

SEMINARS FOR DIASPORA NATIONALS ON OBJECTIVE SITUATION



Public seminars focusing on the objective situation in the homeland, as well as global and regional developments, were conducted for nationals in Italy, South Sudan, South Africa, Angola, Australia and Germany.

At the seminars conducted in Italy, Mr. Fesehatison Petros, Eritrea's Ambassador to Italy, addressed nationals in Rome; Mr. Teklesenbet Imam, Eritrea's Consul General, addressed nationals in Bologna; and Mr. Girmay Habtemicael, Head of Public Affairs, addressed nationals in Bari. The seminars focused on the political and security situation and developments in the region.

At the seminar in Juba, South Sudan, which was attended by over 650 nationals, Mr. Tsegai Mehari, Consul of Eritrea, and Mr. Romodan Ahmedin, Head of Public

and Community Affairs, provided briefings on the diplomatic efforts being exerted by the Eritrean Government to ensure regional stability based on mutual respect.

The participants expressed their conviction to play their due part in national affairs.

At the seminar he conducted for nationals on the objective situation, Mr. Saleh Omar, Eritrea's Ambassador to South Africa and the Southern African countries, called on nationals to strengthen their participation in national political, economic, diplomatic, media, and cultural activities.

In the same vein, Mr. Desale Tekleab, Eritrea's Consul General in Angola, conducted a seminar for nationals residing in Luanda on the objective situation in the homeland, as well as regional and global

developments.

The participants expressed their readiness to strengthen their participation in efforts to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity and adopted a five-point resolution.

At the public seminars in the Australian cities of Melbourne and Perth, Mr. Endrias Abraham, Eritrea's Consul General, and Mr. Yasin Omar, head of Public and Community Affairs, provided extensive briefings on the objective situation in the homeland, regional and global developments, and the role of nationals in national affairs.

The participants, for their part, expressed their resolve to contribute to national affairs by strengthening their organizational capacity and resilience.

Similarly, at a virtual meeting, heads and members of national committees in 26 cities in Germany discussed the timely responsibilities of nationals and expressed their readiness to strengthen their organizational capacity and contribution to national affairs.

SUCCESSFUL CARDIAC SURGERY PERFORMED ON CHILDREN



Successful cardiac surgery was performed on 25 children from 9 to 20 October at Orotta Referral Hospital, in collaboration with Eritrean experts and the Italian medical team "Mission Bambini."

Prof. Tsigereda Gebrehiwet, Head of the Pediatrics Hospital, said that the children, who came from all over the country, required urgent medical treatment and were between two weeks and 19 years of age.

Noting that cardiac surgery has been performed on over 1,700 children at the hospital since 2002, Prof. Tsigereda said that the program has made a significant

contribution to transferring experience and technological know-how.

Dr. Bruno Murzi, coordinator of the team, said that the team has been providing surgical services twice a year since 2006 and that 20 specialists came to Eritrea this year to perform cardiac surgery on children. He also commended the role of Eritrean medical experts in the program.

Noting the successful cardiac surgeries, Head Nurse Amaresh Zeraf said that the Eritrean medical experts participating in the program are continually developing their experience and capacity.

ERITREA CLINCHES MEDAL AT AFRICA CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIP

The Eritrean Cycling National Team which is participating at the Africa Cycling Championship 2026 in Kisumu, Kenya, has sealed gold and silver medals at the individual time trial race that was conducted Wednesday, 21 October.

The Eritrean Cycling National Team was represented at the race by Athlete Yafiet Mulugeta at the under 23 category and by Olympian Merhawi Kudus and Athlete Hebron Berhane.

Accordingly, Athlete Yafiet Mulugeta, won a Gold Medal at the under 23 category and that Eritrea has won gold medal in this category for the first time after 2015 in the Africa Cycling Championship.

Olympian Athlete Merhawi Kudu also won Silver Medal. It is to be recalled that Merhawi Kudus has been the winner of Gold Medal in 2025.

At the elite male group, Merhawi Kudus won second place by finishing the 30.6 km race by 40 minutes and 23 seconds while Hebron Berhane took 10th place.

The Africa Cycling Championship will conclude on Sunday, 25 October.



CONGRESS OF ERITREAN COMMUNITY IN JEDDAH AND ITS ENVIRONS

The Eritrean community in Jeddah and its environs held its 9th congress on 15 October under the theme "Let's Consolidate Our Organization for the Development of Our Community."

At the congress, which was attended by Mr. Abdelrahman Osman, Eritrea's Consul General in Jeddah and its environs; Mr.

Ahmed Jaefer, Head of Public and Community Affairs; and heads of national associations and organizations, Mr. Abdelkadir Malek, Chairman of the Eritrean community, presented a three-year activity report highlighting the strengths and challenges encountered.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr.

Abdelrahman Osman emphasized the significance of strengthening participation and contribution in social activities to enhance the community and address the needs of its members.

The participants elected members of the central and executive committees for a three-year term.





Yemane G. Meskel

@hawelti · Oct 20

Reading from a teleprompter on Ethiopia's TV yesterday, the Potemkin Party's Prime Minister disparages Eritrea's economic development, and particularly its manufacturing sector, as "stagnant and in decline" since its independence in 1991.

The speech/interview was also laced with his three-year old threats of war of aggression and invasion unless Eritrea succumbs to his delusional projects of "sovereign access to the sea" and "Ethiopian naval presence" in Eritrea's coastal territory; packaged this time round in different pretexts, language, and format.

To revert to his disparaging discourse on Eritrea's economic performance and potential:

1. In the past 35 years, Ethiopia was the beneficiary of a whopping 80-90 billion US dollars of international multilateral and bilateral assistance;
2. Ethiopia went through two rounds of WB sponsored debt-cancellation rounds, as well as repetitive financial bailouts from the IMF and other donors. For almost ten years in-between, Ethiopia's dire humanitarian conditions were alleviated by the international community under a customized "social safety net" and other similar "intensive care" financial antidotes.
3. The current regime itself has received over 30 billion US dollars in international assistance in the last 8 years alone. In addition, its tattering economy is being resuscitated by another IMF bailout programme to the tune of 3.1 billion US dollars.
4. And yet, as the figures below illustrate, more than 68% Ethiopians are living under extreme poverty while close to 30 million people require urgent humanitarian relief assistance at this point in time.
5. In as far as the 300 manufacturing plants that the PP leader alludes to, these were old factories built during Italy's colonization of Eritrea from 1889 until 1941. The British Military Administration dismantled many of those factories - including the dock in Massawa - as "war booty" and sold them to other foreign countries. The occupationist Haile Selassie regime, in its turn, dismantled many of the remaining factories and transferred them to Ethiopia especially during the imposed "Federation" period.
6. After its hard-won independence in 1991, Eritrea registered rapid economic growth in the first seven years (WB reports). Imposed wars and unwarranted sanctions thereafter naturally affected the pace and magnitude of its economic trajectory.
7. These externalities have nothing to do with Eritrea's open investment and economic policies and visions.
8. And in any case, Eritrea has the abundant economic endowments (blue economy, extractive industry, educated and industrious human capital, and a civilized culture that celebrates religious and ethnic diversity within robust national unity) to excel and achieve its aspirations of rapid and sustainable growth in a conducive and enduring regional climate of peace and stability.
9. Finally, Ethiopia itself could do much better, extricate itself from debilitating dependency, and use its abundant resources for real development if its leaders abandon sectarian policies of division and polarization that incubate perennial cycles of internal turmoil as well as intertwined acts of regional destabilization in pursuit of delusional and expansionist projects.



