as the principal United Nations entity dealing with human rights, the Human Rights Council comprises 47 elected Member States. On the basis of equitable geographical distribution, Council seats are allocated to the five regional groups as follows: African States, 13 seats; Asia-Pacific States, 13 seats; Eastern European States, 6 seats; Latin American and Caribbean States, 8 seats; and Western European and other States, 7 seats.

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## **DP World Eyes Eritrea’s Assab and Massawa Ports after Djibouti Troubles**

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 20, 2018

BY NIZAR MANEK | BLOOMBERG

**The Dubai-based harbor operator is evaluating its strategy and Eritrea could be key**



“Eritrea’s strategic location near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a key shipping lane used by oil tankers &

other cargo vessels en route to the Suez Canal, makes it an attractive investment destination.” – CEO, DP World

The Red Sea state of Eritrea may play a key role in DP World Ltd.’s plans in the Horn of Africa, where a dozen ports could be needed to service the region, Chief Executive Officer Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem said.

The Dubai-based state-controlled harbor operator is evaluating its strategy in the region after having its stake in a port in Djibouti — the main trade route for Ethiopia, Africa’s fastest-growing economy — nationalized by the government.

Developing more ports in the Horn, including one it’s already building at Berbera in the self-declared republic of Somaliland, will help boost trade flows to Dubai, Bin Sulayem said in an interview.

Eritrea’s strategic location near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a key shipping lane used by oil tankers and other cargo vessels en route to the Suez Canal, makes it an attractive investment destination for logistics companies. It’s also a gateway to other nations in the region, the CEO said.

“Eritrea is going to have a major role,” Bin Sulayem said. “We believe that the way we should look at the Horn of Africa is not at Eritrea alone, but add to the equation South Sudan, other parts of Sudan, and Eritrea’s needs, and then the Ethiopian population.”

“That’s the only way out: compensation,” Aboubaker said. “But we believe that they are not interested in money. They want more than money. They want to freeze any maritime infrastructure development on the 354 kilometers of the coast in the entire country for the next 50 years.”

DP World spokespeople Michael Vertigans and Sana Maadad didn’t immediately respond to an emailed request for comment sent on Friday.

DP World is also in arbitration with China Merchants Port Holdings Co. at the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre over the alleged infringement of DP World’s 50-year concession to run the Djibouti terminal, Bin Sulayem said. China Merchants bought a stake in DCT in 2012.

### **Ethiopia, Somaliland**

Elsewhere in the region, DP World is interested in helping develop Kenya’s Mombasa port, and in helping Ethiopia establish a logistics facility, he said.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed this year pledged to co-develop four unidentified sea-ports in Somalia with Somalia’s federal government. While DP World’s involved only in Somaliland and in the Bossaso port in neighboring semi-autonomous Puntland, it will consider more Somali ports if further offers are made, Bin Sulayem said.

Eritrea is normalizing its foreign relations after signing a historic peace deal in July with neighboring Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous nation with 105 million people. The two countries fought a border war two decades ago that claimed as many as 100,000 lives.

DP World will consider what the government's plans are at the port city of Assab and "will be there like everybody else" if asked to invest, Bin Sulayem said. Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel said he couldn't comment on whether the ports of Assab and Massawa will be opened for tender.

Eritrea may provide an alternative trade route for the region instead of Djibouti, where DP World is in a legal dispute with the government after it nationalized the Doraleh Container Terminal last month. That followed a U.K. tribunal ruling that Djibouti's cancellation in February of DP World's contract to run DCT was unlawful.

### **Dispute Resolution**

Djibouti's government hasn't approached DP World directly or indirectly with an offer of a settlement, Bin Sulayem said. Djibouti's ports authority chairman, Aboubaker Omar Hadi, said in an emailed response to questions he met Bin Sulayem in January where they discussed possible compensation, though details of that have yet to be worked out.

The company has been carrying out assessments throughout the region, Bin Sulayem said. He declined to specify how many harbors it's targeting of the 10 to 12 it estimates the region requires.

Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi told reporters last week in Hargeisa that Ethiopia may use three more Somali ports — Bosaso in Puntland, and Merca and Kismayo in southern Somalia.

Somaliland, which has declared independence from Somalia, hosts a United Arab Emirates military facility at Berbera, though Bin Sulayem said the base won't have a bearing on its investment plans.

"Whatever the U.A.E. does is to improve trade relations because that is our bread and butter," Bin Sulayem said. "There is no political agenda of the U.A.E. in Africa. Our agenda is trade."

# Ethiopia Petroleum Enterprise Eyes Assab Port for Fuel Import

BY KALEYESUS BEKELE | THE REPORTER

TESFANEWS SEPTEMBER 15, 2018

If the Port of Assab fuel storage and unloading facility is in good condition Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise (EPSE) may import up to 30 percent of the total fuel import via Assab in 2019.

Following the landmark peace declaration between Ethiopia and Eritrea the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise (EPSE) is looking at the Port of Assab for fuel import.

Reliable sources told *The Reporter* that EPSE is planning to import some amount of the country's fuel import through the Port of Assab as of 2019.



Sources said a team of experts drawn from the enterprise, the Ethiopian Roads Authority, the National Bank of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Roads Authority, and the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise are assessing the port facilities.

The national committee will travel to Assab next week to make assessment.

“We will look at the berth, fuel tanker and unloading facility at the port. If things look good EPSE may start importing fuel via the Port of Assab as of January 2019,” sources told The Reporter.

So far EPSE has been using the Port of Djibouti to import 95 percent its fuel purchase. The Horizon Djibouti Petroleum Terminal provides storage facility to the enterprise. However, the Horizon Terminal is not expanding the storage facility to cope up with the growing fuel import by Ethiopia. All the military bases in Djibouti also use the same facility. Hence the terminal is unable to meet the growing demand.

“If the Port of Assab fuel storage and unloading facility is in good condition EPSE may import up to 30 percent of the total fuel import via Assab in 2019. This will be decided after the field visit,” sources said.

“Djibouti Fuel Terminal is still intact and we will keep using the Horizon terminal but if we can import some amount of our fuel via Assab we can relieve the congestion at Horizon Terminal,” they added.

The Djibouti Horizon Fuel terminal tank farm has a total of 31 tanks with a storage capacity of 300,000cu.m of petroleum products. The terminal has various tanks for gasoline (benzene), gas oil (diesel), kerosene and jet fuel. DHT Company has allocated half of the tank farm more than 150,000cu.m of petroleum storage capacity for Ethiopia. EPSE uses the facility to store 72,000cu.m of diesel, 70,000cu.m jet fuel, gasoline 10,000cu.m and 10,000cum fuel oil.

Ethiopian fuel import has been growing at a rate of 10 percent every year and reached three million metric tons valued at three billion dollars. The country’s daily average consumption is diesel 80,000 cu. M (8 million liter), benzene (gasoline) 1,600cu.m (1.6 million liter), jet fuel 2,500cu.m (2.5 million liter). EPSE pays two million dollars for Horizon Terminal for the storage facility.

EPSE estimates that the country would need 2,780,000 metric tons of gasoil, 840,000 metric tons of jet fuel, 494,000 metric tons of gasoline and 83,000 metric tons of fuel oil in 2019. The country’s total fuel demand in 2019 is estimated at 4,197,000 metric tons valued at 2.8-3 billion dollars.

EPSE will float a fuel procurement tender end of this month that will cover 2019 petroleum demand of the country. Sources told *The Reporter* that before putting up the fuel tender the enterprise should pass a decision on the use of the Assab port.

“Because the bidders should know which port they would use to deliver the petroleum products,” they added.

# Top U.S. Envoy Reiterates Decision to Strengthen Ties with Eritrea

TESFANEWS, DECEMBER 4, 2018

BY TEFANEWS

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Tibor Nagy, today met and held his first ever talks with President Isaias Afwerki at the Denden Hall here in the capital Asmara. The meeting comes as part of his recent tour to Horn of Africa countries with a focus on promoting stronger trade and economic ties with the United States. During their meeting, both President Isaias and Ambassador Nagy discussed on bilateral as well as regional and global issues of interest to the two countries.



President Isaias Afwerki received US Assistant Secretary for Africa, Tibor Nagy, to discuss bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. Ambassador Nagy reiterated US decision to strengthen its ties with Eritrea.

Relations between Washington and Asmara have long been frosty but Assistant Secretary of State Tibor Nagy told journalists ahead of this trip to Asmara that he hopes that will change. “We would like to have the same type of positive relations with Eritrea as we do with Ethiopia,” Nagy said during a visit to its capital Addis Ababa last week. President Isaias expressed Eritrea’s readiness for constructive engagement to strengthen relation and cooperation with the US in various sectors. Assistant Secretary Nagy on his part reiterated his country’s willingness to strengthen relations with Eritrea.

The two sides also agreed to work together for the consolidation of the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Assistant Secretary Nagy also held similar discussions with Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and other senior Government and PFDJ officials.

The Horn of Africa is in the midst of profound political change following the historic peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia over the summer. As a prelude to the new political and strategic

realities in the region, the U.S. suddenly shift its long held anti-Eritrea policy, courtesy of national security adviser John Bolton, resulting in the lifting of the almost decade-old sanctions against Eritrea.



Eritrea – UN-Sanctions

## Eritrea at UN Demands Reparation for Sanctions

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018

BY AFP



**Reparation, not Extension of Sanctions. “The people of Eritrea have not committed a crime or transgression that impels them to seek clemency. As such, they are not only calling for the immediate rescinding of the sanctions but they are also asking, and deserve, amends for the damages incurred and opportunities forfeited” – FM Osman Saleh speech at UNGA.**

Eritrea’s foreign minister on Saturday called for sanctions against his country to be lifted as a result of the peace deal with Ethiopia and demanded compensation for the economic hardship.

Two months after the peace deal was signed, the UN Security Council has not moved to lift the arms embargo and targeted sanctions imposed on Eritrea in 2009 for its alleged support to armed groups in Somalia, which Asmara denies.

“The sanctions imposed on Eritrea for the last nine years have entailed considerable economic damage to the country and unnecessary hardships on its people,” Foreign Minister Osman Mohammed Saleh told the UN General Assembly.

Eritreans “are not only calling for the imminent rescinding of sanctions, they are asking and deserve amends for the damage incurred and opportunities forfeited,” he added.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki signed a declaration of peace in July that formally ended two decades of hostility.

Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia in the early 1990s, and war broke out later that decade over a border dispute.

A 2002 UN-backed boundary demarcation was meant to settle the dispute for good, but Ethiopia refused to abide by it.

A turnaround began in June when Abiy announced that Ethiopia would hand back to Eritrea disputed areas including the flashpoint town of Badme where the first shots of the border war were fired.

Addressing the world body, the Eritrean foreign minister said the peace deal would now allow both countries to channel their resources into much-needed economic development.

Slamming the "unwarranted sanctions," Saleh accused countries at the Security Council of resorting to procedural measures to block lifting sanctions.

He did not name the countries but diplomats said the United States, backed by Britain and France, wanted Eritrea to show progress on human rights as a condition for ending sanctions.

Human rights groups say Eritrea's record on free speech and press freedom ranks among [allegedly] one of the worst in the world.

The foreign minister said it was "astounding" that countries wanted to prolong sanctions "in light of the widely acclaimed peace."

In his address to the assembly on Thursday, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu also called on the Security Council to "now seriously" consider lifting sanctions on Eritrea.

The Security Council is due to review sanctions on Eritrea in November.

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## Reconsidering the Case of International Sanctions on Eritrea

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 22, 2018

BY FIKREJESUS AMHAZION (Ph.D.)

As the powerful winds of hope and change blow across the Horn of Africa, the issue of international sanctions against Eritrea is again drawing attention and comment. In a recent article featured on *Bloomberg*, an analyst is quoted as claiming that, for Eritrea, "*further domestic and international reforms are needed in order for it to bring an end to the UN-imposed sanctions.*"

Additionally, last week, Tibor Nagy, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and former US Ambassador to Ethiopia (as well as several other countries), commented that despite the rapid, momentous changes unfolding throughout the Horn of Africa, it is too early to lift the sanctions on Eritrea.

The longtime US diplomat also asserted that, “there has to be concrete actions taken,” and that “Eritrea cannot assume that by saying wonderful things and opening good relations with the neighbors that will automatically lead to sanctions relief.”

Such comments reveal, yet again, the fact that the sanctions against Eritrea (first imposed in 2009, and then broadened in 2011) are less about Eritrea’s alleged support for terrorism or other activities in the region than other factors. Of course, this can hardly be considered breaking news.



New sets of preconditions? The primary pretexts for imposing the sanctions have long been found to be non-existent. Why changing the goalposts now?

As put by internationally renowned scholar and widely respected activist Noam Chomsky, the “international political system is basically weapons you can use against the weak.”

With regard to the UN, the national interests of the permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) members are often a more accurate, reliable guide to the likelihood of sanctions being imposed than the fact of a violation.

Additionally, according to comments from several months ago posted on Twitter by Ambassador Idd Mohamed, a Somali diplomat, “as former alternate Ambassador of Somalia to the UN who participated [in] all discussions and meetings between [the] UNSC and IGAD member states, I can confirm the sanction imposed to Eritrea on behalf of Somalia by UNSC was politically motivated [rather] than factual or evidence-based.”

It is highly instructive to recall that beyond the considerable issue of the dubious legitimacy or basis for the original adoption of sanctions against Eritrea, and while setting aside their general ineffectiveness, demonstrable counter-productivity, and flagrant violation of the fundamental rights of the Eritrean people, the pretexts for the sanctions have long been found to be non-existent.

