

Ethiopia demands for Port access and assures a peaceful solution

November 15, 2023



Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed
leader of the **Prosperity Party** since 2019
Ethiopian Prime Minister **Abiy Ahmed** (from 2nd April 2018)

The Prime Minister said that Ethiopia would persist in its pursuit of securing access to a port. However, he, once again, reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to **refrain from any acts of aggression or invasion towards neighboring countries.** **Abiy's** previous statements regarding the Red Sea had sparked concerns within the region, particularly with **Eritrea**, which boasts an extensive coastline.

During a televised speech on October 13, Abiy emphasized that **Ethiopia**, being a landlocked nation, is inherently reliant on the Red Sea for its very existence. The Red Sea serves as a crucial waterway for global trade, and **Abiy** stressed that **Ethiopia's burgeoning economy and growing population necessitate access to a port.** In subsequent efforts to assuage regional apprehensions, **Abiy** addressed a

military parade two weeks later, unequivocally stating that Ethiopia would not pursue its interests through military means. He re-confirmed that Ethiopia remained committed to pursuing mutual interests through dialogue and negotiation. However, he emphasized the need for open and constructive discussions regarding access to the sea. It is worth noting that Abiy's previous comments had triggered a reaction from **Eritrea**, whose information ministry released a **statement** characterizing **discussions** surrounding sea access **as excessive**.

The HISTORICAL CONTEXT: Following Eritrea's secession from Addis Ababa in 1993 and its subsequent declaration of independence, Ethiopia lost its coastline. The two nations then engaged in a **three-decade war** that concluded on May 24, 1991. Though Ethiopia is a much larger country than Eritrea, probably because of the large help provided by the then USSR, Ethiopia could not avoid defeat and an independent small country Eritrea emerged from the civil war. Prior to the conflict, Ethiopia had enjoyed access to a port in Eritrea. However, since the war, Ethiopia has primarily relied on Djibouti for its import and export activities.

Abiy's efforts towards reconciliation with Eritrea in 2018 earned him a Nobel Prize in 2019.

----BACKGROUND on the ERITREA CONFLICT and the TIGRAY ISSUE----

Eritrea's military of 250,000 to 300,000 soldiers is one of the most effective fighting forces not only in Africa but the world. It grew out of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), colloquially known as **Shabia**. It was an armed **Marxist-Leninist organization** that fought for the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia. It emerged in 1970 as a far-left to left-wing nationalist group that split from the **Eritrean Liberation Front** (ELF). In the early 1980s, ELF was marginalized and pushed into neighboring Sudan. The EPLF remained the only relevant opposition to Ethiopian occupation in Eritrea.

After achieving Eritrean independence in 1991, it transformed into **the People's Front for Democracy and Justice** (PFDJ), which serves as Eritrea's **sole legal political party**.

CRITERIA: the State of Eritrea, is a country in the Horn of Africa region of Eastern Africa, with its capital and largest city at **Asmara**. The northeastern and eastern

parts of Eritrea have an extensive coastline along the Red Sea. It includes the **Dahlak Archipelago** and several of the **Hanish Islands**.

Asmara is at an elevation of 2,325 metres, making it the sixth highest capital in the world by altitude and the **second highest capital in Africa**. The city is located at the tip of a steep ledge, that is both the northwestern edge of the Eritrean Highlands and the Great Rift Valley in neighboring Ethiopia.



Eritrea: estimated Population: 3.6 to 6.7 Mn; Area: 124,330 km² (97th)

GDP: \$1.98 Bn; GDP per capita: \$566

Capital: **Asmara**, Population: 963,000

The TIGRAY CONFLICT: The Tigray conflict in Ethiopia began on November 3, 2020, and lasted until November 3, 2022. The conflict was primarily fought in the Tigray region of Ethiopia between forces allied to the Ethiopian federal government and Eritrea on one side, and the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** on the other. The war resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. The TPLF was

the dominant political party in the region before the conflict, and the conflict began after the party held regional elections in defiance of the federal government's decision to postpone them due to the COVID-19 pandemic. *(In the map below, Tigray is to the east of Denakil and to the north of Gonder.)*

In November 2022, a peace deal was struck between the TPLF and Ethiopia's government, which ended the fighting in Tigray. However, nine months later, Eritrean troops still occupy several areas along the border, including four of **Irob's** seven subdistricts. (**Irob** District is also claimed by Eritrea, even though, it was awarded to Ethiopia by the UN Commission set up for settling the boundary.)



Ethiopia: Population: 126.53Mn (13th); Area: 1.112,000 Km² (26th);
GDP: \$155.8Bn (59th); GDP per capita: \$1,473 (159th)
Capital: **Addis Ababa**, Population: 2.74 Mn

According to the Global Firepower Index, Ethiopia is ranked 49th out of 145 countries in terms of military strength, with about 200,000 soldiers.

The Tigray conflict has had a devastating impact on the region, with millions of people being displaced and in need of food aid. The situation in Tigray remains tense, and the international community continues to monitor the situation closely.

Note: United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was established on July 31, 2000, by the United Nations Security Council, to help implement the Algiers Agreement, which ended the Eritrean-Ethiopian War. To facilitate the demarcation of the border between them, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) was established. The EEBC delivered its final and binding decision on April 13, 2002, which awarded the town of **Badme** to Eritrea. However, the border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia never reached the final stage of physical demarcation of the border on the ground, and the award decisions by the EEBC in 2002 and 2006 remain unimplemented until today.

*EDITORIAL COMMENTS by www.DiGiNews360.com: When human beings commit unspeakable cruelties on a group of persons, who may belong to a different religion, race or tribe, as **Hamas terrorists** did on 7th October 2023 on children, old women and men, their hatred for Jews made them **less than humans and closer to animals**. The Eritrean army did something similar, **or even worse**, on the hapless tribe of 35,000 **Irobs** in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. After committing these atrocities, the robes of the Marxist ideology of Eritrea look to be meaningless cover for animals, masquerading as humans. Can we, all on this globe, become human beings, without any delay? www.DiGiNews360.com prays: God bless us all with becoming human beings!*