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KEY FIGURES

Financial & Debt Support	
~\$30 Billion <small>Cumulative external financial assistance in the past 8 years</small>	>\$35 Billion <small>Current external debt</small>
\$13–15 Billion <small>Outstanding loans from China</small>	\$10–15 Billion <small>Support from the World Bank (since 2017)</small>
Crisis & Displacement	
~4 Million <small>Lives lost to conflict, famine & governance crises (1940s–2024)</small>	~4.5 Million <small>Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in 2025</small>
~20–30 Million <small>People requiring food assistance</small>	~12 Million <small>Children requiring food assistance</small>
Education & Development	
~5.1% <small>College entrance exam pass rate over the last 4 years</small>	>1,200 <small>Secondary schools where zero students passed college entry exams</small>
0.11 <small>Physicians per 1,000 people</small>	170–180 <small>HDI rank out of 193 countries</small>

Key Figures

~21.4 million <small>people in need of humanitarian assistance</small>	~4.5 million <small>Internally Displaced People (IDPs)</small>
~12 million <small>children in need of humanitarian assistance</small>	~8.32 million <small>children out of school</small>
~9,178 schools <small>damaged or destroyed</small>	~24% <small>people living below the national poverty line (based on 2015/16 survey)</small>
~38.6% <small>people living below ~\$3/day poverty line</small>	~68.7% <small>of population are multidimensionally poor 18.4% vulnerable</small>

SpotLight

An Encouraging Glimpse of Creativity, Ingenuity, and Potential

Bana Negusse

This week, I had the pleasure of attending an innovation competition – the Innovation Corridor Contest – in Asmara, organized by the United Nations in Eritrea as part of the UN Day 2026 celebrations. Hosted at Asmara Palace, the exhibition highlighted a range of themes, including climate action, energy, artificial intelligence, and technology. More than simply showcasing innovative projects, the event offered an encouraging glimpse of the creativity, ingenuity, and potential that exist across Eritrea, as well as the opportunities that can emerge when people and institutions come together around shared goals.

The competition featured dozens of submissions covering topics ranging from agriculture and food security to learning, education, the economy, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy. Innovators came from across the country, representing both men and women and spanning a wide range of ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds, reflecting Eritrea's diverse and dynamic creative community. Throughout the day, visitors steadily streamed through the exhibition, exploring the projects and engaging with the participants.

In the evening, the Youth Trashion Show offered another opportunity for young Eritreans to demonstrate their creativity, transforming reused and recycled materials into fashion designs. Beyond the creative expression and cultural elements, the activity sought to promote sustainability, environmental awareness, and responsible consumption, connecting recycling and climate-conscious action in a simple yet memorable way. It was another encouraging example of how young people can use creativity to raise awareness about environmental challenges while inspiring more sustainable choices.

Overall, the day was vibrant, hopeful, and forward-looking, bringing together ideas, institutions, and individuals committed to shaping a better future. Several aspects of the experience stood out in particular.

Personally, one of the most striking aspects of the day and competitions was the tremendous diversity of its participants. Innovators came from different parts of the country, bringing with them a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas. The mix of ages and backgrounds was particularly encouraging,

ranging from young students and recent graduates to more experienced participants who have been contributing to their respective fields for years.

This diversity was about more than representation. Rather, it reflected the depth of creativity and ingenuity that exists throughout Eritrea. The range of entries demonstrated that innovation is not confined to any one group or region but instead can thrive wherever curiosity and determination are nurtured. Given the right opportunities and encouragement, Eritreans from all walks of life can contribute meaningfully to addressing both local and global challenges.

Young people, in particular, have tremendous potential to innovate. They are creative, motivated, and often willing to think boldly and differently. At the same time, more experienced innovators bring valuable knowledge and a practical understanding of challenges and opportunities. Together, these groups form a powerful combination of fresh ideas, energy, and expertise.

Equally important was the local context of many of the projects. Several sought to address local challenges through solutions grounded in Eritrean realities, rather than simply replicating ideas from other contexts. This approach matters tremendously. Around the world, experience has shown that homegrown solutions, rooted in local needs, knowledge, and circumstances, are often better suited to the communities they serve and more likely to be effective and sustainable.

Beyond the projects themselves, the atmosphere of the event was highly inspiring. Throughout the day, the exhibition hall buzzed with conversation, curiosity, and

exchange. Innovators eagerly presented their ideas, while visitors, including government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, employees of international organizations, local

some assumptions, several UN agencies, including UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNDP, have worked closely with Eritrean ministries and institutions over the years, pursuing shared goals related to sustainable

and creativity are essential tools for developing effective, locally appropriate, and sustainable solutions.

By fostering new ideas and



students, and community members, asked thoughtful questions and offered constructive feedback. This openness reflected not only enthusiasm for innovation but also the value of collaboration and shared learning. Equally positive was the willingness of many innovators to support one another, exchange ideas, and offer constructive criticism and sound advice, further demonstrating a sense of shared purpose and camaraderie.

Another important dimension of the event was the cooperation between the UN in Eritrea, the Eritrean government, and local institutions, including the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students. The competition helped highlight the constructive relationship that has developed among these actors. Contrary to

development and improving people's lives.

This collaboration, grounded in mutual respect and trust, provides a strong foundation for joint efforts in areas such as innovation, youth empowerment, and community resilience. The competition was a practical example of how such partnerships can create meaningful opportunities for participation, learning, and progress.

Importantly, the event also underscored the growing importance of innovation in today's world. Eritrea faces numerous challenges, including the increasing impacts of climate change. Although the country contributes very little to global greenhouse gas emissions, it remains vulnerable to their effects. Against this backdrop, innovation

supporting local talent, Eritrea can strengthen its ability to adapt to and respond to complex challenges. Innovation can improve livelihoods, promote inclusive development, and help ensure that progress is locally driven and sustainable. Events like this competition do more than showcase creativity; they also cultivate a mindset of problem-solving, initiative, and collaboration that is vital for the country's future.

Of course, for innovation to thrive, it must be supported by an enabling environment, one that encourages experimentation, values new ideas, and provides access to resources and mentorship. Strengthening connections between educational institutions, local industries, government bodies, and development partners can help build such an ecosystem. Through appropriate policies, training, investment, and continued support, Eritrea can help ensure that promising ideas move beyond the exhibition hall and translate into tangible benefits for communities.