Specifically, a long series of UN Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) reports have consistently concluded that they have found “no evidence of Eritrea’s support for Al-Shabaab,” while Eritrea has normalized its ties and relations with countries across the region.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman memorably developed the term “zombie ideas” to describe policy ideas that keep being “killed” by evidence, but nonetheless shamle relentlessly forward, essentially because they suit a political agenda.

In a similar fashion, the sanctions imposed upon Eritrea may be as regarded as “zombie sanctions.” At this stage, the continued imposition of sanctions against the country can only be characterized as the continuation of a severe miscarriage of justice, politically-motivated, and not rooted in a genuine concern for international peace or security.

Furthermore, the attempt to establish a new set of preconditions, particularly in relation to Eritrea’s alleged internal conditions or policies, is a simple case of “changing the goalposts” in order to justify the unfounded measures taken by the UNSC against the country.

Although Eritrea certainly has numerous challenges within many areas which, to be clear and to reiterate, are not the basis for the imposition of sanctions, the way to begin to effectively address these is through cooperation, genuine respect, dialogue, and constructive engagement, not impartiality and coercion.

Moreover, maintaining the unwarranted, unjust sanctions while shifting the discussion to the country’s internal conditions and policies raises significant questions regarding moral authority and credibility, appears morally self-righteous, and intrudes upon the country’s sovereignty and political independence.

Sovereign equality is a fundamental component of the UN Charter, and Eritrea, as an independent nation-state within the framework of the international community, has equal rights and duties with other nation-states.

Notably, these rights extend to the ability to freely and independently select and develop its political, social, economic, and cultural systems. Additionally, it is important to recall that the principle of non-intervention in other countries’ internal or external affairs is among the basic principles of international law, as outlined in the UN Charter and strongly emphasized within many other regional and international treaties and documents.

In addition to the problematic comments about sanctions outlined above, Nagy’s reported description of Eritrea as having created a “fortress state” critically overlooks the nearly 20-year illegal military occupation of and repeated aggression toward Eritrea by the US-backed, TPLF-led Ethiopian regime. To compound the matter, the arms embargo imposed on Eritrea

infringed on its fundamental right to defend itself – a not insignificant point as a state that had large swathes of its territory militarily occupied and faced unremitting threats from a belligerent party.

Furthermore, the description ignores Eritrea’s consistent and considerable efforts since independence to provide and tangibly improve vital social services for its people, including primary and secondary healthcare, education across all levels, energy (e.g. urban and rural electrification), housing, food security, clean water, and sanitation, as well as the country’s significant investments on infrastructure (such as ports, airports, roads, and communication facilities) and inclusive, sustainable development and poverty reduction. Of note, all these efforts and investments have been undertaken with a special focus on women, children, minorities, and vulnerable, marginalized groups.

Ultimately, the sanctions against Eritrea are not based on fact or law, while arguments for their continued imposition are not rooted in a genuine concern for international peace and security. Quite simply, they should be immediately and unconditionally lifted. By doing so, not only will the UN and the international community take an important step to rectify a severe miscarriage of justice and restore eroded credibility, they will help contribute positively to much-needed peace, security, and stability in the Horn of Africa and show support for the rapid, momentous changes unfolding across the region.

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## **UNSC Committee on Somalia and Eritrea Considers Final Reports of its Monitoring Group**

BY UNITED NATIONS | PRESS RELEASE

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 29, 2018

The UN Security Council Committee concerning Somalia and Eritrea held informal consultations to consider the final reports of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG).

On 12 October 2018, the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea held informal consultations to consider the final reports of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG), submitted pursuant to paragraph 48 of resolution 2385 (2017).

The Committee further discussed the recommendations contained in the final report on Somalia. Both final reports are expected to be transmitted to the Security Council on 8 November 2018. Committee members expressed appreciation and support for the work of the SEMG.

The Committee also held an exchange of views with the delegations of Somalia and Eritrea, respectively. During the course of the discussions, Committee members welcomed the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia in complying with the partial lifting of the arms embargo and encouraged reinforcing those efforts, including by strengthening cooperation with the SEMG.

Committee members recalled that the arms embargo served to limit the flow of weapons to Al-Shabaab, which remains a threat to the peace and stability of Somalia and the region, while allowing the Federal Government of Somalia to build the capacity of its security forces. Committee members welcomed the positive political developments in the Horn of Africa region, under the new leadership in Ethiopia. They expressed appreciation for the meetings of Eritrean authorities with the Committee Chair and with the SEMG Coordinator. They underlined the importance of efforts to achieve the normalization of relations between Eritrea and Djibouti and encouraged the two countries to continue to engage in meaningful dialogue.

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## Sanctions on Eritrea Lifted

TESFANEWS, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

BY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

The UN Security Council has today lifted the unwarranted sanctions that were imposed on Eritrea in December 2009 and 2011 respectively.

The Government of Eritrea welcomes this belated decision to redress injustice, almost a decade after nefarious acts were taken inculcating indefensible harm on the country. At this juncture, the GOE pays tribute to the vigorous defiance of the people of Eritrea inside the country and abroad against injustice; to their characteristic resilience and patience in the face of adversity. It also expresses its gratitude to all friends of Eritrea who added their moral weight and contributed in different ways, to the lifting of the ignominious sanctions. Congratulations to all!

But even as we turn the page of this dark chapter and focus on the future, we must ponder on, and take stock of, what transpired; why Eritrea was needlessly victimized; what were the dynamics that underpinned a travesty of international justice on this scale?

And here the verdict is crystal clear. The sad fact is three previous US Administrations (the Clinton, Bush and Obama Presidencies) pursued a misguided policy of propping up regional proxies or anchors, the TPLF regime in the case of Ethiopia, within the framework of a unipolar global order. Key pillars of this policy included:

- Stoking border disputes and conflicts to manage the resulting mayhem;
- Fomenting and institutionalizing ethnic and factional polarizations;

- Undermining regional integration and cooperation so as to create a conducive climate for wanton interference.

The symptoms and legacy of this malaise are illustrated in sporadic flare-ups of ethnic strife that continue to beset Ethiopia, as well as in the acute societal fragmentations that prevail in Somalia and South Sudan today. The complications and external interventions spawned by this reality have inevitably created a fertile climate for the forces of terror and subversion.



“UN Security Council unanimously decides to lift sanctions against Eritrea. The Government of Eritrea welcomes this belated decision to redress injustice, almost a decade after nefarious acts were taken inculcating indefensible harm on the country”

The deleterious consequences of this misguided policy in terms of loss of life, displacement, migration, economic deprivation and poverty have been considerable indeed. Irreparable damage and loss of opportunities were callously inculcated to the more than 150 million people who inhabit the Horn of Africa region.

As it happens, the litany of wrongs committed against Eritrea that include: instigation of senseless border disputes; outright military assaults; political subterfuges; relentless campaigns of isolation, defamation, and psychological warfare; economic strangulation; and ultimately, the unwarranted sanctions imposed in 2009 with the unwitting complicity of the P5; cannot be seen outside the context of this misguided policy.

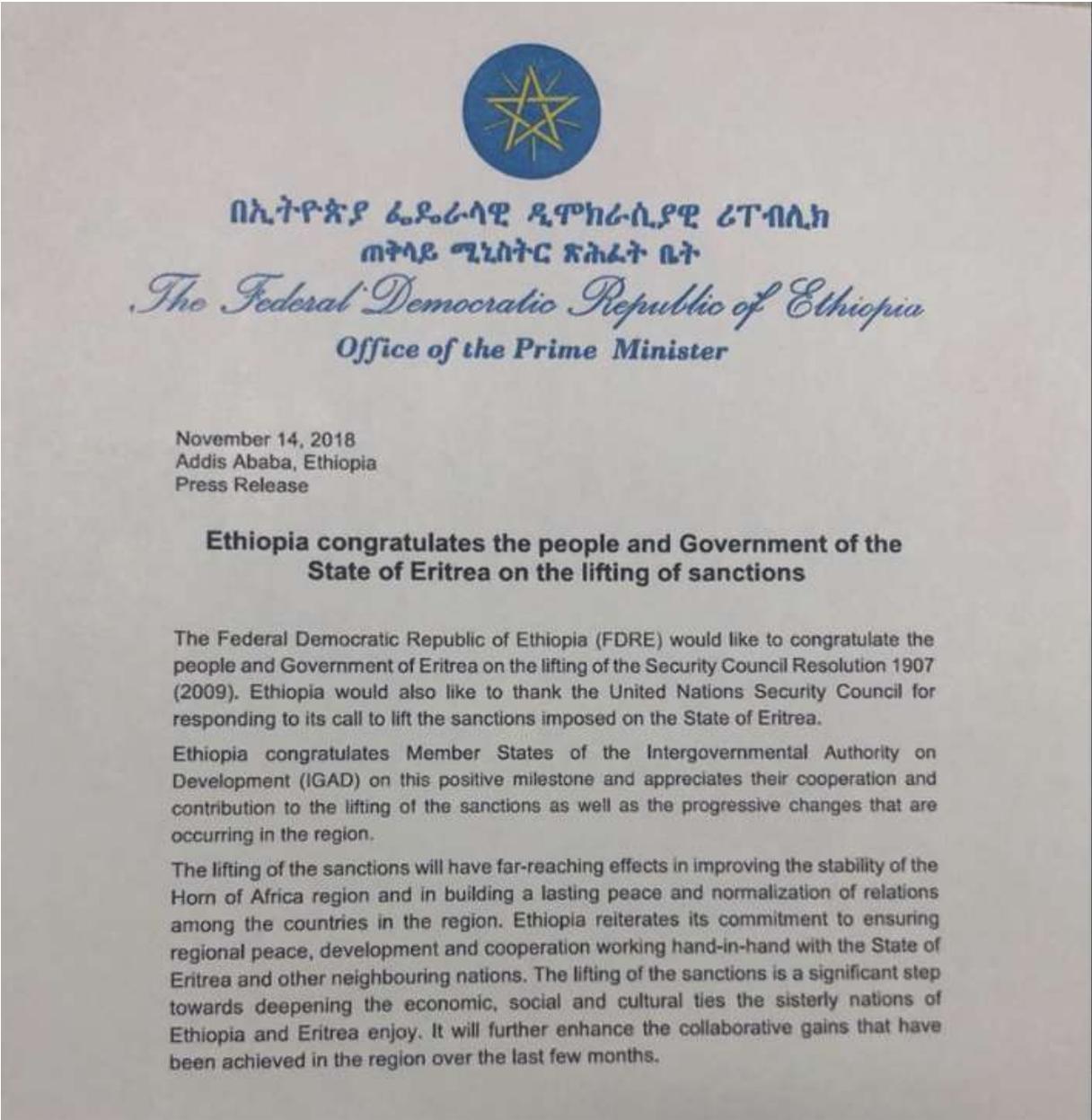
Needless to emphasize, the damage incurred on Eritrea has been enormous indeed. Furthermore, the vain attempts carried out to maintain and extend the sanctions through flimsy pretexts even after all the lies were exposed have exacerbated the wrongs meted to Eritrea.

In the event, the UNSC shoulders a responsibility of effecting amends to the wrongs done; above and beyond the lifting of the sanctions. The Government and people of Eritrea will not thus abandon their efforts for truth and justice with the mere lifting of the sanctions.

Ministry of Information  
Asmara, 14 November 2018

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## Ethiopia’s Reaction on Lifting the Sanctions



## Eritrea: Joy and the Future

TESFANEWS, NOVEMBER 24, 2018

BY FIKREJESUS AMHAZION (PH.D.)

Last week, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to lift the nearly decade-long international sanctions on Eritrea. The news led to the outpouring of widespread joy and excited celebrations among Eritreans, both across the country and in cities around the world.

I was in my hometown, Asmara, in *maekel ketema* (city center), with several friends and colleagues when the news first started filtering in. *Banderas* (flags) were quickly planted outside all shops and buildings, in public areas, on windows and balconies, and on many cars. People driving in cars excitedly honked their horns and passionately waved flags out of their windows.



The future of Eritrea is in the strong and capable hands of the Eritrean people. The notion that those who contributed to years of the anti-Eritrea campaign should now somehow trying to dictate the path forward for Eritrea after lifting of sanctions is beyond preposterous.

There was also a live outdoor concert held at *Bahti Meskerem*, the large public square. People of all ages came together to sing, dance, cheer, and celebrate the latest positive development for Eritrea and the Horn of Africa. Bright smiles and laughter were abundant and the atmosphere was one of extreme happiness and joy.

As I watched Eritreans proudly celebrate the lifting of sanctions and in the days since then, several thoughts have come to mind.

First, congratulations must go to the people of Eritrea – the soldiers, the youth, the civil servants, the elders, the farmers, and the mothers and fathers. This latest development can only

be regarded as an undeniable victory for them. Do not forget that the international sanctions were just one part of the larger strategy devised by the previous US and Ethiopian governments to isolate and weaken Eritrea, hoping to cause its collapse, implosion, or submission.

However, the people of Eritrea stood strong, never wavered, never flinched, and remained firmly committed to their core principles and values. Few could have withstood all that they confronted and overcame. They truly deserve the greatest credit and unreserved respect.

Second, it is quite interesting that much like during the period shortly after Eritrea and Ethiopia first came to peace, in the days since sanctions were lifted there have been numerous analyses and comments outlining what Eritrea's next steps ought to be.

However, it is extremely difficult to overlook the fact that many of these comments and analyses emanate from those who for years strongly supported sanctions on Eritrea, even in the absence of a scintilla of supporting evidence, or who have regularly penned the country's obituary, in various instances confidently predicting its ever-imminent economic collapse, looming state failure or disintegration, or announcing that it was definitely about to "blow" if not already imploding.

The notion that those who contributed to years of injustice against the people of Eritrea or who were so abjectly wrong in their analyses about the country or the region should now somehow guide the conversation or dictate the path forward for Eritrea is beyond preposterous. To use a phrase from Shakespeare's King Lear, *"That way madness lies."*

Undeniably, Eritrea faces significant challenges. At the same time, however, Eritreans are not naïve. They are fully aware of the immense challenges ahead and the considerable work that lay in store. Eritreans, also, are not daunted. The fact that they have been able to withstand and overcome so much for so long serves as great inspiration and a reservoir of strength for the journey forward. And, as per Aeschylus' maxim, *"Suffering leads to wisdom."*

Of course, it should be noted that Eritreans are also highly welcoming and appreciative of any genuine help or support. However, do not doubt the fundamental fact that the future of Eritrea is in the strong, capable hands of the Eritrean people. They – and they alone – will be the ones to map their future and move the country forward.

Eritrea - Ethiopia

## Eritrea, Ethiopia Troops Celebrate Peace and New Year Together

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

**Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders visited their common border to celebrate Ethiopian new year together with their troops.**



As part of Geez new year celebration and following the full realization of normalization of relations, the Ethiopian and Eritrean armed forces met for the first time in 20 years to clear landmines, open the border crossings and celebrate the holiday together.

Tuesday, September 11, 2018, marks the first day of the 2011 Ethiopian New Year, which is 7 – 8 years behind the Gregorian calendar. Members of the defense forces have met yesterday at the Zalambesa border to coordinate the get-together party on the Ethiopian side of the border. Meanwhile, President Isaias Afwerki and PM Abiy Ahmed also made a joint visit to the Eritrean side of the Bure border near Assab port to celebrate the holiday with the troops. “PM Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afwerki are visiting Bure Front along Ethio-Eritrea border to celebrate the New Year with members of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Defense Forces following the full normalization of the relations between the two countries,” said Fitsum Arega, PM Abiy’s Chief of Staff, on Twitter.

During a speech he made on the eve of the holiday, PM Abiy congratulates both the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea and announce that the two country’s armed forces will celebrate the new

year holiday together at the frontline. According to the Eritrean State television, President Isaias and PM Abiy officially opened the Debay Sima – Burre border point today for road connectivity between the two countries. The two leaders will arrive in Asmara shortly and proceed to open the Serha-Zalambesa border.



The joint celebration and reopening of borders are the latest in a series of rapid changes as relations between the two countries strengthened. In July, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki signed a declaration saying that the state of war between the two countries was over. Since then, phone calls and flights between the two countries resumed, and last week an Ethiopian cargo ship arrived in the Eritrean port of Massawa to load zinc ores destined to China. The two countries have also reopened their embassies in each others' capital cities. What is believed to come next is the complete withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from all the Eritrean territories.

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## Ethiopia to Withdraw Troops from Border

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

### **PM Abiy said complete demilitarisation of Eritrea, Ethiopia border to start as of today**

Ethiopian and Eritrean troops stationed on both sides of the shared border are ordered to withdraw and move back to camps, shortly after the countries officially opened the borders following two decades of tensions.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed told reporters upon return to Addis Ababa from Eritrea that to ease the tense atmosphere that existed in border areas for nearly 20 years, Ethiopian Defense Forces will return to their camps. “As of today, Ethiopia’s defense forces (along with the border with Eritrea) will be gathered to camps. The same will be done from the Eritrean side.” PM Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki marked the Ethiopian new year on Tuesday by opening two border posts for the first time in 20 years while emotional people embraced after the long separation. “We heralded the new year by demolishing the trenches along our border,” Abiy told reporters.



Eritrean Information Minister Yemane G/Meskel in a post on Twitter says Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed have opened the border point at Bure for “road transport connectivity” and later will conduct a similar ceremony at the Serha-Zalambesa crossing.



The leaders have been celebrating their recent diplomatic thaw by marking the Ethiopian new year at their border. The once-bitter rivals in recent weeks have restored diplomatic and other ties shortly after Abiy taking office and announced that Ethiopia would fully embrace a peace deal that ended a 1998-2000 border war.

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## **Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace Initiative: The Genesis and the Prospect**

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

BY BRUH METSAE

As people who have had a ‘good’ taste of bad war and familiar with its ugly outcome, Eritreans want to be optimistic and see the full implementation of the peace process including the border demarcation.

Two decades after the eruption of full-fledged war between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the subsequent huge human and material loss that ensued both countries are today burying the

hatchet and working in embracing and solidifying peace and reviving their badly needed economy.

### **Signs of Optimism**

What makes the current peace process more unique, giving optimism to both the brotherly people of Eritrea and Ethiopia has largely to do with the bold move Ethiopian parliament undertaken in recent months, voting overwhelmingly for the acceptance of the Algiers peace agreement and reestablishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries.



Another factor that adds to such optimism involves Somalia and Djibouti, two neighboring countries with a fair share of external-driven instability. As of current, three regional countries – Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia – have just signed a joint declaration of cooperation in trade, security, and other important matters. Djibouti has also shown a positive signal and will most likely to join the group in recent days to weeks.

### **Mixed Feelings**

When President Isaias accepted Ethiopia's call for engagement and announced to send a delegation to Addis Ababa on June 20 (Martyr's day), people had exhibited a mixed feeling of joy and suspicion. Some people were simply confused, given the speed with which the rapprochement occurred. After all, up until recently, Ethiopia's position towards Eritrea has not been palatable and antagonist, to say the least.

For over a decade following the unprovoked war of aggression which had consumed so many lives, the former did everything and anything in its power to undermine the latter's sovereignty, calling for regime change, imposing unwarranted UN sanctions on a basis of falsified and fabricated Eritrea's role with terrorism.

Given such facts, it's quite natural for people to feel a sense of suspicion to such gesture for peace and take it with a grain of salt.

### **Why Peace and Why Now?**

To have a better appreciation as to why and the speed with which such positive rapprochement occurred at this time, it's prudent that one examines closely at some of the sociopolitical changes Ethiopia has been undergoing in recent years.

It's the writer's firm belief that people's disenchantment over the ruling party EPRDF lack of governance, the gross human rights violations and the resultant sense of deep anger played a big role in the decision by some members within the ruling party EPRDF to take a different approach in reforming the country's administrative system and resolving the Eritrea – Ethiopia conflict.

It's a known fact that Ethiopia has for the past 25 years been ruled by the minority TPLF regime, whose members belong to the Tigray region. Since it came to power in 1991, after ousting another brutal regime- the Dergue militarily, the TPLF government has committed countless crimes against both its own citizens and its neighbors. It was accused by the international community of rigging multiple elections and imprisoning and torturing dissents who questioned the legality of the election.

Externally, the TPLF regime, supported by some powers, crafted the plan to invade Eritrea, only six years after both peoples enjoyed the peace and what appeared to be a lasting warm relationship, under a false territorial claim. Eritrean citizens who resided in Ethiopia for decades were harassed, humiliated and over 70 thousand of them, amongst whom include sick old people, pregnant women and children were deported to Eritrea inhumanely and with nothing but the clothes on their back.

To make things in the region worse, back in December 2006, the TPLF regime under the leadership of the now deceased Meles Zenawi, invaded another sovereign nation: Somalia using "terrorism" as a pretext; destroying families and leaving the country in a chaotic state.

Domestically, certain ethnic groups within Ethiopia were harshly treated and tortured by the same clique for voicing their dismay over the government's territorial redistricting program they felt threatens their inherited cultures and the lack of economic progress in the country.

Ethnic tensions have risen to the highest level and reached a point that the government was unable to control it. People took it to the streets across Ethiopia demanding drastic sociopolitical changes. The country has suffered multiple incidences of civilian casualties as a result of clashes with TPLF ruled government forces. Ethiopia was on a verge of collapse.

### **The Era of New Hope**

For most Ethiopians, the emergence of Dr. Abye as their Prime Minister at such critical time in their country was considered as "God sent", which was largely the reason they galvanized huge support to his bold move to both unite his people and make peace with his neighbors.

With respect to Eritrea, the decision by Dr. Abiy and most members of the parliament to engage with their former foe in such a positive manner is of several folds. For one thing and the most important one deals with Ethiopia's current political and economic state. Twenty years after the eruption of the deadly military conflict and the political and social pressure that followed persistently to isolate and destroy Eritrea, the government in Addis Ababa finally seems to have come to realize that engaging with Asmara with hostility is both meaningless and unproductive.

Despite some difficulties, the sanctions and all other political pressures imposed on Eritrea for over two decades bear little fruits. In contrast, the country was moving forward in developing its economy; the international community was opening up and appraising the progress underway. Eritrea has reached a point where it will move forward and thrive through its solid principle of self-reliance with or without Ethiopia.

Within such context, PM Abiy and his colleagues come to terms and reached out to Eritrea believing that doing so would also benefit their country to come out of the sad economic state it's in.

Ethiopia's state of the economy has suffered significantly in the past decade. Corruption played a big part in draining the country's economy. Billions of dollars have admittedly been stolen by top government officials.

Civil unrest which persisted for years also has contributed to deepening the country's economic crisis. In addition, lack of hard currency made it more difficult for the government to import goods and services, including its capacity to pay the huge port fees.

What makes the current fanfare between the two countries rather unique and historically relevant is that this would be the first time (and hopefully not the last) in Ethiopia's history where the country's leader not only recognized Eritrea's sovereignty but also called for a comprehensive peace that would have a far-reaching benefit for both people.

Such language of peace and reconciliation on the basis of mutual respect was an alien to all the previous leaders, all of whom ruled their people by the barrel of a gun and died by one. This may be one factor that instilled hope and optimism in both peoples who had quenched for peace for over two decades and wanted to see the end of hatred and hostility.

### **A Misreading Tendency**

As Eritreans who have been victimized by the previous successive Ethiopian rulers for decades, the need to approach the current peace deals cautiously is quite natural. And I think we should.

Besides, making repeated mistakes don't look good on us. Having said that, looking at all things we face in life in an apprehensive way persistently without making a thorough analysis is counterproductive. There comes a time when we have to open up to ideas and plans that are of benefit to our society even if they seem too good to be true, and provide moral support in its implementation.

Some of the pessimistic comments that hovered around on social media shortly after both Eritrea and Ethiopia accepted the peace plan have created a tremendous state of confusion and suspicion. *“He sold Asab!, that was his plan all alone” ... “What about border demarcation?”* are amongst such comments that unfortunately attempted to convince the most gullible.

The irony is that the majority of the commentators and “Facebook warriors” who campaigned against the peace initiative profusely were the same ones who told us that the border issue is “none of our concerns” and frequently traveled to Awasa and Mekele to assist TPLF’s evil scheme in undermining Eritrean sovereignty.

There are also remnants of Emperor Menelik and Haileselassie, who, to this day, daydream of owning Eritrea, including its vast Red Sea and its ports. For these few chauvinists, the peace initiative was miscalculated as to mean “Union” with Ethiopia, far from the truth. They were seen on social media tampering with our map and our flag. The likes of the die-hard *Teddy Afro* and *Tamagn Beyene* who still live in the 18th century Lala land will continue to salivate over Eritrea but won’t bear any fruit. Because, despite the presence of such backward tendency amongst some Ethiopian elites and descendants of the Emperors, the majority of Ethiopian people have shown strong desire to live in peace with Eritreans as good neighbors.

### **Moving Forward**

Only God knows how things will unfold between the two countries in the future. As people who have had a ‘good’ taste of bad war and familiar with its ugly outcome, we want to be optimistic and see the full implementation of the peace process including the border demarcation.

One also would hope that realization of peace and stability in the region will create an environment conducive to concentrate on the yet to be resolved domestic matters.

May Peace and Love Prevail in the Horn of Africa!

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## **Ethiopia Moving Troops Away from Eritrean Border**

TESFANEWS, DECEMBER 14, 2018

BY AP

Ethiopia starts moving its troops away from the Eritrean border in the wake of new peace and the subsequent ease of tension.

Ethiopian military officials on Friday announced they are moving troops away from the border with Eritrea, months after the former rivals made a surprising peace.

Relations have “improved tremendously” and the “threat level from the Eritrean side has declined sharply. So we have decided that there is no use in keeping that massive force in the border areas,” said Gen. Asrat Denero, head of the army’s Western Command. “It will be deployed to other locations.” He did not say how many troops will be moved.



Lt. Gen. Molla Hailemariam, special operations chief with the Ethiopian Defense Forces, said the majority of armed forces had been deployed along the border. But the situation “has changed dramatically,” Molla said. Both officials spoke during a press conference aired by the state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate.

Amid the country’s sweeping reforms since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in April, officials also say army commands are being cut from six to four, while landlocked Ethiopia seeks to re-establish a naval force.

Some Ethiopians have seen the army reforms as a way of reducing the power of some top military commanders from the Tigray region bordering Eritrea. Many from the Tigrayan ethnic group had assumed top ranks in the decades since the ruling coalition assumed power in 1991.

Some former Tigrayan officials who until recently dominated top posts in the government had resisted making peace with Eritrea under previous administrations.

# TPLF's Abay Tsehaye Makes Desperate Plea to Eritrean President

TESFANEWS, DECEMBER 14, 2018

BY ETHIOPIA OBSERVER

One of the founders of the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), Abay Tsehaye has made a desperate plea to Eritrean leader Isaias Afwerki to transcend what he called old enmities and join in an alliance with the rank and file of TPLF.

Saying TPLF from the time of its establishment has had unwavering support for the liberation struggles and Eritrean independence, Abay has urged the Eritrean president to forget rancour and to heal wounds with Tigray region's leadership. "TPLF has forgotten it (old animosity). EPRDF has forgotten it. President Isaias has also to forget it," Abay said speaking in Tigrinya in video recorded by BBC Tigrinya. He said: "TPLF from the very start has taken a favourable position to the burgeoning cause of Eritrean liberation movement, after having studied and examined the situation and concluded it was a legitimate question that should be solved in a peaceful and democratic manner through a referendum."