Overall, the innovation competition served as a powerful reminder that innovation is both a necessity and an opportunity. The diversity of participants, the creativity of their projects, and the spirit of collaboration on display demonstrated that Eritrea has a wealth of talent and ideas to draw upon. With the right support and opportunities, this potential can be harnessed to address pressing challenges and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Eritrea: Delegation Statement at Sixth Consultative Meeting on Enhancing Coordination of Peace Initiatives and Efforts in Sudan

*Honourable Co-Chairs,
Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We sincerely appreciate the Swiss Confederation and the UN for convening this Consultative meeting and for inviting Eritrea to participate.

At the same time, we regret the Government of Sudan's absence from this and previous series of consultations. Its direct participation would help ensure that the discussions make meaningful contributions to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

As Eritrea is invited to the Consultative Meetings for the first time, allow me to use this opportunity to present major principles that underpin Eritrea's long-standing and consistent position on the conflict in Sudan.

1. The resolution of the conflict in Sudan rests primarily and ultimately with the Sudanese people. International and regional partners must limit themselves to facilitating a Sudanese-owned and Sudanese-led process, with the people and Government of Sudan at the center.

2. The conflict itself should not be misconstrued as a purely



peace efforts should be coordinated with the Government of Sudan's peace initiative, submitted to the UN Security Council on 22 December 2025 and welcomed by the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and numerous other organizations.

5. The Sudanese Army played a critical role in the popular uprising that removed the incumbent government. It should also be recalled that the Sudanese people have entrusted the Sovereign Council with overseeing a time-bound transition to civilian governance. Under

the Council unhindered to execute its mandated responsibilities and achieve lasting stability.

Excellencies,

For three and a half years, the conflict in Sudan has had devastating consequences for its people and poses serious risks to peace, stability and security across the region.

Temporary ceasefires and partial measures may provide only limited

respite and risk prolonging the crisis. The ultimate goal must be to end the suffering of the Sudanese people, restore peace and stability, and enable Sudan to begin recovery and reconstruction in a secure environment.

To achieve that we would like to put more emphasis on one critical point. Achieving the peace that lies at the heart of our discussions today will require us to address, in a frank yet constructive manner, the impact

of external involvement in the conflict in Sudan. The consequences of such involvement for the prospects of peace and stability cannot be overlooked.

It is therefore essential that our discussions translate into meaningful and collective action to address all factors contributing to the continuation of the conflict, including external support and interference. Without a concerted effort in this regard, our ability to advance a credible and sustainable path towards peace will remain severely constrained if not impossible.

Again, Eritrea believes international efforts should focus on creating the conditions for peace, rather than pursuing approaches that could complicate the situation or undermine Sudanese ownership of the process.

Eritrea remains committed to supporting these efforts and to pursuing a peaceful, stable, and sovereign Sudan.

*I thank you.
Geneva, 20-21 October 2026*

LOCAL NEWS

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION INCREASES

Dr. Yohannes Tekeste, Medical Director of the National Blood Transfusion Service, reported that voluntary blood donation increased by 33% over the past nine months compared with the same period in 2025.

Dr. Yohannes said that, through coordinated efforts with partners, over 12,000 units of blood were collected from January to September, with a monthly increase of approximately 6.6%.

Of the 12,531 units of blood collected, Dr. Yohannes said that 38% was distributed to Orotta National Referral Hospital, 12% to Sembel National Referral Hospital, 10% to Halibet National Referral Hospital, and 3.3% to the regional hospitals in Massawa, Mendefera and Keren.

Noting that all donated blood is screened using modern medical equipment, Dr. Yohannes said that 0.02% tested positive for HIV, 0.27% for hepatitis B, 0.1% for hepatitis C, and 0.007% for syphilis. Records from the National Blood Transfusion Service indicate that the service met approximately 74% of hospitals' blood requirements nationwide in 2025, compared with 81% in 2026.

Dr. Yohannes also expressed

appreciation to all partners contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the National

Blood Transfusion Service and the National Voluntary Blood Donors Association.

POLICE PERSONNEL RECEIVE TRAINING IN FORENSIC CHEMISTRY

The Eritrean Police has provided training in forensic chemistry to crime investigation personnel.

Sub-Lt. Simon Gebreyohannes, head of the Crime Investigation Unit, said that the training, provided by Dr. Eden Tareke, a chemistry and food safety expert, will strengthen the capacity of laboratory technicians and contribute significantly to the effective execution of the unit's daily activities.

Sub-Lt. Simon said that Dr. Eden

had also donated books on the subject, as well as equipment.

Dr. Eden, for her part, called on the trainees to build on the knowledge gained during the training, further develop their capacity through reading, and contribute to serving the public.

The trainees expressed appreciation for the training opportunity and presented a certificate of appreciation to Dr. Eden Tareke.



internal strife driven by personal or institutional rivalries. Evidence shows that external actors are supplying the RSF with advanced weapons, weapon systems and mercenaries, deepening the crisis and advancing agendas that risk dividing and fragmenting the country.

the circumstances, the Sovereign Council must be recognized as the sole State authority in Sudan in the Transitional Phase; an arrangement which presupposes integration of the armed forces under one national umbrella and command.

3. Uncoordinated initiatives, even when undertaken in good faith, risk unintended consequences and may deepen the crisis. Any new initiative should build on existing progress rather than duplicate or undermine it. Accordingly, the Jeddah Declaration and the Jeddah Agreement of 2023 should underpin any proposed political process.

4. International and regional

6. Finally, Sudan's Sovereignty Council must fulfill its foundational mandate by guiding the country peacefully toward a civilian-led government, steering the nation out of political turmoil and safely to Ber al-Amān, as originally intended. To ensure the success of this transition, external actors and the international community at large, must respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity, refrain from unilateral interventions, and leave



Contrasting Eritrea's Sovereign Foreign Policy with Ethiopia's Expansionism in the Horn of Africa

The geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa has once again reached a dangerous crossroads. At the heart of this unfolding crisis lies a fundamental confrontation: on one side stand the core principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and sovereign equality; on the other lies an aggressive political agenda, driven by UAE led axis that is increasingly centered on maritime entitlement, historical revisionism, and the projection of regional power. This clash of visions has been brought into stark relief by the sharp deterioration of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The escalation reached a critical threshold on October 1, 2026, when Ethiopia decided to close its embassy in Asmara and expel ten Eritrean diplomats, a move swiftly followed by Eritrea's decision to take reciprocal decision and severe diplomatic relations entirely.

In mainstream Western and corporate media discourse, the complex friction points of the region are frequently flattened into a generalized narrative of mutual intransigence. However, drawing upon regional policy analyses and investigative perspectives a vastly different reality emerges. This analysis explores the fundamental dichotomy between Eritrea's consistent foreign policy of defensive sovereignty, regional partnership, and non-interference, and Ethiopia's historical and contemporary trajectory of destabilizing expansionism, internal volatility, and projection of external grievances.

This crisis cannot be understood solely as a diplomatic disagreement over port facilities or commercial access to maritime routes as mainstream media would have you believe. It must be examined against the increasingly forceful rhetoric emanating from Ethiopia's political leadership concerning sovereign access to the Red Sea, historical rights, Ethiopia's former maritime position, and the strategic importance of the Eritrean coastline. The central question is whether Ethiopia's declared objective is confined to securing reliable commercial access through negotiated arrangements or whether influential elements within its political and military establishment envisage a more ambitious transformation of the regional territorial order.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the leadership of the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) have repeatedly described sovereign sea access as an existential national necessity. At various points, they have also tried to cloak their warped ambition in the language of peaceful negotiation, mutual benefit, and respect for neighbouring states' sovereignty. They must be examined alongside statements

invoking historical entitlement, the alleged inevitability of maritime access, the possible use of force, and the security of the Red Sea extending toward Eritrean ports. It is the tension between these positions, not any single statement in isolation that demands serious regional and international scrutiny.

Eritrea's position is fundamentally different. Its foreign policy rests on the defence of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and the principle that no state, regardless of population or economic weight, possesses a superior entitlement to another nation's territory. From Eritrea's perspective, Ethiopia's landlocked status may constitute an economic and logistical challenge, but it cannot serve as a legal justification for coercion, territorial revisionism, or the unilateral alteration of internationally recognized borders.

This position is further reinforced by the historical record. Even following the outbreak of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border war in May 1998, Eritrea did not block or obstruct Ethiopia's access to its port facilities at Assab and Massawa. Rather, it was the Ethiopian government that voluntarily chose to boycott Eritrean ports and redirect its maritime trade through Djibouti. Claims that Ethiopia's landlocked status constitutes an existential condition imposed by its coastal neighbours are therefore contradicted by Ethiopia's own historical experience. At various points, Ethiopia has also explored or pursued alternative maritime access arrangements involving Port Sudan, the port of Tadjoura in Djibouti, and Kenya's Lamu port, underscoring that its maritime options have never been confined exclusively to Eritrea.

I. Eritrea's Sovereign Foreign Policy and the Principles of International Law

Eritrea's foreign policy has been profoundly shaped by its protracted liberation struggle and an enduring determination to preserve national independence against external domination. Since achieving independence in 1993, Eritrea has consistently maintained that the viability and legitimacy of a sovereign state do not depend on its physical size, population, or strategic resource endowments. Rather, sovereign viability rests on the fundamental rights of its people, the inviolability of its territorial integrity, and its capacity to conduct independent international relations based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. In the immediate post-independence era, Eritrea actively participated in regional institution-building, notably contributing to the revitalization and development of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Its

diplomatic approach emphasizes regional economic cooperation, structural complementarity, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, principles that are vital in the Horn of Africa, a region historically burdened by external interventions, geopolitical rivalries, and structural fragmentation.

Eritrea's commitment to regional peace and diplomacy is reflected in its sustained engagements across the Horn of Africa over three decades. In July 1994, Eritrea played a central early role in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Sudanese conflict, contributing significantly to the formulation and signing of the IGAD Declaration of Principles on Sudan.

When conflict erupted between 1998 and 2000, on a putative border dispute, Eritrea sought a definitive resolution grounded in international law. On 12 December 2000, the parties signed the landmark Algiers Agreement, establishing a binding legal framework to end hostilities and resolve outstanding issues. Pursuant to this treaty, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission issued its final and binding delimitation decision on 13 April 2002 under applicable international law, an enduring legal record formally published in the Reports of International Arbitral Awards.

For Eritrea, this process extended beyond frontier demarcation; it embodied the imperative principle that territorial disputes must be resolved through agreed legal procedures rather than unilateral assertions of historical entitlement or political hegemony.

Leveraging its diplomatic mediation capacity, Eritrea hosted and facilitated peace negotiations in Asmara that culminated in the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in October 2006, ending years of armed conflict in eastern Sudan. In May 2007, Eritrea hosted contact group meetings that successfully de-escalated tensions and normalized relations between Chad and Sudan. Later that same year, in September 2007, Asmara convened the National Reconciliation Conference for Somalia, bringing together key political stakeholders to deliberate on state reconstitution and national unity.

In the following decade, Eritrea broadened its multilateral engagement in human security and regional reconciliation. In 2014, Eritrea became a founding core member of the African Union-Horn of Africa Initiative on Countering Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons (the Khartoum Process), ultimately assuming the Chairmanship of the initiative in 2019. Furthermore, between 2018 and 2019, Eritrea facilitated critical peace agreements between the Ethiopian federal government and various armed

opposition movements, enabling their peaceful return to Ethiopia to foster national reconciliation and broader regional stability.

Eritrea's posture regarding the Red Sea is governed by these same principles of international law and sovereign equality. The Red Sea must function as a secure international corridor for trade, maritime transit, and peaceful economic communication, rather than an arena for geopolitical competition or territorial encroachment. Maritime security and jurisdiction in the Red Sea rest on cooperation among its legitimate coastal states in strict accordance with established international law. A landlocked state cannot convert its demographic size, economic ambition, or lack of direct maritime access into a special legal entitlement over the sovereign territory, coastline, or security arrangements of its coastal neighbors. Regional stability cannot be built on unilateral claims or strategic coercion, but must rest firmly on mutual respect, territorial integrity, and the sovereign equality of all states.

II. Historical Revisionism and the Ideological Construction of "Sovereign Access"

Ethiopia's pursuit of maritime trade and logistical access is, in principle, a standard economic objective. Landlocked states possess well-defined rights of transit and access to maritime routes applicable to appropriate bilateral agreements under international law. However, a legal and strategic controversy arises when a state deliberately blurs the distinction between commercial port usage and the assertion of territorial sovereignty over foreign coastlines, a revisionist position supported by neither international legal precedent nor treaty law.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, this conceptual distortion has become a central pillar of Ethiopian state strategy. The PP has increasingly deployed arguments rooted in historical nostalgia, demographic weight, and existential geographic disadvantage to construct a legal pretense for territorial overreach.

• Early 2023: Normalizing Irredentist Claims

Beginning in late 2022, Ethiopian strategic discourse shifted from routine trade logistics toward asserting a "natural and historical right" to the Red Sea. By framing maritime access in terms of historic entitlement and regional dominance, narratives that are both historically unfounded and legally invalid, the PP laid the ideological groundwork to contest Eritrea's sovereignty. From Eritrea's perspective, this signaled a clear transition: Ethiopia was no longer merely seeking negotiating commercial access, but preparing

political conditions to challenge international borders.

• 13 October 2023: Deploying "Existential Necessity" as Coercive Strategy

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's address to parliament on 13 October 2023 marked a formal escalation in this campaign. By branding Ethiopia a "prisoner of geography" and elevating Red Sea access to an "existential imperative," the ruling party framed its landlocked status not as a geographical reality to be managed through bilateral trade, but as an existential injustice to be rectified.