"Even when there were tensions and rows between TPLF and EPLF (the Eritrean People's Liberation Front) during the armed revolt, TPLF never put into question the legitimacy of Eritrean independence. TPLF sent fighters to support EPLF in Eritrean soil, and paid heavy sacrifices. The Eritrean people are well aware of this, the Eritrean fighters are aware of this. The Eritrean fighters were mobilized to help TPLF in Tigray, that was how we defeated the Derg," he said referring to the regime that came to power in Ethiopia after ousting Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 and ruled the country until 1991.

The TPLF, a group that began guerrilla movement for the autonomy of Tigray, had been a close ally of the EPLF. It would later form an ethnic-based coalition of opposition forces and would continue advancing farther south and assume state power in 1991. The EPLF assumed complete control of Eritrea and a separation was effected. However, five years later fighting sparked, which was widely believed to be as a conflict of interest triggered by fierce competitions between Tigray and Eritrea as each scrambled to develop its respective regions through the resources of other parts of Ethiopia.

Even after the establishment bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea after the coming Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the subsequent visits of President Isaias to the capital and others parts of Ethiopia three times, TPLF old guards felt snubbed by lack of bilateral meeting. The Eritrean leader also continued to make disparaging references about TPLF leaders.

Abay Tsehaye, whose name is often associated with corruption scandal in his former role as director-general of the Ethiopian Sugar Corporation is based in Mekele, the Tigrayan capital which many say have become an untouchable enclave for former power TPLF officials. The

region has refused to hand down ex-spychief, Getachew Assefa wanted for his role in alleged human rights abuses.

In the media interview, Abay has taken a softer line towards Isaias, inviting the President to visit the region and sit for dialogue, stressing the “common language spoken by the two people”. He also made a call for the opening of the border crossing through Badme and Humera and the use of Port Massawa. For the moment only the main road between Zalambessa and the Eritrean town of Serha is accessible.

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Eritrea – Sudan

## Sudan to Normalize Relation with Eritrea

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 29, 2018

BY SUDAN TRIBUNE



How not to be left behind. Sudan eager to mend its frozen bilateral relation with Eritrea.

Sudan and Eritrea would normalize bilateral relations in the near future as a result of regional efforts, according to a press report published in Khartoum on Sunday.

In January 2018, Sudan accused Eritrea of backing rebel groups unidentified opposition groups and closed the border after deploying thousands of troops.

In return, Asmara last May accused Sudan, Ethiopia, and Qatar of supporting armed opposition groups to overthrow the government of President Isaias Afwerki.

However, the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reconciled with Eritrea last July and sought to bridge the gaps between the two neighboring countries as he did with Eritrea and Somalia.

*Al-Meghar* newspaper reported on Sunday that President Omer al-Bashir would meet his Eritrean counterpart Afewerki after a visit by the Presidential Assistant Faisal Hassan Ibrahim to Asmara in the upcoming days, without further details.

The report said the normalization of relations come after regional efforts to end the tensions between the two countries.

Also, the newspaper mentioned internal efforts by Sudanese political parties that have good relations with President Afwerki without naming these political forces. But it disclosed that Presidential Assistant Musa Mohamed Ahmed who is also the leader of the Beja Congress is currently in Asmara to discuss the normalization of bilateral relations and he would return next Tuesday.

Musa who was the leader of the rebel East Front signed a peace agreement with the Sudanese government brokered by the Eritrean government in October 2006 and remained close to Eritrean president.

Last September the IGAD Council of Minister said it would discuss the normalization of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea; and between Eritrea and Sudan. However, nothing was announced after the meeting of 12 September about this matter.

Eritrea - Djibouti

## Eritrea, Djibouti Leaders Hold Historic Meeting in Jeddah

TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 17, 2018



President of Djibouti Ismaïl Omar Guelleh and President of Eritrea Isaias Afwerki held on Monday a historic meeting in Jeddah a decade after a border conflict strained ties.

The meeting was sponsored by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and was attended by Saudi Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers Dr. Essam bin Saad bin Said, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir.

Afwerki and Guelleh express their gratitude for King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for facilitating the meeting, which opens a new chapter for relations between the neighbors.

The meeting took place in the presence of Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers Dr. Essam bin Saad bin Said, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir.

The meeting will open a new chapter in ties between Djibouti and Eritrea, underlining the Saudi Arabia's keenness on peace and stability in the region.

On Sunday, King Salman sponsored in Jeddah a historic peace agreement signed between Afwerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Eritrea – Somalia

## Eritrea’s President Pays Historic Visit to Somalia

TESFANEWS, DECEMBER 13, 2018



“It is a great honour to welcome President Isaias Afwerki to #Mogadishu today on this historic visit. Somalia and Eritrea have a historic bond of friendship which we will transform into modern opportunities for our two brotherly peoples. Soo Dhawoow Mudane Madaxweyne!” – President Mohamed Farmaajo

BY REUTERS

Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki arrived on Thursday for his first-ever visit to Somalia, in another sign of rapidly changing relations in the region following Eritrea’s rapprochement with one-time foe Ethiopia. Somalia President Mohamed Abdullahi’s office said in a statement the visit was meant to boost diplomatic relations and explore areas to cooperate in security and investment. Isaias landed in Mogadishu and headed to the Somali president’s office, Reuters witnesses. Security was tight in the capital, they said.

“President Isaias’s historic visit is part and parcel of the consultative Tripartite Summits of the Heads of State and Government of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia,” Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Meskel said on Twitter. The three countries have been mending their sometimes fraught relations since Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in April.

In July, Somalia and Eritrea said they planned to establish diplomatic relations as ties improved across the Horn of Africa following Eritrea’s rapprochement with Ethiopia.

Past Somali administrations had accused Eritrea of supplying weapons to anti-government Islamist insurgents. Asmara has repeatedly denied this, saying the accusations were concocted by its enemy, Ethiopia. In 2007, Eritrea walked out of the East African bloc IGAD in protest as Ethiopian forces entered Somalia to fight militants.

The visit comes as Somali President Abdullahi faces an impeachment motion, which was filed in parliament last week. A copy of the motion, seen by Reuters, lists as grounds for the impeachment an allegation that the president secretly signed agreements with other countries, including Ethiopia and Eritrea. Abdikarim Haji Buh, the general secretary of Somalia's parliament said in a statement on Tuesday the motion was likely to fail, since so far the minimum 92 lawmakers needed for the motion to be valid hadn't been attained.



Ethiopia

## Deadly Ethnic Attacks Erupt Outside Addis Ababa

BY ELIAS MESERET | ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 16, 2018



Ethiopia, another ethnic-based attack, another displacement. This time a few kilometers away from the capital Addis, in Burayu, Oromia.

Government officials and residents said overnight ethnic-based attacks in the outskirts of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, have killed several people and caused hundreds to flee their homes.

"Several lives were lost and properties damaged due to this attack," head of the Oromia Police Commission, Alemayehu Ejigu, told the state broadcaster ETV on Sunday. He said 70 suspects have been arrested.

"The perpetrators are criminals organized in groups to kill people and cause damages to the properties of targeted citizens," he said. "This is a shameful act."

Police said the attacks started late Saturday afternoon in the Burayu and Ashewa Meda areas just outside of the capital. They did not say what prompted the violence.

Scores of Addis Ababa residents demonstrated in front of the state broadcaster calling for the perpetrators, whom they suggested were youths from the surrounding Oromia region, to be brought to justice.

Some locations in the north and northwestern parts of Addis Ababa remained tense on Sunday. City officials visited the displaced on Sunday morning pledging support but Ethiopians are expressing anger on social media and urging Ethiopia’s new leader, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, to take serious measures to stop ethnic-based attacks.

Ethnic-based attacks over land and resources are not new in this East African nation of more than 80 ethnic groups. But the severity of such attacks has grown in recent months. The U.N. Children’s Fund UNICEF said in August that as many as 2.8 million Ethiopians were internally displaced, mainly due to ethnic-based attacks in various parts of the country.

Frustrated by the new wave of conflicts, Ethiopia’s leader has warned in recent weeks that those who are instigating the violence in different parts of the country should stop their actions or his government will be forced to take measures. “We are only humans, so we won’t sit and watch them from now on,” he said.

These crises are posing the biggest challenge to Abiy since he came to power in April, and people are urging him on social media to be tough and start taking serious measures against the violence.

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## Peace discussion between Ethiopian government and ONLF

Shabait.com



Asmara, 19 September 2018. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) discussed modalities of peace talks in Asmara yesterday. Government Delegation was led by The Minister of Government Communication Affairs Office and Chairman of the Ethiopian Somali Peoples Democratic Party, Mr. Ahmed Shide, while ONLF side was led by its Chairman, Admiral Mohamed Omar. Here is the joint statement issued by the Ethiopian government and ONLF:

### **Joint statement: government of Ethiopia and ONLF**

A meeting between the Ethiopia government and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) took place in Asmara, Eritrea to discuss ways of resolving the longstanding conflict in Somali region. The two parties have discussed the modalities of peace talks between the Ethiopia government and ONLF.

The parties have reached a common understanding on the issues discussed and way forward.

The two parties have agreed to work together peacefully to promote and protect the interest of the people of the Somali region and collaborate on national issues including the future of the horn of Africa integration.

The substantive talks will be finalized soon.

Both parties thank the Eritrea government and people for hosting the meeting.

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## **Ethiopia detains 1,200 after deadly Addis Ababa clashes**

TefaNews, September 25, 2018

Ethiopia has detained 1,200 people over the deadly political violence that broke out a fortnight ago, police say.

These are the first mass arrests since reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in April.

At least 28 people died in clashes near the capital, Addis Ababa, following the return of exiled leaders of a former rebel group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) on 15 September.

Rights group Amnesty International has called for the prisoners' release.

In addition to those held in connection with the violence, a further 1,400 people were taken into custody following raids on places where people gamble, smoke shisha or chew the narcotic leaf khat.

Most of those have been released, Addis Ababa police chief Maj Gen Degfie Bedi is quoted as saying by the state-linked Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC).

Those arrested for the violence have been sent to Tolay military camp, which is known for providing what is called "rehabilitation training", reports the BBC's Habtamu Tibebe from Addis Ababa.



The rally to welcome back the exiled leaders of the OLF passed off peacefully

The trouble began on 13 September as OLF supporters placed their flag in parts of the capital. The move was interpreted by some residents as an attempt by the OLF to take control of Addis Ababa. Rival supporters then clashed leading to the closure of parts of the commercial centre of Addis Ababa. The violence escalated two days later, leaving 28 people dead, FBC quotes Maj Degfie as saying.

### **'Do not fill prisons again'**

Most of them died through beating with sticks and stones as rival groups clashed and seven were killed by security officers, Maj Degfie said. Amnesty International put the number of dead at 58. It condemned the arrests, saying the government had made a "commendable attempt to empty" prisons and it should not "fill them up again" by detaining people without charge. "The government must renew its commitment to a new era of respecting and upholding human rights," Amnesty added in a statement.

Since coming to power in April, Prime Minister Abiy has introduced a series of reforms that have been widely welcomed. He has released thousands of political prisoners and unbanned groups, including the OLF, which had been labelled as terrorist organisations. Mr Abiy who is from the Oromo ethnic group, has been seen as the person who could resolve political and ethnic divisions in the country. In recent years, Ethiopia has been hit by a wave of protests

led by Oromos, who have been complaining about political and economic marginalisation. The Oromos are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia.

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## Ethiopian PM pushes for unity after months of ethnic violence

Aaron Maasho  
AfricaTech, October 4, 2018



HAWASSA, Ethiopia (Reuters) - Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed told members of his ruling coalition that "an attack on one is an attack on all" on Wednesday as he pushed for unity after months of ethnic violence.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addresses his country's diaspora, the largest outside Ethiopia, calling on them to return, invest and support their native land with the theme "Break The Wall Build The Bridge", in Washington, U.S., July 28, 2018.

Abiy has presided over a series of jolting political and economic changes since coming to office in April - making peace with arch-foe Eritrea, freeing political prisoners, pledging to open up the state-controlled economy and promising to overhaul the security services. But the reforms have not stopped ethnically-charged violence that has escalated since he was

named premier - including in his own native Oromiya region where protesters first took to the streets in 2015 over perceived marginalisation by the state.

“If we are see a developed Ethiopia, we should not commit violence on the basis of ethnicity or religion,” he told about 1,000 delegates at the congress of Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in the southern city of Hawassa. “An attack on one is an attack on all. The displaced of one is the displacement of all. The death of one is the death of all,” he added.

Abiy has promised to push for reconciliation and allowed the leadership of the separatist Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) - previously outlawed as a terrorist organisation - as well as the opposition group Patriotic Ginbot 7 to return from exile. But the fighting has continued. Clashes about 150 km (90 miles) from Hawassa between two ethnic groups, the Oromos and Gedeos, have forced nearly a million people to flee their homes since Abiy took power.

Last week, more than 70,000 people - mostly ethnic Oromos - were targeted by members of other groups in the western state of Benishangul-Gumuz, regional officials said.

## **PAST SACRIFICES**

Abiy, the first leader from the Oromo ethnic group in Ethiopia’s modern history, used his speech to praise past leaders as he sought to reassure the coalition after his changes. “A country develops through transitions and a handover of leadership. The new generation should not blame the old generation but be grateful for their achievements and sacrifice,” he said. “It is not about wiping out history - a history that has brought us here,” Abiy told the audience, many of them wearing T-shirts and hats emblazoned with the logos of the four ethnic groupings in the EPRDF. There was scattered applause through his remarks in a large conference hall.