While official media later sought to qualify these statements by referencing peaceful negotiations, the strategic damage was already done. Weaponizing the concept of "existential necessity" creates a dangerous precedent, implying that a state's economic ambitions or demographic size can supersede the territorial integrity of its neighbors.

Core Principles of State Sovereignty:

1. Geographical landlockedness creates **no legal right** to foreign territory.
2. Demographic size confers **no superior entitlement** under international law.
3. Nostalgic mythmaking and manufactured historical narratives confer absolutely zero legal authority to alter recognized international borders. Attempts to deploy such narratives are doubly invalid here, as the historical claims being peddled are factually absurd and demonstrably false.

Historical narratives confer no authority to revise recognized international borders, especially when, as in this case, the narrative itself is factually baseless.

14 November 2023: Tactical Reassurances amid Creeping Destabilization

In November 2023, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed publicly dismissed concerns that Ethiopia intended to violate Eritrean sovereignty, claiming his party sought maritime access solely through legal mechanisms, commercial deals, and economic concessions like equity in Ethiopian Airlines or the GERD. While presented as a peaceful diplomatic overture, this assurance functioned as a tactical effort to neutralize regional alarm while laying the groundwork for more aggressive postures. The stark contrast between these formal reassurances and Ethiopia's subsequent rhetoric, which reframed sea access as a non-negotiable historical destiny, reveals a calculated strategy to normalize expansionist ambitions under the guise of economic cooperation.

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Contrasting Eritrea's Sovereign Foreign Policy with Ethiopia's

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2023: Symbolic Expansionism and Irredentist Signal-Sending

Concurrent with diplomatic disclaimers, regional and military actors within Ethiopia began actively projecting expansionist symbolism toward the Red Sea throughout 2023. Declarations by the President of the Oromia Regional State asserting that the 2024 Irreechaa festival would be celebrated on the Red Sea coast, within the sovereign territory of a neighboring state, served as a deliberate ideological provocation. Compounded by Ethiopian military officials displaying maps that absorbed Assab and Eritrea's southern coastline into Ethiopia, these actions demonstrated that rhetoric surrounding maritime access was backed by irredentist signaling designed to contest established international borders.

The "Two Waters" Concept: Strategic Ambition and Regional Instability

A central driver of Ethiopia's increasingly destabilizing regional motives is the emerging "Two Waters" doctrine, a framework that geopolitically links the Nile Basin to the Red Sea. While presented under the guise of economic integration and maritime access, the concept serves as a broader strategic vehicle for projecting Ethiopian hegemony across the Horn of Africa.

Rather than fostering genuine economic cooperation, this dual-water strategy functions as a pretext to undermine the territorial integrity of neighboring states. Although public declarations stop short of explicitly codifying an official plan to annex Eritrean territory, the doctrine's strategic implications are unmistakable: it systematically conflates commercial access with historic rights and security domain authority. Ultimately, regional strategic narratives must not serve as a cover for eroding state sovereignty or disrupting the precarious stability of the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea corridor.

III. From Negotiated Access to Historical Entitlement: The Developments of 2024–2025

1 January 2024: The Ethiopia–Somaliland MoU as a Catalyst for Regional Instability

Ethiopia's unilateral Memorandum of Understanding with Somaliland on 1 January 2024 significantly escalated regional tensions, directly challenging Somalia's sovereignty and setting a dangerous precedent across the Horn of Africa. While focused on Somaliland, the agreement sent a clear signal to neighboring states, including Eritrea, that Ethiopia was willing to bypass established international law to secure maritime footholds. The crisis underscored how

Ethiopian strategy dangerously blurs the boundary between legitimate commercial port leases and unilateral attempts to alter sovereign territorial arrangements, threatening to ignite competing jurisdictional claims across the Red Sea corridor.

2024: Codifying Maritime Ambition as an Expansionist Imperative

Throughout 2024, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed elevated sea access from an economic ambition to an existential, generational objective. By framing maritime access as a core element of Ethiopia's strategic identity, it signaled that its geopolitical drive would not be constrained by existing international borders. For Eritrea and the broader region, this shift confirmed that Ethiopia was not merely seeking commercial port access, but was laying the ideological groundwork to demand sovereign rights over coastal territories, a revisionist proposition that directly undermines regional stability.

August 2025: The Prosperity Party's Rhetorical Escalation: From Access to "Historical Rights"

In August 2025, the ruling Prosperity Party Council formally institutionalized this aggressive trajectory, adopting resolutions that declared access to the Red Sea a "natural and historical right" necessary to restore Ethiopia's regional dominance. Moving beyond the Prime Minister's rhetoric into formal party doctrine, this shift transformed a practical trade issue into a revanchist political claim over neighboring territories. However, historical narrative cannot override contemporary state sovereignty, nor does prior historical association grant a landlocked state an enforceable entitlement to annex sovereign Eritrean territory.

September 2025: Peaceful Rhetoric as a Means of Normalizing Revisionist Demands

At the launch of his book *The Medemer State* in September 2025, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reiterated his characterization of Ethiopia as a "geographical prisoner," asserting that the country would not remain landlocked. While invoking peaceful negotiations and economic dialogue, the statement framed landlockedness as an existential injustice that must be rectified. Under the guise of peaceful engagement, this strategy systematically forces coastal states into negotiating away sovereign rights under the implicit threat that Ethiopia's ambition will be realized regardless of diplomatic consent.

27 October 2025: Categorical Rhetoric and the Escalation to Maximalist Claims

Rhetoric escalated sharply on 27 October 2025 when Abiy declared he was "a million percent certain" that Ethiopia would secure Red Sea access. This shift to absolute certainty signaled a refusal to accept the geopolitical status quo, converting a policy objective into an unyielding national mandate. By adopting such an unequivocal position, the ruling party risked narrowing the space for conventional diplomacy, which depends on negotiation, mutual consent, and respect for sovereignty in securing commercial access, in favour of mounting pressure on coastal neighbours to accept arrangements that could entail concessions over sovereign rights.

7 November 2025: General Bacha Debele and the Normalization of Military Coercion

The discourse took a dangerous turn in November 2025 with statements surrounding Ambassador General Bacha Debele, which introduced the posture of pursuing sovereign access "through negotiations if possible, and by force if necessary." Whether framed as explicit official policy or calculated psychological warfare, circulating the threat of military force against a sovereign nation violates Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. By allowing threats of military action against Eritrean territorial integrity to enter mainstream debate, Ethiopia has deliberately destabilized the Horn of Africa and normalized military coercion as an instrument of statecraft.

IV. Historical Revisionism and the Escalation of Military Rhetoric

Late 2025: Revisionist Rhetoric and the Delegitimization of Eritrean Sovereignty

In late 2025, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed directly challenged the historical foundation of Eritrean statehood, alleging during a parliamentary address that no official documentation exists to explain how Eritrea's separation from Ethiopia transpired. By attempting to erase the well-established historical reality of Eritrean statehood, rooted in the colonial treaties of 1900, 1902, and 1908, forged through a thirty-year liberation struggle, and sealed when Eritrea gained Independence in 1991, Ethiopia crossed a dangerous threshold. This rhetoric signaled a deliberate shift toward historical revisionism, seeking to frame contemporary international borders as mere political accidents and laying the ideological groundwork to contest Eritrean sovereignty.

Late 2025: The Golan Heights Analogy and Unilateral Territorial Seizure

The Prime Minister's revisionist

narrative was further reinforced by reported parliamentary references to Israel's annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights as a precedent for Ethiopia's maritime pursuit. Invoking forcible annexation as a model for resolving landlocked status represents an explicit rejection of international legal norms. By equating economic desire with territorial entitlement, the PP signaled that it views unilateral territorial acquisition as a viable policy option, a stance that directly violates the United Nations Charter.

January 2026: Normalizing War as a Means for Coastal Acquisition

Rhetoric escalated to explicit belligerence in January 2026, when the PM declared: "*If we have to fight, it has to be for a good cause, and the Red Sea cause is a good reason*". This statement stripped away remaining diplomatic ambiguities, explicitly framing the forcible acquisition of sovereign maritime access as a *casus belli*. Transforming an economic topic into an explicit justification for war completely dismantled prior peaceful assurances and exposed an aggressive, expansionist doctrine targeting coastal neighbors.

3 February 2026: Demographic Entitlement and Specific Territorial Demands

Addressing the House of Peoples' Representatives on 3 February 2026, Abiy asserted that Ethiopia and the Red Sea are "inseparable entities" and specified a demand for approximately 50 kilometers of coastline. By contrasting Ethiopia's 130-million population with the smaller populations of Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia, the PP deployed a doctrine of demographic entitlement to subvert international law. Demanding a specific coastal strip while cloaking it in talks of land swaps or joint use does not alter the underlying threat: it represents a coercive demand for sovereign territory, forcing neighbors like Eritrea to defend their recognized borders against expansionist pressure.

22 February 2026: Unilateral Security Claims and Military Overreach Toward Massawa

At a Special Forces ceremony in Hawassa on 22 February 2026, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed asserted that Ethiopian military power would secure the Red Sea corridor extending from Somalia to the Eritrean port city of Massawa. By unilaterally projecting a military security mantle over the sovereign territory and coastlines of neighboring sovereign states, specifically Eritrea and Somalia, Ethiopia laid claim to extraterritorial security authority. This declaration marked

a dangerous evolution in Ethiopian policy: shifting from demands for commercial access to asserting a right of military dominance and intervention across foreign maritime jurisdictions without international mandate or host-nation consent.

V. March–October 2026: Tactical Reassurances, Systemic Escalation, and the Crisis of Regional Trust

March 2026: Superficial Assurances vs. Strategic Intent

In March 2026, Abiy attempted to blunt regional alarm by reiterating that Ethiopia did not intend to invade Eritrea or violate its sovereignty, maintaining that maritime access remained a matter for diplomatic negotiations. However, these periodic peaceful assurances are consistently undermined by the PP's military buildup, revisionist rhetoric, and expansionist operational posture. This growing contradiction between diplomatic disclaimers and coercive military signaling has triggered a profound crisis of confidence, exposing these assurances as tactical maneuvers intended to appease international observers while advancing destabilizing objectives.

18 March 2026: The Maritime Objective as an Existential Threat to Regional Security

By mid-March 2026, Ethiopia's maritime pursuit had evolved from a trade policy debate into a primary driver of regional instability. Viewing the trajectory as a cohesive continuum, from the "Two Waters" doctrine and the Somaliland Memorandum to historical revisionism and military posture declarations toward Massawa, reveals a deliberate strategy to dismantle the post-colonial territorial order. The issue is no longer about economic access; it is an existential confrontation over whether international law, state sovereignty, and territorial integrity will endure in the Horn of Africa, or be overridden by unilateral Ethiopian coercion.

9 April 2026: "Sovereign Access" as an Existential and Expansionist Imperative

In early April 2026, Ethiopian discourse further entrenched the demand for "sovereign sea access" as a permanent, non-negotiable national objective. By deliberately insisting on "sovereign" access rather than standard commercial port leases, the ruling Party signaled that its strategic goal is not trade integration, but territorial acquisition. This rhetoric forces neighboring states into an impossible dilemma, treating foreign sovereign territory as a commodity to satisfy Ethiopian

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Contrasting Eritrea's Sovereign

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By May 2026, the Ethiopian ruling party systematically linked the “Two Waters” doctrine and “natural and historical rights” arguments with explicit attempts to delegitimize Eritrean statehood. By questioning the validity of Eritrea’s 1993 independence referendum and historical borders, the Prosperity Party and its lackeys laid the ideological groundwork for irredentism. Historical narratives were weaponized to normalize the concept that contemporary international borders in the Horn of Africa are temporary anomalies that must yield to Ethiopian regional dominance.

15 July 2026: Normalizing Coercive Diplomacy (“Negotiation if Possible, Force if Necessary”)

In July 2026, the doctrine of securing maritime access “through negotiations if possible, and by force if necessary” resurfaced as a central theme in state-aligned commentary. By holding military coercion as an explicit contingency behind diplomatic negotiations, Ethiopia violated fundamental prohibitions against the threat or use of force in international law. This posture exposed the PP’s diplomatic strategy as coercive extortion: demanding coastal concessions under the implicit threat of military invasion.

September–October 2026: Diplomatic Pivot or Tactical Camouflage?

Entering late 2026, Abiy and his party willfully pivoted toward softer diplomatic terminology, employing deceptive phrasing such as “equitable access” and “reliable maritime partnerships”, in a transparent attempt to neutralize growing regional alignment and sharp legal pushback. This linguistic shift, however, represents cosmetic repackaging rather than a substantive shift in policy. So long as Ethiopia refuses to unequivocally renounce its territorial ambitions over Eritrean land and sovereign waters, these diplomatic euphemisms serve merely as tactical camouflage designed to blunt international scrutiny while preserving expansionist objectives.

October 2026: Military Timelines and Threats to Dissolve the Border

September–October 2026: Escalating Rhetoric, Military Timelines, and Threat to Dissolve Borders

Far from peaceful partnership, explicit declarations from senior Ethiopian officials, parliamentarians, and high-ranking military commanders lay bare a deliberate campaign of coercion and aggressive intent to liquidate Eritrean statehood and forcibly erase international borders:

- September 21, 2026: Ambassador Dina Mufti, a member of the Federal Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, reaffirmed that Ethiopia’s demand for sovereign

sea access remains non-negotiable, while aggressively demanding international pressure against Asmara.