The 42-year-old former army officer who speaks three Ethiopian languages has delighted many in the country and among its Western backers by ending the military standoff with Eritrea. But there were signs the rapid changes had caused misgivings in some quarters. Two people were killed and scores wounded in a grenade attack on a rally attended by Abiy in June. The Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front, an ethnic Tigrayan movement that had dominated the EPRDF until Abiy’s rise and led the fight against Mengistu, initially warned against making concessions to Eritrea.

Abiy took over after street protests forced the resignation of the last prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, in February. Wednesday’s congress was the party’s first since the unrest started to spread in 2015.

## Ethiopia's new Cabinet 50 percent women, including defense

Africa Report; 16 October 2018

By ELIAS MESERET

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP) — Ethiopia's new Cabinet is now a record 50 percent female, including the country's first woman defense minister, after lawmakers on Tuesday unanimously approved the nominations put forward by reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

"Our women ministers will disprove the old adage that women can't lead," Abiy said while presenting his choices. "This decision is the first in the history of Ethiopia and probably in Africa."

Ethiopia has faced sweeping political and economic reforms since the 42-year-old prime minister took office in April after months of anti-government protests and made pledges that include free and fair elections.

The Horn of Africa power joins a handful of countries, mostly European, where women make up 50 percent or more of ministerial positions, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and U.N. Women. French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in recent years unveiled "gender-balanced" Cabinets.

Aisha Mohammed Musa will lead Ethiopia's defense ministry. Another woman, former House speaker Muferiat Kamil, will lead the new Ministry of Peace at a time when Africa's second most populous country faces sometimes violent ethnic tensions as the wider political freedoms are explored.

The Ministry of Peace will oversee the powerful National Intelligence and Security Service, the Information Network Security Agency, the Federal Police Commission and the Finance Security and Information Center, Abiy's office confirmed Tuesday.

This 20-member Cabinet, trimmed from 28 posts, is the second named since Abiy took office in April. The first was criticized for the low number of female ministers.

Ethiopia has long been considered a patriarchal society and it "suffers from some of the lowest gender equality performance indicators in sub-Saharan Africa," U.N. Women has said. "Women and girls in Ethiopia are strongly disadvantaged compared to boys and men in several areas, including literacy, health, livelihoods and basic human rights."

Recent efforts have been made to show women in more prominent posts. Ethiopian Airlines, which calls itself Africa's largest carrier, has publicized all-female flight crews.

Several African nations have had female defense ministers including South Africa, Central African Republic, Kenya and Guinea-Bissau. And Rwanda has received international recognition

for female representation in government, with women making up 43 percent of its Cabinet and 61 percent of parliament members.

## Ethiopia's PM says soldiers who marched on palace sought to 'abort reforms'

Aaron Maasho

AfricaTech, OCTOBER 18, 2018

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters) - Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said on Thursday that soldiers who marched on his palace last week had had "nefarious aims" to stop reforms and he defended his relaxed attitude to them at the time saying he had sought to defuse tensions.

Several hundred armed soldiers descended on the palace on Oct. 10 and met Abiy in what the government initially said was a bid to press for a rise in pay. State television subsequently showed the 42-year old leader doing push-ups with smiling men in fatigues and red berets, some of whom stood snapping photos on their mobile phones.

"The approach taken (by the soldiers) was not only unconstitutional and dangerous, the intent was to abort reforms," Abiy told lawmakers in an address to parliament in which he gave details of the incident for the first time. "Five to 10 people with nefarious aims" had instructed the soldiers, he added. He gave no further details of the alleged instigators but he said he physically exercised with the soldiers to defuse tensions.

"Had we not taken a cautious approach, it could have led to a dangerous situation. All this took place without a single bullet being fired and a single loss of life," he said, adding unspecified forces "regretted missing out on the opportunity to kill" him. Since his appointment in April, Abiy has presided over a raft of reforms that have turned the region's politics on its head, including the pardoning of dissidents long outlawed by the government. He has also acknowledged and condemned abuses by security forces, even likening them to state terrorism. But his actions have failed to curb violence that has often pitted different ethnic groups against each other. About 2.2 million people out of a population of 100 million have been displaced since last year. In June, a grenade attack attended by tens of thousands of his supporters rattled a rally moments after he finished giving a speech, killing two people.

In recent months, thousands of people were arrested on suspicion of involvement in violence in the capital and its outskirts that left dozens of people dead. State-run media said nearly 1,200 young men were released on Wednesday having spent weeks in detention. "Lawlessness is the norm these days. It is something that is testing the government," Abiy said in parliament. "Unless we collaborate and work hand-in-hand, we may not exist as a country anymore."

# Africa's Longest Insurgency Ended with A Peace Deal in Eritrea

TESFANEWS OCTOBER 25, 2018

BY MILDRED EUROPA TAYLOR | FACE 2 FACE AFRICA



Ethiopia and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) signed a historic peace agreement on 21 October in Asmara, ending the 34-year-old insurgency in the country. The document was signed by FM Workneh Gebeyehu and by Admiral Mohammed-Omar Osman, Chairman of ONLF.

After more than three decades of insurgency between Ethiopia and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) rebels from its Somali Region, the two on Sunday signed a peace deal agreeing to end all hostilities and pursue their political obligations through peaceful means.

The ONLF, formed in 1984, had been fighting for the rights of ethnic Somalis living in eastern Ethiopia to self-determination, as well as a bid for secession.

The peace deal was signed in the Eritrean capital Asmara by Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Workneh Gebeyehu and the vice-president of the Somali regional state, Mustafa Omer.

"The Ethiopian government and ONLF delegations held productive discussions and reached a historic deal that allows the ONLF to undertake a peaceful political struggle in Ethiopia," the foreign ministry said.

Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed, since assuming office in April, promised to deal with ethnic conflicts in the country that have displaced over 2 million people since last year. He has also made attempts to reconcile with several rebel groups in the country.

In July, his administration removed the ONLF from a terror list which prompted the group to declare an indefinite unilateral ceasefire in August.

### **But what is the genesis of the conflict between Ethiopia and the ONLF?**

In 1977, Ethiopia and Somalia got engaged in a territorial conflict over the Ogaden region that is claimed and situated between the two countries.

This territorial dispute got international attention as Ethiopia had the backing of the Soviet Union while Somalia was supported by the United States.

The Border conflict and internal unrest in the Ogaden resumed after Somalia became independent in 1960 led by the Western Somalia Liberation Front of the area who were resisting Ethiopian rule.

Ethiopian leader, Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in September 1974 by the military council known as the Derg and out of the political confusion that ensued arose many separatist groups who were opposed to the Derg. The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) was one of those groups. Made up of Somalis living in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, this group demanded the annexation of the area they controlled to Somalia.

The Derg, by 1977, had gained total control of almost all of Ethiopia, as it suppressed many separatist groups, particularly the WSLF and its supporters. Ethiopia, had, around this time been declared a Marxist state and had been allied with the Soviet Union.

The WSLF, meanwhile, in their fight gained support in terms of weapons and other supplies from the Somali government while the Soviets also supplied their new ally Ethiopia with massive support to the extent of bringing in 15,000 Cuban troops as well as “volunteers” from other communist nations such as Yemen and North Korea when the territorial conflict began. The Somalis, in response, also requested support from the United States, which they received.

When the conflict began in July 1977, the Somali National Army of about 35,000 alongside fifteen thousand WSLF militiamen outnumbered the Ethiopian military but because Ethiopia had superior artillery and air force due to the Soviet support they received, they defeated the Somali Army and the WSLF allies and drove them out.

At the start of the conflict, Ethiopia controlled 10 per cent of the Ogaden region but by March 1978, it had captured almost all of the Ogaden, pushing the Somalis out of the area.

Accounts state that by the early 1980s, the number of refugees in Somalia from the Ogaden exceeded 1,500,000, most of them women and children.

Since the 1980s, the region has continued to experience periodic unrest, including tensions after the disputed 2005 general elections and the civil unrest in Somalia and Ethiopia's intervention there in 2006.

Thus, the Ethiopian government has had military presence in the region that is said to contain four trillion cubic feet of gas and oil deposits.

The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) which was formed in 1984, has been one of the groups spearheading these periodic insurgencies.

Its massive attack was in April 2007 when its fighters killed about 74 people in an attack on a Chinese-run oil facility. This compelled the Ethiopian government to further crack down on the activities of the ONLF rebels that have claimed lives and caused other human rights abuses.

Following the group's indefinite unilateral ceasefire in August after their removal from the terror list and Sunday's peace agreement, the two sides have now agreed to end all hostilities and form a joint committee to discuss the root causes of the conflict.

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## **Ethiopia's parliament approves Sahle-Work Zewde as first female president**

Writing by George Obulutsa; Editing by Toby Chopra

Reuters; October 25, 2018

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters) - Ethiopia's parliament has approved senior diplomat Sahle-Work Zewde as the country's first female president, proceedings on state television showed, cementing another shift in the country's political system from Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Sahle-Work is at present U.N. under-secretary general and special representative of the secretary general to the African Union. She replaces Mulatu Teshome Wirtu, who tendered his resignation to parliament earlier on Wednesday.

The president's post is a ceremonial one in Ethiopia. The prime minister, who is the head of state, holds executive power. "In a historic move, the two Houses has elected Ambassador Shalework Zewde as the next President of #Ethiopia. She is the first female head of state in modern Ethiopia," Fitsum Arega, Abiy's chief of staff, said on Twitter. "In a patriarchal society such as ours, the appointment of a female head of state not only sets the standard for the future but also normalises women as decision-makers in public life."

Last week, when the prime minister reshuffled his cabinet, he appointed 10 female ministers, making Ethiopia the third country in Africa, after Rwanda and Seychelles, to achieve gender parity in their cabinets.

“When there is no peace in country, mothers will be frustrated. Therefore, we need to work on peace for the sake of our mothers,” Sahle-Work told parliament after her approval.

Teshome, who had held the office for five years, departed one year ahead of his term ending, saying he wanted to be part of change and reforms. Sahle-Work becomes the fourth president since the ruling EPRDF coalition came to power.

Since his appointment in April, Abiy has presided over a raft of reforms that have turned the region’s politics on its head, including the pardoning of dissidents long outlawed by the government.

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## Ethiopia to launch “\$7bn worth” of solar, hydropower and highway PPP schemes

Global Construction Review; October 29 2018

Needing more electricity to power its growing manufacturing sector, Ethiopia’s Office of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) announced \$7bn worth of energy and road schemes on Friday, 26 October.

Dr Teshome Tafese, director general of the office, told state broadcaster Fana the projects will be launched this fiscal year after necessary tendering procedures. The embrace of PPPs, in which private sector consortiums finance construction of the asset and seek profit from the revenue it generates, comes as concerns grow over the fast-developing country’s debt levels. Ethiopia has been rapidly commissioning industrial parks to shift its economy from agriculture toward light manufacturing.

Schemes announced Friday include 14 power projects and three highways. The highways are from Adama to Awash (125km), Awash to Mieso (72km) and Mieso to Dire Dawa (160km). According to *New Business Ethiopia (NBE)*, the combined value of the highway schemes is just over \$1.1bn.

The 14 power projects include a mix of hydropower and solar schemes. *NBE* lists the hydro-power schemes as: the \$1.2bn, 424MW Halele Warabessa project; the \$984m, 798MW Dabus project; the \$793m, 469MW Genale Dawa 5 project; and \$729m, 280MW Chemoga Yeda 1 and 2 projects.

Solar schemes itemised by *NBE* involve eight projects, each with generating capacity ranging from 100MW to 150MW, in Welenchiti, Weranso, Mekele, Metema, Hurso and Metehara, among others.

Investment sought for the solar schemes totals \$1.17bn, according to *NBE*'s list. The investment values itemised total just under \$6bn; it is not known if the list is comprehensive.

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## **Tension Runs High in Oromia After OLF Fighters, Gov't Forces Clash**

BY ADDIS STANDARD

TESFANEWS OCTOBER 29, 2018

Tensions were high since the weekend following clashes between supporters of rebel group Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) led by Dawud Ibsa and security forces, DW Amharic reported citing eyewitnesses as its source of information.

The BBC Amharic on its part reported there were clashes between OLF militiamen and federal security forces this morning in Kelem Wellega zone Gidami woreda, Kelem town. Citing its anonymous sources, the BBC Amharic also said that civilians were in hiding for fear of their lives.

Other sources also tell Addis Standard that Dawud Ibsa was blocked from traveling beyond Nekemte on Saturday on 27 October by his own supporters and armed militiamen who suspected his trip to that part of the country was part of efforts to disarm OLF's militia. The same sources say he was forced to cancel his trip and return to Addis Abeba on the same day. It is not clear why he was in the area, where he draws a large support from.

Pictures spreading on social media show several protests taking place today in cities and towns in west Wellega zone of the Oromia regional state in western Ethiopia by supporters of the OLF demanding a stop in attempts by federal government to disarm the rebel group.

DW Amharic added that Oromia Regional State President Lemma Megerssa has on Saturday confirmed the the news that OLF supporters have blocked business activities in the area and affected the daily routine of civilians. He denounced the confrontations and stressed that on the struggle of OLF supporters was "not in the right discourse". He asked for calm and law and order, DW Amharic reported.



Ethiopian government forces reportedly clashed with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) militias in Southern Ethiopia on Friday.

The escalation of tensions happened even after a statement issued by OLF on Saturday urging its supporters for calm. However, the statement made a vague reference to the process of disarmament when it condemned the narrative of one disarming the other as a highly distorted narrative and should be treaded carefully.

In what appears to be an apparent condemnation of online criticisms against it by pro-government individuals, OLF's statement also said that such distorted narrative of disarming its militia should not be disseminated by individuals who are not concerned with the process.

President Lemma on his part said that disagreements between OLF and Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) should not create opportunities to those who want to hurt the Oromo people and appealed for OLF's supporters not to take to the streets until after the issues were resolved the government amicably. Our people have passed the point for staging a protest," Lemma was quoted as saying.

### **Several Killed in Clashes Between OLF and Gov't Forces**

Ethiopian government forces clashed with combatants of the separatist Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Borena, Southern Ethiopia on Friday.

According to ESAT sources, at least five government forces were killed in the fight while about 30 OLF soldiers were injured. It was not immediately clear how many, if any, combatants were killed on the OLF side.

The source said government forces were patrolling the main highway near Gerba town, that was reportedly blocked when they confronted OLF combatants.

Five of the seven government soldiers injured in the fight had died on arrival at the Bule-Hora Hospital, according to the source, who also said two soldiers were sent to the Dilla University Hospital.

The main highway to Moyale, Ethiopia’s southern border town, remains closed.

Meanwhile, president of the country’s Oromo region told Deutsche Welle Amharic that the decision by some youth to side with the OLF against a well equipped national army was not a wise decision on their part. Lema Megersa called on the youth to return home to their peaceful lives and adhere to a peaceful form of a struggle if they want to assert their political rights.



The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) is one of the armed opposition fronts that had recently returned to Ethiopia from their base in Eritrea after a call by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who extended an olive branch to all the opposition to come home and take part in a peaceful political process.

Despite a call by the government for all groups to lay down arms, the OLF remains armed, and in fact, it’s combatants have reportedly control some areas in the south and western Ethiopia.

According to sources, OLF and the Oromo youth network called the Qeerroo have taken control of West Guji zone.

Ethnic clashes between the Guji (Oromo) and the Gedeo ethnic groups in June and July resulted in the death of over 300 people and the displacement of about 1 million Gedeos from their homes. It is feared that the safety of those who had recently returned to their villages is in great danger, the source said.

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## Ethiopia says security agents attacked PM's rally, orders arrests

AFRICATECH, NOVEMBER 12, 2018

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed speaks during a media conference at the Elysee Palace in Paris, France, October 29, 2018. Michel Euler/Pool via REUTERS/File Photo

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Ethiopia's attorney general accused members of the security service of carrying out a grenade attack on a rally attended by the prime minister, as he announced details of a string of investigations that struck at the heart of the establishment.

Members of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) were involved in the blast that killed two people in June, soon after newly-elected reformist prime minister Abiy Ahmed left the stage, attorney general Berhanu Tsegaye told reporters on Monday. Under other investigations, Berhanu added, arrest warrants have been issued for 36 security agents accused of rights abuses and corruption, and for more than 30 officials from a military-run firm, where he said inquiries had uncovered mismanagement. Reuters could not immediately contact the security service, or the industrial conglomerate named by the attorney general - Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC). Abiy has pushed through a series of jolting reforms since coming to power in April, including a peace deal with neighbouring Eritrea, a pledge to open up state-dominated sectors to private investors and promises to rein in the security services.

"For six years METEC made international procurements totalling \$2 billion without any bidding processes," Berhanu said, without naming the international firms involved. The attorney general said the investigation involved METEC's procurement procedures and its contract for the Grand Renaissance Dam, the centrepiece of Ethiopia's bid to become Africa's biggest power exporter.

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## Ethiopia arrests former deputy spy chief Yared Zerihun

15 November 2018

**Ethiopia's former deputy intelligence chief has been arrested amid investigations into corruption and human rights abuses committed by the security forces.**

Yared Zerihun, the former deputy head of the national security agency, is one of more than 60 intelligence and military figures arrested since Monday. Mr Yared has not yet commented on the allegations. The move has been widely welcomed by human rights groups.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed promised a strong line on corruption and human rights abuses when he came to power in April this year and has passed a string of reforms, including ending a two-decade conflict with neighbouring Eritrea. It is not clear and he has not yet been charged.

However, Attorney General Berhanu Tsegaye has accused "the senior leadership of the national security agency" of involvement in a grenade attack at a rally attended by the prime minister in June, in which two people were killed. However, he declined to name a suspect.

### **Who else has been arrested?**

So far this week, 27 people have been detained over alleged crimes committed at the Metals and Engineering Corporation (Metec), Ethiopia's military-run conglomerate - including its former head, who was arrested as he tried to flee the country.

According to state-affiliated television Fana Broadcasting, police have also arrested the head of the security division at state-owned Ethio Telecom network.

### **Why now?**

On Monday, the attorney general announced that a five-month investigation into Metec had uncovered vast corruption. Ethiopian state media then broadcast a documentary alleging that the conglomerate had been involved in illegal arms smuggling, including to Somalia. BBC Africa Security Correspondent Tomi Oladipo says this week's arrests continues Mr Abiy's pattern of reforms since he took office in April this year. In August, Metec's contract to build a major new dam on the River Nile was revoked and handed to foreign companies. Prime Minister Abiy also replaced a number of senior military figures in June. Last month, a group of several hundred soldiers, some armed, went to see the prime minister - reportedly to demand a pay rise. The situation was defused, with pictures released showing him doing press up with some of them. However, he later suggested that some had been trying to kill him.

### **Ethiopia PM takes on military elite** **By Emmanuel Igunza, BBC News, Ethiopia**

A year ago, many Ethiopians would not have dared to imagine the spectacle they are being treated to right now, as the government intensifies the crackdown on corrupt officials and people it alleges have carried out gross human rights violations.

The country has watched in disbelief - and then cheered as former high-ranking and powerful military and intelligence officials have been arrested on live television, handcuffed while surrounded by heavily armed security personnel and bundled into police vehicles. Times have indeed changed.

The corruption scandals now facing the Metals and Engineering Company have not been a secret in the country - they have been whispered in homes, pubs and coffee places.

Other officials have already appeared in court facing charges that include the torture, rape and sodomy of arrested individuals. These are again claims very familiar to thousands of Ethiopians, who over the years have been arbitrarily arrested and detained.

Since coming into office in April, Prime Minister Abiy has endeared himself to the public, but by taking on the powerful military elite this week he has won over even some of his doubters who thought he didn't have it in him.

### Abiy's rapid pace of reform

- 2 April - becomes prime minister after unexpected resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn
- May - frees thousands of political detainees, including opposition leader Andargachew Tsege
- 5 June - lifts state of emergency two months early
- 5 June - agrees to accept border ruling giving disputed territory to Eritrea
- 9 July - alongside the Eritrean president declares the end of war between the two countries
- 11 September - reopens land border with Eritrea
- 16 October - appoints women to half of ministerial posts

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## Ogaden Liberation Front Departs to Ethiopia

TESFANEWS, NOVEMBER 21, 2018

BY SHABAIT



The Ogaden Liberation Front (ONLF) has finally returned to Ethiopia to pursue peaceful political struggle as Agreed with the Ethiopian gov't in Asmara.

In accordance with the Peace Agreement reached between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Ogaden Liberation Front on 21 October in Asmara, the ONLF departed to Ethiopia to pursue its political activities through peaceful means.

The contingent were flown from Asmara to Jijiga, capital of the Somali Regional State, SRS by an Ethiopian Airlines flight. They were received with cultural displays upon their arrival at the airport.

The agreement reached between the two sides included that they end hostilities towards each other, the ONLF to pursue its political objectives through peaceful means, with assurances that the FDRE will respect and uphold the provisions of its constitution as well as to establish joint committee to further discuss substantive issues pertaining to the root causes of the conflict in the region through continuous engagement inside the country.

The agreement between the FDRE and ONLF was signed by Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the Ethiopian side and by Admiral Mohammed-Omar Osman, Chairman of ONLF.

The ONLF members indicated that the objective of their movement was to ensure justice and that they are departing home encouraged by the new positive development in Ethiopia.

It is to be recalled that the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM), Arbegnoch Ginbot 7, Benshangul People's Democratic Movement, Oromo Liberation Front and the Amhara Democratic Movement Forces signed similar agreement with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

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Ethiopia – Djibouti

## **Botched Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway Project a Warning to Belt and Road Investors**

By Eric Ng; SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

TESFANEWS, OCTOBER 28, 2018

**Planning behind many China-led projects abroad [in Africa] has been ‘downright inadequate’ and costly**



Lessons should be drawn from the poorly executed US\$4 billion Addis Ababa-Djibouti freight railway, warns head of China’s export credit insurer Sinosure.

The planning behind many of China’s major infrastructure projects abroad has been “downright inadequate”, leading to huge financial losses, according to the head of the country’s state export credit insurer.

Wang Wen, of China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation, known as Sinosure, said Chinese developers and financiers of projects in developing nations supported by Beijing’s “Belt and Road Initiative” need to step up their risk management to avoid disaster. He cited the mistakes of a major railway project in Africa that has cost Sinosure close to US\$1 billion in losses, according to its chief economist.

Lessons should be drawn from the poorly executed US\$4 billion Addis Ababa-Djibouti freight railway that was inaugurated early this year but has already had to restructure its debt

because of underuse caused by power shortages, Wang told a belt and road infrastructure financing forum in Hong Kong earlier this month. “Ethiopia’s planning capabilities are lacking, but even with the help of Sinosure and the lending Chinese bank it was still insufficient.” He said other China-backed projects plagued by poor preparation have included sugar refineries that have lacked a supply of sugar beet, and underused railways in Latin America. His comments were a stark reminder to Hong Kong financiers and investors at the forum looking to tap belt and road opportunities of the risks of backing projects in developing nations.

Put forward five years ago, President Xi Jinping’s “Belt and Road Initiative” aims to create modern-day Silk Road trading routes across Eurasia and Africa by building railways, roads and ports. It has, however, so far relied on state financing, which has raised concerns about its sustainability and political impact.

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority has been working hard to make the city a financing hub for belt and road projects.

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, Africa’s first cross-country electric railway, was built by China Rail Engineering Corporation and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation and backed by US\$3.3 billion of loans from the Export-Import Bank of China.

Sinosure, which provides payment guarantee to the project, is now almost US\$1 billion out of pocket on the 756-km railway that gives landlocked Ethiopia sea access through neighbouring Djibouti, said Wang.

Many large projects in nations supported by the belt and road strategy are financed by Chinese banks, often with payment guarantees or default insurance provided by Sinosure. Others are provided by multilateral policy banks such as the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The rest are commercial-oriented projects such as power plants and toll roads that commercial banks are willing to lend to.

Policy banks’ so-called “concessionary lending” at favourable terms to borrowers is mostly off-limits to international commercial banks because of their profit objectives. There have long been calls for more private sector funding. “[Belt and road] projects are such a mammoth undertaking, to realise them we have to get commercial capital involved,” said Peter Burnett, Standard Chartered’s head of corporate finance for Greater China and North Asia in an interview. “That is going to happen and we are beginning to see it.”

Although Asia has a huge amount of private savings looking for safe long-term investments, suitable projects are hard to find within the region and most of the funds end up in developed markets, said AIA’s group chief investment officer Mark Konyn. The life insurance giant has doubled its allocation to infrastructure to around US\$20 billion in the past decade, he added.

To help change this, the Hong Kong government’s mortgage insurer Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation earlier this month said it plans to buy a diverse basket of infrastructure loans in

nations not limited to the belt and road’s geographical scope next year and explore the idea of “securitising” or repackaging them into securities to be sold to investors.

HSBC Greater China chief executive Helen Wong said the initiative would help “recycle” commercial banks’ capital to be redeployed into other greenfield infrastructure projects, besides enabling wider capital markets participation in regional infrastructure development.



Djibouti

## Indebted Ethiopia gets major break on Chinese loan for Djibouti railway

12 September 2018 | By GCR



Photograph: Train crosses the Holhol bridge, Djibouti, part of the new railway to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**China has given Ethiopia 20 extra years to pay back a loan for its transformative railway to Djibouti as concerns over the African country's debt load grow.**

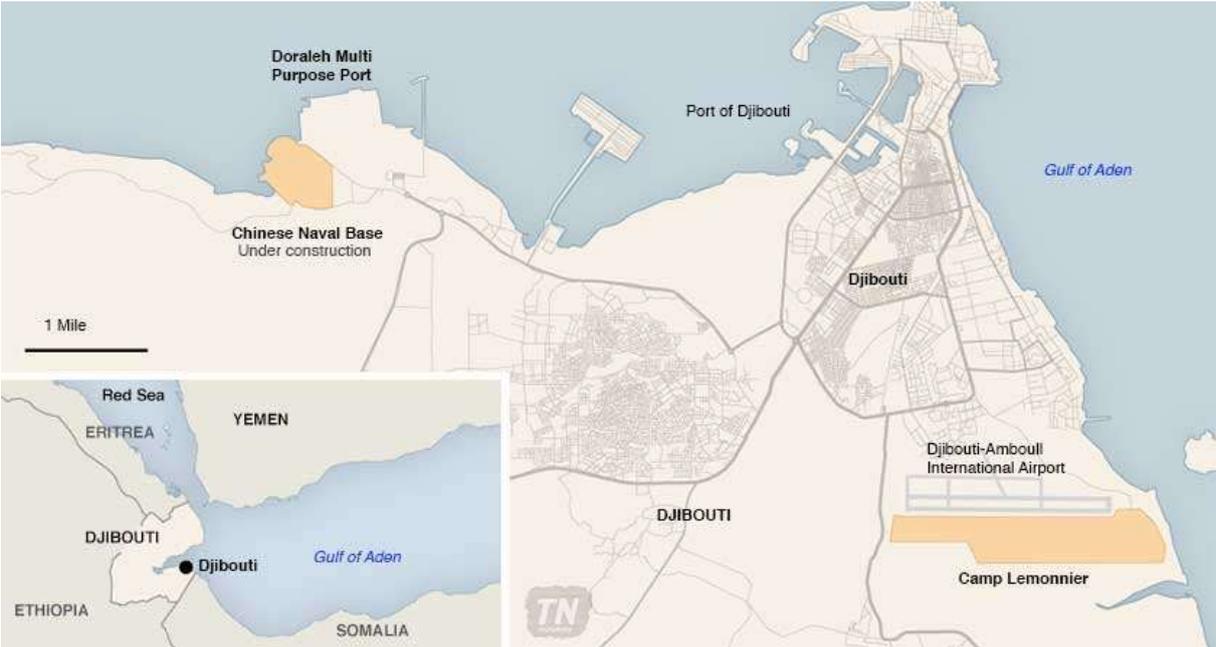
The restructuring of the loan triples the time landlocked Ethiopia has to repay what it owes for the \$4bn, 750km standard gauge line to the port of Djibouti, which opened in January last year. The original terms stipulated 10 years. China's Export-Import Bank loaned Ethiopia some 70% of the total project cost, reports Reuters. Ethiopia's prime minister Abiy Ahmed announced the welcome news last week after returning from the 7th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summit in Beijing. China is a major lender to Ethiopia, but it has voiced concerns over the country's rising debt. In July China's mission to the African Union in Addis Ababa said on its website that creditors were worried about repayment risks as Ethiopia's debt reached 59% of GDP, Reuters reported earlier. "During our stay, we had the opportunity to enact limited restructuring of some of our loans," Abiy said. "In particular, the loan for the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway which was meant to be paid over 10 years has now been extended to 30 years." In a further sign of China's new caution over infrastructure debt in

Africa, Beijing declined to commit to a \$190m grant for a section of Kenya’s new cross-country railway, asking for a comprehensive feasibility study first.