- September 27, 2026: Ethiopian Army Deputy Chief of Staff, General Abebaw Tadesse, explicitly telegraphed offensive operations, declaring: “The offensive launched in Tigray will not stop there. Mekelle is a mere stop-over; our ultimate destination is Assab. Our main objective is to install our flag in the Red Sea.”

- October 11, 2026: Ethiopian Air Force Commander General Yilma Merdasa confirmed the military’s primary target, stating that their central mandate remains the forcible recovery of maritime access, specifically targeting the sovereign Eritrean port of Assab.

- October 12, 2026: Lencho Bati, Director General of Ethiopia’s Diaspora Service, further escalated the bellicose rhetoric, asserting: “The Ethiopian military that suffered in the deserts of Tigray will not stop before taking off its shoes by the Red Sea and washing its feet in Eritrean Red Sea waters.”

These statements signaled an aggressive intent to liquidate Eritrean statehood and borders. By openly framing the destruction of recognized sovereign boundaries as a viable objective, the Ethiopian leadership directly breached the fundamental prohibition on the threat or use of force under Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

VI. Diplomatic Rupture and Systemic Crisis

The breakdown in bilateral relations reached a critical flashpoint on October 1, 2026, when Ethiopia announced the closure of its embassy in Asmara and expelled ten Eritrean diplomats under pretextual national security allegations. In response to this deliberate provocation, Eritrea formally severed diplomatic ties, dismantling key institutional safeguards designed to prevent regional military escalation. Occurring against the backdrop of renewed armed conflict in northern Ethiopia and heightened military posturing along the Red Sea basin, the PP’s actions effectively closed diplomatic channels in favor of coercive brinkmanship.

From Eritrea’s perspective, this ultimate diplomatic rupture was not an isolated event, but was preceded by a systematic sequence of actions by Ethiopia’s ruling party that progressively undermined normal bilateral communication. The deliberate dismantling of diplomatic channels followed a clear timeline:

- May 2026 Onward: The Ethiopian Embassy in Asmara ceased responding to official correspondence and substantially curtailed its engagement with Eritrea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, systematically obstructing established diplomatic channels.

- 8 August 2026: The Ethiopian government effectively abandoned its Embassy in Asmara

at 5:00 PM, when its four remaining diplomatic staff members quietly departed Eritrea via Tarco Airways. By intentionally failing to notify the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the PP flagrantly breached standard diplomatic protocol and the fundamental requirements governing receiving and sending States under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

- 1 October 2026: Compounding the unilateral closure of its Asmara mission, the Ethiopian government expelled all ten Eritrean diplomats accredited in Addis Ababa. Crucially, this expulsion targeted the Chargé d’affaires, who served as Eritrea’s accredited Permanent Representative, along with all three diplomats assigned to the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

By expelling multilateral representatives accredited to international bodies, the Prosperity party’s actions stand in flagrant violation of the 2000 AU Constitutive Act, the 1965 General Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the OAU, the 2008 AU–Ethiopia Headquarters Agreement, and the 1958 UNECA–Ethiopia Headquarters Agreement.

VII. Eritrea’s Multilateral Diplomacy: Defending Sovereign Equality

Eritrea’s signing of the El-Alamein Declaration on 4 October 2026 alongside Egypt, Somalia, and Sudan established a firm regional consensus: governance of the Red Sea remains the exclusive prerogative of sovereign littoral states. This diplomatic framework counteracted landlocked Ethiopia’s unilateral attempt to claim maritime authority, establishing that regional security must rest on sovereign equality, international law, and the absolute rejection of expansionist aggression.

Throughout this deepening crisis, Eritrea’s posture has consistently reflected strategic composure, maturity, and diplomatic restraint. While the Ethiopian government chose an escalatory path, invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter in a letter from its Foreign Minister to construct a self-defense pretext, Eritrea deliberately refused to engage in reciprocal military posturing. Instead of resorting to unilateral threats, Eritrea took the high ground of international legality, requesting that the Security Council act within its constitutional mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. By seeking binding deterrent measures against regional aggression, Eritrea demonstrated that true defense of sovereignty relies on collective security mechanisms and the rule of law rather than reckless brinkmanship.

VIII. The Core Contradiction of Ethiopia’s Maritime Agenda

The central destabilizing element in Ethiopia’s regional strategy is the irreconcilable gap between its strategic rhetoric of peaceful partnership, ad nauseam to mislead

the international community, and its systematic deployment of revisionist claims, historical irredentism, and implicit military coercion designed to sway its own population toward a war of aggression against Eritrea. Peaceful intent cannot be established through periodic disclaimers while official state rhetoric continuously frames maritime access as an unyielding national mandate.

To safeguard regional order, four legal and diplomatic principles must remain non-negotiable:

- 1. Access vs. Ownership: Commercial port access and long-term logistical leases do not require, and must never involve, the transfer of territorial sovereignty.

- 2. Inviolability of Historical Borders: Nostalgic historical claims and past arrangements confer zero legal entitlement to revise contemporary, internationally recognized sovereign borders, especially when, as in this case, those professed historical claims are themselves factually baseless.

- 3. The Fallacy of Demographic Entitlement: Economic scale and demographic size do not grant a larger state superior sovereignty over its neighbors or a right to coerce territorial concessions.

- 4. Collective Security vs. Unilateral Hegemony: Maritime security in the Red Sea is a collective responsibility of littoral states governed by international law, not a pretext for landlocked power projection or unilateral military overreach.

IX. An Actionable International Imperative to Counter Coercion

The international community, including the United Nations and African Union, must abandon passive neutrality and directly confront Ethiopia’s expansionist rhetoric before it triggers armed conflict. International engagement must be anchored in five concrete requirements:

1. Strict Adherence to Territorial Integrity: Reaffirm the absolute inviolability of established international borders, upholding the binding authority of the 2000 Algiers Agreement and the 2002 Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission decision.

2. Explicit Renunciation of Force: Demand that Ethiopia formally and unambiguously rule out military force, coercion, or border revisions as mechanisms for securing maritime access.

3. Restoration of Diplomatic Channels: Facilitate the urgent re-establishment of direct diplomatic mechanisms, crisis de-confliction channels, and communication lines following the October 2026 rupture.

4. Institutional Neutrality of Regional Bodies: Ensure the African Union uphold the core principle of sovereign equality rather than permitting regional mechanisms to be co-opted by state hegemony and restore Eritrea’s Permanent Representation at the Headquarter.

5. Littoral-States Led Maritime Governance: Reinforce

that Red Sea security and governance reside strictly with coastal states working within established international frameworks, rejecting unilateral territorial overreach by landlocked states.

Conclusion: Sovereignty Is Non-Negotiable and Geography Does Not Confer Ownership

The evolution of Ethiopia’s maritime rhetoric, from Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s October 2023 characterization of the country as a “prisoner of geography,” through the Prosperity Party’s August 2025 invocation of a “natural and historical right,” to the explicit February 2026 demands for 50 kilometers of coastline and military power projection toward Massawa, has created a primary threat to peace in the Horn of Africa. While Ethiopian officials periodically issue disclaimers advocating peaceful negotiations, a credible foreign policy requires absolute consistency between diplomatic rhetoric, legal commitments, and strategic military conduct.