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## Risks Bubbling Beneath Djibouti’s Foreign Bases

TESFANEWS, NOVEMBER 29, 2018



Political and economic stability has underpinned the tiny African nation’s attractiveness to foreign militaries but several underlying issues could soon break the calm.

BY BERTIL LINTNER | ASIA TIMES

The Republic of Djibouti is on any measure one of the most stable countries in eastern Africa. There are no known Islamic radicals here and, unlike its immediate neighbor Somalia and Yemen across the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, it is not plagued by a vicious civil war.

The 1998-2018 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, two other next door countries, significantly did not spill over into Djibouti.

It has a French-style judicial system and a popularly elected National Assembly. Ismail Omar Guelleh has been the small country’s elected president since 1999 and he appears to be firmly entrenched in power.

Djibouti’s currency, the franc, is freely convertible and the country has adequate financial services with seven for-profit banks and four Islamic ones — more than enough for the needs of foreign investors and its less than a million inhabitants.

With all that, combined with Djibouti's strategic location at the entrance of the Red Sea, it is not surprising that several foreign powers, namely the United States, Japan, France, Italy and, most recently, China, have chosen to establish and maintain military bases here.

But underneath the veneer of stability and calm, there are three major issues that could spark turmoil.

According to a March 2018 report by Center for Global Development, a US-based think tank, Djibouti has borrowed more money from China to pay for infrastructure projects than it can analysts doubt it can afford.

For decades, trade with Ethiopia's land-locked but fast-growing economy has been conducted through Djibouti's ports. But a peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea, concluded in July this year, could open a new trade route from Ethiopia to the Eritrean city of Massawa, once one of the most important ports on the Red Sea.

If and when that happens, analysts say Djibouti stands to lose much of the US\$1 billion it earns annually in revenues from exports and imports passing through its ports.

A third factor is the future of the Guelleh regime. There is an ugly face behind its friendly façade of democratic institutions with scores of political prisoners, an authoritarian state machinery and strict libel laws that have gagged media coverage of official corruption or abuse of power allegations.

In 2007, the opposition-oriented *Le Renouveau* newspaper was closed down over an article alleging that a businessman had paid a bribe to receive favorable terms to the national bank's governor, Guelleh's brother-in-law.

Since then, there has been virtually no critical coverage of Guelleh's government in the domestic media. In 2011, Djibouti's political rights rating on Freedom House's Index declined from "partly free" to "not free" due to constitutional changes that allowed Guelleh to run for a third time in office beyond a previous legal two term limit.

In that same year, Djibouti was affected by the Arab Spring uprisings against authoritarian regimes in North Africa and the Middle East. A series of protests broke out against Guelleh's long-serving government, but were quickly suppressed as demonstrators clashed with riot police.

Reporters Without Borders, a France-based press freedom advocacy group, claims that torture is common in Djibouti prisons, while Freedom House says that security forces frequently make illegal arrests. Like other long-running authoritarian regimes, Guelleh's could face internal unrest simply because there are no other outlets for dissent.

But the most serious issue is the debt load that Djibouti now faces. According to the Center for Global Development report, Djibouti is projected to take on public debt equivalent to 88% of the country's total gross domestic product of US\$1.72 billion, with China owning the lion's share of the liabilities.

Comparisons have been made with Sri Lanka, which was recently unable to service its US\$8 billion worth of debt to Chinese banks and as a result had to sign over a 70% stake and a 99-year lease of its Hambantota port to China Merchant Port Holdings.

The same state-owned Chinese company was involved in building the Doraleh port in Djibouti. A new railway connecting Doraleh with Ethiopia’s capital Addis Ababa was built with a US\$4 billion loan from China, though Ethiopia is more exposed than Djibouti for the line’s financing.

In September this year, China had to slow the financing of other projects in Ethiopia as doubts grew over the profitability of investments there and the country’s ability to repay its loans.



Chinese and African workers on the Addis Ababa–Djibouti railway. (Photo: Qin bin/Imaginechina)

In all, Chinese interests have provided nearly US\$1.4 billion, or the equivalent of 75% of Djibouti’s GDP, for various projects in a country now being dubbed as China’s “gateway to Africa”.

Those loans have gone towards upgrading Djibouti’s airport and ports, building a new oil terminal and road construction projects. In 2017, China replaced the US as Djibouti’s top source of foreign investment. Those burgeoning ties to China, not surprisingly, has stoked concerns in Washington.

In July this year, two US senators, James Inhofe from Oklahoma and Martin Heinrich from New Mexico, reportedly wrote a letter to National Security Adviser John Bolton saying that Guelleh seems willing to “sell his country to the highest bidder”, a not-so-veiled reference to China. The letter argued the trend was undermining US military interests in the region.

There is also rising local resentment about China’s growing inroads and increasing hold over the country. “The Chinese treat us with no respect, they shout and push us around. And they bring in their own workers for their projects, ignoring us locals,” said a hospitality company employee in the capital Djibouti City. “Ten years from now, China will own the whole country,” said another company employee with a caustic laugh.

But Djibouti is hardly in a position to push back against China and its ambitious US\$1 trillion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of which Djibouti’s ports and railways on the Horn of Africa will play pivotal roles.

A complete Chinese takeover of the port in Doraleh along the lines of what happened to Sri Lanka’s Hambantota could have consequences for supplying the 4,000 or so troops that the US maintains at its base in Djibouti.

At the same time, there are signs that China may not be entirely pleased with the Guelleh regime. According to a report by the Australia-based Lowy Institute in May this year, “the smell of bad business, coupled with corruption and bureaucracy issues, have soured attitudes in Beijing. Djibouti did not help matters by announcing that it would re-tender contracts with China on two airports last October.”

Observers believe the move is likely posturing on the part of the Djibouti government and given Beijing’s strong and rising influence over the country that Chinese companies will ultimately get the re-tendered contracts.



Locals hold Chinese and Djiboutian national flags as they wait for Djibouti’s President before the opening of a China-backed 1,000-unit housing construction project in Djibouti, July 4, 2018. (Photo: AFP/Yasuyoshi Chiba)

According to The Maritime Executive, a leading publication of global maritime news, “Djibouti is not a signatory to the World Bank’s International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes. Given the authoritarian nature of the government, the level of opacity in business transactions is likely to expose companies to corruption and compliance risks.”

The Djibouti government’s takeover this year of the Doraleh Container Terminal from contracted Dubai operator DP World and subsequent non-adherence to a ruling in favor of the company handed down

by the London Court of International Arbitration underscored the risk of doing business with the Guelleh regime.

While the West may lament such arbitrary and legally questionable moves, without a change in government, Western nations have few avenues to force change. And despite the setbacks for China over the airport projects, its dominant role in Djibouti is still secure.

China's emerging strong position in Djibouti will inevitably have implications for the geopolitical balance of the entire Indian Ocean region. The question is whether the present political stability will hold, or if Djibouti's authoritarian regime will be plunged into the same political pandemonium that has plagued its neighbors.

If that eventually happens, Djibouti's current balancing act between Chinese and Western base operators could be thrown off-kilter. For the tiny, strategically positioned nation on the Horn of Africa is already a superpower playground where even the slightest misstep could seemingly trigger a wider conflict.

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Somaliland

## Competing with Djibouti, Somaliland Offers Ethiopia a Pipeline Alternative

BY NIZAR MANEK | BLOOMBERG

TESFANEWS OCTOBER 28, 2018



Aspiring nation poses a direct challenge to Djibouti's conduit plan

A self-declared republic in Somalia asked Ethiopia to reroute its nascent oil and gas exports via a proposed new pipeline, challenging Djibouti's long-held plans for a conduit.

The overture from Somaliland comes as Ethiopia begins exploiting an estimated 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and test-drilling for oil in its restive east. It's the latest bid by the Somali territory, which has sought statehood for almost three decades and plans its own crude output, to leverage its strategic location near the Red Sea to attract major foreign infrastructure projects.

"Why not send natural gas and crude oil from the Ogaden basin to Somaliland's coast at Berbera?" Somaliland Minister of Energy and Minerals Jama Mohamoud Igel said in an interview, referring to the region's main port. Such a pipeline would be more "cost-effective" at only 400 kilometers (249 miles), rather than the 700 kilometers to Djibouti, he said.

Somaliland's offer is a bold challenge to Djibouti, a tiny former French colony that's benefited from its location on a global shipping choke-point to host the U.S. and China's only official permanent military facilities on the continent. It comes as the broader Horn of Africa region

sees dramatic changes, with landlocked giant Ethiopia promising multi-party democracy and peace with long-time foe Eritrea.

### **Unrecognized State**

Somaliland, which unilaterally declared independence from civil war-ravaged Somalia in 1991, isn't officially recognized by any other nation. Speaking in the self-proclaimed capital, Hargeisa, Jama didn't specify which officials he'd made the suggestion to, saying "the decision is for the Ethiopian government."

The government will also approach GCL-Poly Energy Holdings Ltd., which is pumping the fuel, over its proposal, Jama said. A partnership between GCL-Poly and the closely held Hong Kong-based Golden Concord Group signed five production-sharing agreements with Ethiopia in 2013 to explore in the Ogaden basin.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has said gas exports to Djibouti will begin in 2021, two years later than initially planned, and bolster what's already Africa's fastest-growing economy.

The chairman of Djibouti's ports authority, Aboubaker Omar Hadi, said he wasn't aware of the offer, but GCL-Poly and his government had already signed the contract for a pipeline. "Business is about competition," he said by email.

### **Trade Flows**

An Ethiopian spokesman for the mines and energy ministry, Mikahil Mengesha, referred requests for comment to an official at the institution's Petroleum Licensing & Administration Directorate, calls to whom didn't connect. Tedla Minda, a senior accountant at GCL-Poly's Ethiopian branch, said he would forward emailed questions to the general manager.

Berbera in Somaliland is already the site of a United Arab Emirates military facility, as well as a port being built by DP World Ltd., which the Dubai state-controlled harbor operator says will help boost trade flows to the U.A.E.

Somaliland, which is bigger than the U.S. state of Florida, is also planning its own oil production. Genel Energy Plc, an oil company founded by Nathaniel Rothschild and ex-BP Plc Chief Executive Officer Tony Hayward, is preparing to drill as many as three wells in the territory's east, where it has production-sharing agreements, Jama said.

Genel will start drilling at one well in the fourth-quarter of 2019, near Burao in the Togdheer region, according to Jama and Genel's communications head, Andrew Benbow. "There is oil for sure, but they have to come to know if this is viable for commercial business," Jama said.

## Seeking Jade

RAK Gas LLC of the U.A.E., which has production-sharing agreements for two blocks south and east of Berbera, is in talks with Genel over co-drilling arrangements, according to Jama. The company didn't respond to two emailed requests for comment sent to an address on its website.

Three Chinese companies will explore with local partners for jade in southeast Berbera, between the Genel and RAK gas blocks and near the U.A.E. base, according to Jama.

He said unidentified Canadian, Chinese, Norwegian and British companies are interested in exploring three offshore blocks on the approach to the Bab el-Mandeb, where the Red Sea meets the Gulf of Aden. Chinese and British companies are also in talks over two further on-shore blocks at Somaliland's border with Ethiopia.

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United Nations

## Horn of Africa on a Positive Note at the UN General Assembly Agenda

BY ABDI LATIF DAHIR | QUARTZ AFRICA  
TESFANEWS, SEPTEMBER 25, 2018



“Despite the chaos and confusion in our world, I see winds of hope blowing around the globe. Just days ago, I witnessed the signing of a historic peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea in Saudi Arabia” – UN Chief Antonio Guterres at UNGA

World leaders gather in New York this week to tackle a plethora of global problems, from climate change and migration to humanitarian disasters and war. Amid all these challenges, there is at least one positive note: The Horn of Africa’s swift and crucial diplomatic turnaround.

After decades of hostility and rivalry, a recent thaw in relations between nations in the region have shocked observers and brought hope for long-term peace. In June, Ethiopia and Eritrea ceased decades-long hostilities, agreed to reopen borders and embassies and resumed flights between their capitals. The following month, Eritrea and Somalia restored relations, after nearly 15 years of animosity with Mogadishu accusing Asmara of funneling money to insurgents.

On Sept. 11, Eritrea followed suit by signing an accord with Djibouti after more than a decade of border disputes over the Dumeira mountain and Dumeira island along the Red Sea. The next day, South Sudan’s warring leaders gathered in Addis Ababa and signed a deal to end the brutal five-year war that has ravaged the world’s youngest nation.

A historic “wind of hope” is blowing in the Horn of Africa, United Nations secretary general António Guterres recently said, adding the rapprochement represents a significant moment for global peace.

### **The Abiy effect**

Changes in the region were precipitated by Ethiopia’s election of Abiy Ahmed Ali, a 42-year-old former minister with a doctorate in conflict resolution. Abiy, a member of the country’s Oromo community, was picked to head the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front coalition after years of anti-government protests led by his own people. The Oromo, along with the Amhara, had agitated against the Tigray-dominated government, demanding land reform, full political participation, and an end to human rights abuses.

Abiy’s ascension as Africa’s youngest leader was also predicated on the resignation of premier Hailemariam Desalegn, who left in February to pave the way for “sustainable peace and democracy.”

Abiy didn’t disappoint. After taking over, he immediately ended an internet blackout, released journalists and critics, engaged exiled opposition groups, closed notorious prisons, and promised to open up the economy.

He also reached out to long-time foe Eritrea, saying Ethiopia will fully accept the terms of an agreement signed in 2000 which ended the war between the two nations over a disputed border. He also cooled tense relations with Egypt over sharing the Nile waters, flew to Mogadishu to solidify bilateral and trade relations, and oversaw the first meeting in two years between South Sudanese president Salva Kiir and his arch-rival, Riek Machar.

By breaking with the past, Abiy “ushered in a new administration that has prioritized regional integration, and provided an opportunity to pursue new relationships without the legacy of historical baggage,” says Omar Mahmood, a researcher with the Institute for Security Studies in Addis Ababa.

### **The (growing) role of Saudi Arabia and the UAE**

The second important shift in relations was also the result of back-channel talks facilitated by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates between Ethiopia and Eritrea, says Jason Mosley, a research associate at the African Studies Center at Oxford University. The two nations are leading the military coalition prosecuting the war in Yemen, and have pushed their presence in the Horn to counter Iranian influence.

Mosely says “the increasingly proactive and robust security posture” was heightened following the Qatar-Gulf crisis that began last year. The Saudi-UAE breakthrough in the region has, however, raised concerns of a new scramble in a geostrategic region already packed with competing global powers.

## **Guaranteeing success**

The policy shifts are now set to create a conducive moment for economic cooperation in the region. With over 100 million people, landlocked Ethiopia has one of the world's fastest-growing economies. Djibouti and Somalia are both located at a critical corridor for international shipping while Eritrea's Red Sea coast has untapped oil and gas reserves.

Mahmood says Ethiopia's bet on manufacturing and exports could be a good spring-board to guarantee the peace deals' success in the long run. "There is a clear strategy behind the pursuit of economic integration, which should, in turn, reduce the prospect of political competition in the Horn."

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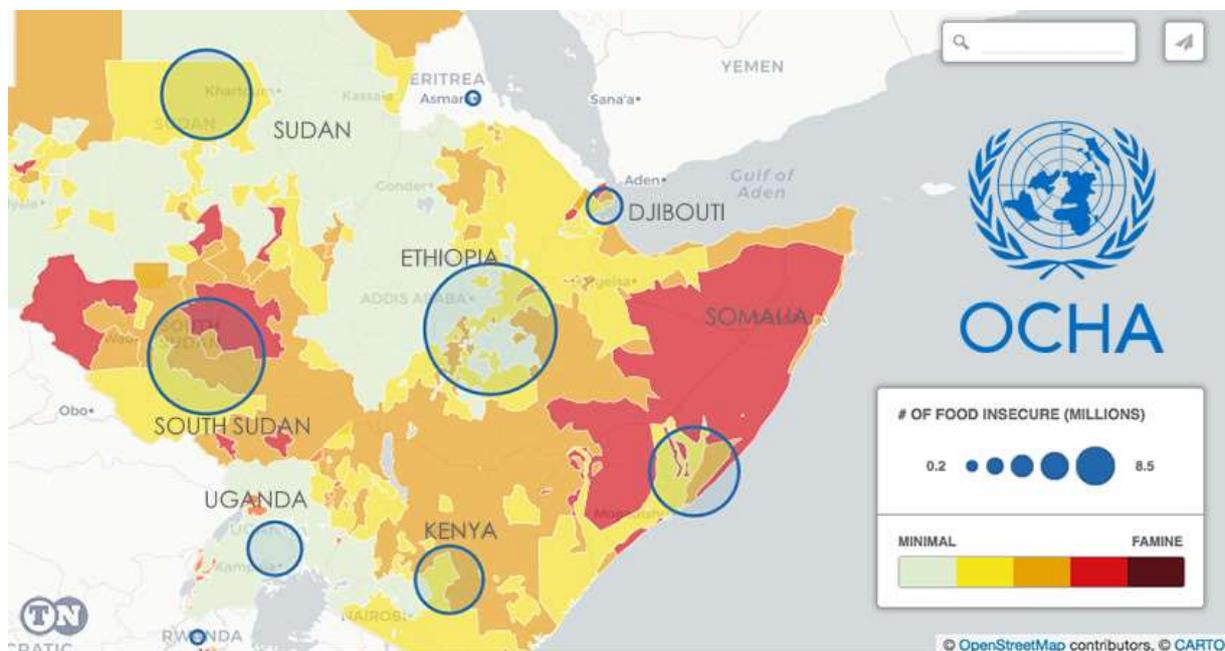
## Horn of Africa

# UN Says 22.4 million People in the Horn of Africa Severely Food Insecure

TESFANEWS OCTOBER 4, 2018

BY XINHUA

**UN-OCHA: 700,000 people (Kenya), 1.6 million people (Somalia), 6.1 million people (South Sudan), 7.9 million people (Ethiopia) and 6.2 million people (Sudan) are food insecure.**



Horn of Africa Food Insecurity Outlook. According to UN OCHA, 22.4 million people in the Horn of Africa region are food insecure and need food aid.

The United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) revealed on Wednesday that 22.4 million people in the Horn of Africa region need food aid.

In a press statement, UN-OCHA, said 700,000 people in Kenya, 1.6 million people in Somalia, 6.1 million people in South Sudan, 7.9 million people in Ethiopia and 6.2 million people in Sudan are food insecure.

UN-OCHA said conflict and internal violence has contributed to a spike in the number of food insecure people in Sudan and South Sudan, although sustained humanitarian response and good rainfall in Somalia has helped to slightly decrease the number of food insecure people in Somalia.

UN-OCHA further said the Horn of Africa region is also suffering from displacement crisis mainly because of armed conflict and internal violence, mainly in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan.

Ethnic violence along the common border of Ethiopia's Gedeo zone in Southern regional and West Guji zone in Oromia regional state since April has led to the displacement of around 960,000 Ethiopians, contributing to a dramatic spike in the number of internally displaced people in Ethiopia in recent months.

The UN-OCHA report also revealed conflicts have led to the creation of around 3.82 million refugees in and from the Horn of Africa region.

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## Washington Wakes Up to East Africa's Importance

TESFANEWS, NOVEMBER 30, 2018

BY STRATFOR

The Horn of Africa is in the midst of profound change. From a summer peace deal between longtime enemies Ethiopia and Eritrea to multibillion-dollar infrastructure projects, the region is transforming, providing opportunities for outside powers to enhance their economic influence.

In recent months, Russia and China's interest in sub-Saharan Africa has forced the United States to sit up and take notice — particularly with regard to activity in the Horn of Africa. All of it begs the question: How will Washington move forward in the evolving region?

Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea over the summer of 2018 has set the stage for deeper changes in the Horn of Africa. Almost overnight, the two countries agreed to set aside decades of acrimony in exchange for better ties.

For landlocked Ethiopia, this improvement in relations has opened up better trade links with the outside world through Eritrea. For Eritrea, the detente has reduced the possibility of war, allowing it to devote more attention to its shattered economy, which has taken a backseat to the quarrel with Ethiopia for dozens of years.

The normalization of ties has also paved the way for the Eritrean government in Asmara to make overtures to other regional capitals after years of supporting militant groups in an attempt to undermine local rivals, especially the Ethiopian government in Addis Ababa. Already, Eritrea has sat down with Somalia, as well as Sudan, to improve relations.

This rapprochement notwithstanding, the reality of United Nations sanctions that discouraged foreign investment continued to obstruct Eritrea's efforts at normalization. The international body imposed targeted sanctions on Asmara in 2009 in response to a U.N. expert report that accused Eritrea of

supporting Islamist militant groups in Somalia, likely as a means of undercutting its principal foe, Ethiopia, which had dispatched troops to the country.



Bringing the U.S. in from the Cold. Fears of growing Chinese and Russian influence in the region may have influenced Washington to suddenly shift its toxic policy against Eritrea, including reversing its opposition to the lifting of U.N. sanctions ... as a prelude to improving its own bilateral ties with the country.

Thus, even as Eritrea recently reoriented its foreign policy, it appeared that the United States and others were unwilling to agree to remove sanctions until the government significantly improved its human rights record.

Reports in early November, however, indicated a sudden shift in the U.S. position (national security adviser John Bolton reportedly played a decisive role), resulting in the abrogation of sanctions on Nov. 15.

Ultimately, it is the timing that is most striking about the U.S. reversal, as it followed new Russian overtures to Eritrea that included promises to build a logistics center at one of the country's Red Sea ports and develop closer ties.

Washington also altered its policy amid worries that China has begun to use debt as a means of enhancing its influence in Africa, particularly in Djibouti. Long the site of a number of foreign military bases, including facilities operated by the United States (Washington's only such base on the continent), France and China, Djibouti has sought to leverage its geostrategically important position on the Bab el-Mandeb strait for influence and financial gain.

But since February, when the tiny country terminated the contract that allowed Dubai-based DP World to operate the Doraleh Container Terminal, U.S. policymakers have harbored worries that China — which holds roughly 80 percent of Djibouti's external debt — could use its leverage to assume control of the port, potentially threatening the nearby U.S. presence.



Horn of Africa military bases

As Russia and China make inroads into the region, the United States might have permitted the lifting of the sanctions against Eritrea as a prelude to improving its own bilateral ties with the country. In fact, Washington and Asmara enjoyed relatively close ties in the 1990s and early 2000s, when Eritrea joined the “coalition of the willing” that invaded Iraq in 2003 and even went as far as offering Washington space to set up a naval base on the Red Sea.

The relationship, however, soured over time due to U.S. concerns about Asmara’s human rights record, especially after authorities arrested two Eritreans employed by the U.S. Embassy in Asmara. Normalization between Washington and Eritrea could even accelerate if the realists in the current U.S. administration win out over those who prioritize greater emphasis on human rights — a topic that Asmara has yet to improve greatly.

The United States has shifted its foreign policy priorities in recent months as concerns about Russia’s and China’s rise have supplanted fears about global terrorism for Washington’s policymakers. The new focus has affected U.S. policy in Africa, with a recent report indicating that the U.S. Department of Defense plans to withdraw 10 percent of its 7,200 Africa-based personnel over the next several years so it can redeploy resources to counter threats from Moscow and Beijing. Subsequent reports have suggested that at least a quarter of those withdrawn will be personnel currently focusing on counter-terrorism efforts in West Africa, where the French military has deployed many troops amid its battle to contain the threat from resilient regional militants.

But even as Washington plans to reduce its presence in Africa, it will maintain its focus on theaters such as Libya, Djibouti and Somalia — an unsurprising move given that local franchises backed by al Qaeda and the Islamic State continue to pose serious problems to weak governments and foreign peacekeepers.

In Somalia, for instance, the federal government in Mogadishu and its ragtag forces will struggle to maintain — let alone build on — the progress made by the roughly 21,000 troops of an African Union peacekeeping force. As a result, the continued threat of terrorism in Somalia will attract U.S. military forces and resources for the foreseeable future, even if Washington is seeking a means of diverting its resources elsewhere.

Moreover, East Africa is a region in which Washington, Moscow, and Beijing are all jockeying for position. The United States has traditionally relied on its security partners in Ethiopia and Kenya to combat militants and ensure regional security. But China remains a potent and growing force, particularly amid questions over its so-called debt-book diplomacy across the continent. Indeed, the Chinese Communist Party has longstanding ties with Ethiopia's ruling coalition — something that Washington would like to reduce as Ethiopia's ambitious and young prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, and his allies push for internal reforms to liberalize the country's economic and political systems.

Russia, too, has turned its attention in Africa in recent months, launching its most ambitious African strategy since Soviet times. Moscow has long enjoyed tight ties with countries like Sudan (owing to arms deals and overlapping ideological hostility toward foreign intervention), but Russian officials have also beaten a path to other countries on the continent such as the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and more in 2018. In fact, hundreds of Russian military trainers are working in the Central African Republic's capital, Bangui, while Moscow has also assumed responsibility for the president's security detail.

Moreover, Russia has, with Sudan's assistance, actively inserted itself into negotiations between the government in Bangui and rebel groups. While several theories abound about Russian intentions, it is likely that Moscow believes that it can gain attractive mineral concessions and influence in oft-neglected capitals like Bangui for relatively little investment of its military diplomacy. Because Washington maintains little focus on Central Africa, Moscow has little to worry about, save from French concerns over its former colonial backyard. While this could change, it is likely that the United States will remain focused elsewhere and let Paris deal with Moscow's increased interests in the area.

Threats from militancy in Somalia will continue to require U.S. hard power and assistance, but as the countries of the Horn of Africa pursue warmer relations with their neighbors amid a local battle for influence among the great powers, Washington is looking to better position itself for the future. And how the United States goes about doing this will ultimately determine how successful it is in projecting its influence in the region.

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