The core principle governing this crisis admits no ambiguity: Ethiopia’s economic ambitions and demographic weight do not confer a right to appropriate Eritrean territory. Neither historical irredentism, logistical burden, nor strategic ambition can create a lawful entitlement to alter established international boundaries. Eritrea’s sovereign statehood, forged through a decades-long struggle and codified under international law, cannot be made conditional on the national development priorities or internal political imperatives of a neighboring state.

The Horn of Africa stands at a critical juncture between two opposing paths:

- **A Regional Order Based on Sovereign Equality:** Grounded in mutual respect, negotiated commercial cooperation, strict adherence to the 2000 Algiers Agreement and 2002 Boundary Commission decision, and the inviolability of recognized borders.

- **A Dangerous Revisionist Trajectory:** Where historical grievances are weaponized into territorial demands, demographic size is deployed as coercive leverage, and military force is normalized to reconfigure regional geography.

The first path provides the only viable foundation for sustainable regional development and collective Red Sea security. The second risks plunging the Horn of Africa into a catastrophic cycle of conflict. True regional integration cannot be extracted through the coercion of sovereign neighbors; it can only be achieved through strict adherence to international law and an unwavering recognition that no state’s prosperity can lawfully be built upon the territorial subordination of another.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea
Research and Documentation Division
20 October 2026**



“Art Deco, Pristine Coasts, and Warm Hospitality: A Travel Expert’s Journey Through Eritrea”

By: Milka Teklom

You recently visited Eritrea. What brought you to the country, and what were your first impressions?

I work in the tourism industry as a tour operator with Koryo Tours, so traveling and discovering new places is a fundamental part of what I do. I am always drawn to destinations with something distinctive to offer—particularly places that aren’t on everyone’s travel list.

Eritrea was fascinating to me. I truly think it is one of the most underrated countries I have visited because there is so much to appreciate that people might not immediately associate with it. My first impressions were overwhelmingly positive. I was struck by the architecture, the atmosphere, and the general rhythm of the place. But what stayed with me most was how comfortable I felt moving around and engaging with my surroundings.

Sometimes, as a traveler, you arrive somewhere with certain expectations, only to discover the reality is completely different. Eritrea was one of those places where I felt there was so much more to discover than its international image might suggest.

What stood out to you most



during your visit?

The Art Deco architecture was definitely a highlight. I have a deep appreciation for architectural history, and Asmara offers something truly special. Walking through the city and admiring the different designs and

In this interview, Zoe Stephens—a British tour leader, marketing manager, and content creator with Beijing-based Koryo Tours—shares her impressions of Eritrea. Reflecting on its Art Deco architecture, beautiful coastline, welcoming people, and untapped tourism potential, she offers firsthand perspective on visiting the country.

intricate building details was a real pleasure.

The city has a distinct character



that makes it memorable. The architecture isn’t just something you photograph and move on from; it gives you a tangible sense of Asmara’s identity and history. I loved being able to walk around and take it all in at my own pace.

The coastline was another standout. The crystal-clear waters and coastal landscapes were impressive. Eritrea has an enormous advantage in the sheer variety of experiences it can offer within short distances—

It was probably the single most important part of my journey. Beautiful buildings and landscapes

draw visitors in, but how local people make you feel is what stays with you long after a trip ends.

Everyone I encountered was friendly and welcoming. What I appreciated most was that people were comfortable going about their daily routines. They were simply living their lives, which allowed me to enjoy my surroundings without feeling like I was attracting unwanted attention. That might sound like a small detail, but it makes a massive difference when traveling. You want to feel at ease observing everyday life.

I also experienced Eritrean hospitality on a deeper level when I was welcomed into a local family’s home. Sharing time and a meal with them gave me an authentic perspective on the culture. It was no longer just about visiting a location; it was about connecting with the people who live there. Those personal encounters are always the most meaningful part of travel.

You even felt comfortable enough to go jogging early in the morning. What did that experience reflect about your sense of safety?

I enjoy staying active, so being able to go out for an early morning jog was something I really appreciated. Feeling comfortable doing that contributed significantly to my overall impression.

When you travel, your sense of safety isn’t just about the absence of obvious problems; it’s about how comfortable you feel navigating daily activities

independently. In Eritrea, I felt completely at ease exploring and soaking in the atmosphere.

Of course, every traveler should exercise common sense and respect local conditions wherever they go. But speaking from my personal experience, I felt safe throughout my stay, which allowed me to enjoy the destination fully.

Could you tell us more about being welcomed into a local home and experiencing the coffee ceremony?

It was a wonderful highlight because it offered a window into daily Eritrean life. There is a world of difference between seeing a country as a tourist and being welcomed into someone’s home.

One of the best moments was participating in the traditional Eritrean coffee ceremony. It’s so much more than just drinking coffee—it’s about time, care, and community. The ceremony invites you to slow down and savor the moment. In a world where travel can often feel like a rushed checklist of attractions, moments like that remind you that travel is ultimately about human connection.

From a tourism industry perspective, what potential do you see for Eritrea?

I see immense potential. Eritrea has all the core elements of a compelling international destination: unique architecture, pristine coastal landscapes, rich cultural traditions, and warm hospitality. Asmara’s architectural heritage is a massive draw for history and design enthusiasts, while the coast and cultural traditions add incredible depth.

Modern travelers are increasingly seeking authentic, off-the-beaten-path experiences. They want to discover unique places, engage with local communities, and bring home meaningful stories. Eritrea has a strong foundation for this style of tourism.

The next step is translating those assets into an accessible, well-organized, and sustainable visitor framework. That requires thoughtful planning, good



traveler information, local service development, and ensuring local communities directly benefit from tourism while preserving the country’s heritage.

What advice would you give to someone who is hesitant about visiting Eritrea because of what they’ve heard?

I would encourage them to look beyond mainstream headlines and research the country from diverse sources. It’s natural to have questions before traveling somewhere unfamiliar, but it’s important not to let a single narrative define an entire nation.

My experience was overwhelmingly positive. I enjoyed the architecture, the coast, the atmosphere, and, above all, the people. I encountered none of the constant surveillance or severe restrictions that some reports might suggest. Approach the country with an open mind, respect local customs, and be ready to learn.

To wrap up, how would you summarize your journey to Eritrea?

It was a deeply rewarding experience that left me convinced Eritrea deserves far more recognition on the global travel map. What I will treasure most is the combination of its historic architecture, beautiful coast, and the genuine warmth of its people.

Eritrea stands out as a reminder that some of the most captivating destinations exist outside the mainstream travel circuit. It has its own distinct character, beauty, and stories—and it deserves the opportunity to share them with the world.

Thank you for your time!