



BUILDING DURABLE PEACE BETWEEN ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA



A policy document of the Movement for Eritrean People's Sovereignty (EPS)
- May 2020 -



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Divergent Historical Narratives.....	4
The Nation State in Africa.....	6
The Boundary Question in Africa.....	8
The Post-Independence Experience.....	9
The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Conflict.....	11
The Geopolitical Setting.....	15
Building Durable Peace.....	17
References.....	19
About Us.....	20



Introduction

The peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia are connected by geographic proximity and ancient history. They are closely bound by strong cultural affinity, economic interdependence and strategic interests. Managed wisely, the multiple pillars of this bilateral relationship possess the potential to serve as a firm foundation for durable political cooperation, reliable drivers of economic complementarity, and a solid anchor of regional peace, security and stability. Indeed, the two peoples deserve to live in peace, good neighbourliness and mutual cooperation with their two sovereign states sustaining cordial relations.

Yet, Eritrea and Ethiopia have been either in a state of active war or in a state of cold hostility for fifty of the last sixty years. Despite the nearly two-year old apparent public friendship between Eritrea's ageing dictator president and Ethiopia's youthful prime minister, there prevails a precarious peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia as the trigger and the underlying causes of hostility between the two countries remain unresolved.

Modern Eritrea and contemporary Ethiopia have an old, pervasive and problematic relationship burdened by a difficult narrative of conquest, war and conflict, often impacted by the intricacies of shared ethnic and cultural affinity straddling the common border. At the core of this problematic relationship lies a longstanding antagonism between legitimate Eritrean aspirations for self-determination, on the one hand, and expansionist Ethiopian ambitions for territorial aggrandisement, on the other. Inability to resolve this historic antagonism has immersed the two countries in two devastating wars that have been the main cause of immense yet avoidable suffering, extreme poverty and miserable living conditions of the vast majority of the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples.

The proper and definitive resolution of this historic antagonism has the potential to lay the foundation for durable peace, political cooperation and economic complementarity between the two neighbouring countries. It also holds the potential to contribute to regional peace, security and stability. As we celebrate the 29th anniversary of Eritrea's historic liberation and the 27th anniversary of its formal declaration of sovereign independence, this brief and general commentary aims to situate the Eritrean people's triumphant achievement of self-determination as a nation state in the context of the emergence of the modern nation state and the normative treatment of the boundary question in contemporary Africa with a view to pointing the way forward to durable peace and amicable relations between the two neighbouring countries, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

1. Divergent Historical Narratives

Narratives have the power to shape a people's mindset and set in motion actions or movements that change the course of history. A brief review of the literature on the history of Eritrea and Ethiopia reveals that the narratives of Eritrean and Ethiopian elites render contentious, *polemical* and often *polarised* accounts of the precolonial relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian narrative uses precolonial history to claim *3,000 years of independence* and historical control over the territory of modern Eritrea and the Red Sea coast. The Eritrean narrative, on its part, uses the same precolonial history to refute the Ethiopian *claim* and prove the longstanding *independence* of the region of modern Eritrea since the distant past. Neither narrative holds entirely true; nor does it have any significant relevance to the present international status of Eritrea.

The ancient Kingdom of Axum that flourished in today's Eritrea and northern Ethiopia declined at the close of the First Millennium following the loss of its Red Sea port of Adulis. Having retreated from the coast and fragmented under rival fiefdoms in their highland bastions, the Abyssinian entities south of the Mereb-Belesa-Muna borderline (1) were cut off from the Red Sea for nearly a thousand years. The rival fiefdoms waxed or waned on account of their relative balance of forces.

Otherwise, Abyssinia was at no time prior to the European colonial scramble for Africa during the last quarter of the 19th century in control of the entire territory of modern Eritrea or even contemporary Ethiopia itself. Nor was the entire Eritrea a part of Ethiopia, because the two countries did not exist as distinct political entities during the precolonial history of the region.

During the advent of the European scramble for Africa, resurgent Abyssinia was both a victim of colonial aggression and a perpetrator of territorial expansion. Having thwarted Italian invasion in 1896, it expanded through wars of conquest in collusion and rivalry with the European colonial powers to occupy and subjugate adjacent territories, thereby assuming its present formation.



Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia (1889-1913) adroitly exploited European rivalry and ambitions in the Horn of Africa to secure diplomatic recognition, procure modern arms and acquire territories. He invaded and annexed Oromia, Harar, Wellega, Wellamo, Jimma, Kaffa, and Gammu. Indeed, the European scramble for Africa coincided with the emergence, territorial expansion, and political consolidation of the Abyssinian Empire.

In brief, modern Eritrea, with the then important commercial hub and vibrant cosmopolitan Red Sea port of Adulis, constituted the core of the Axumite Kingdom. The collapse of Axum, however, irrevocably severed the territory of modern Eritrea per se from any enduring association with the political entities that periodically sprang up, thrived or declined to its south, including Tigray with which the Central Plateau shares close ethnic, linguistic, and cultural affinity.

In the main and for the most part, the territory that constitutes modern Eritrea remained fragmented, often partly autonomous and partly dominated. It was a region of contention or a battleground of rival foreign forces until it fell under Italian control. For instance, Massawa and the Eastern Plains were under Ottoman Turkish control from 1557 to 1872 and Khedivate Egypt from 1872 to 1885 (2), whence Italy took over. The Ethiopian legend aside, therefore, the Eritrean Red Sea coast had existed independent of Abyssinian (Ethiopian) control essentially from the fall of Axum to the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952.

The historical reality thus contests both the Ethiopian claim of control and the Eritrean assertion of independence as untenable. For no state prior to the 1890s resembled the political entities called Ethiopia and Eritrea today. The colonial narrative may deny, but cannot negate, the existence of an autonomous Eritrean history, indigenous Eritrean cultures and a common psychological makeup of Eritrea as a shared homeland of the entire Eritrean people in all their diversity.

In brief, the region's precolonial history cannot undo the reality of a well-developed and distinctive Eritrean national identity, detract from the legitimacy of the struggle for Eritrean independence, or undermine the authenticity of modern Eritrean statehood. After all, legend aside, the modern states of Africa, including Eritrea and Ethiopia itself, are products of the European colonial project.

2. The Nation State in Africa

The modern nation state with a delimited, stable and recognised boundary demarcating state authority and domestic jurisdiction over national territory was non-existent in the remote history of Africa. The notion of a boundary as a fixed and internationally recognised line defining the limits of territorial domain within which national states assert administrative control, exercise formal sovereign authority and apply domestic jurisdiction was virtually absent in precolonial Africa, where there arose and fell distinct empires and kingdoms in the various regions of the continent for millennia since ancient times. Examples include the Axumite Kingdom, the Kingdom of Ghana, the Empire of Mali, the Empire of Songhai, the Kingdom of Zimbabwe, the Kingdom of Mutapa, and the Kingdom of Kongo (3).

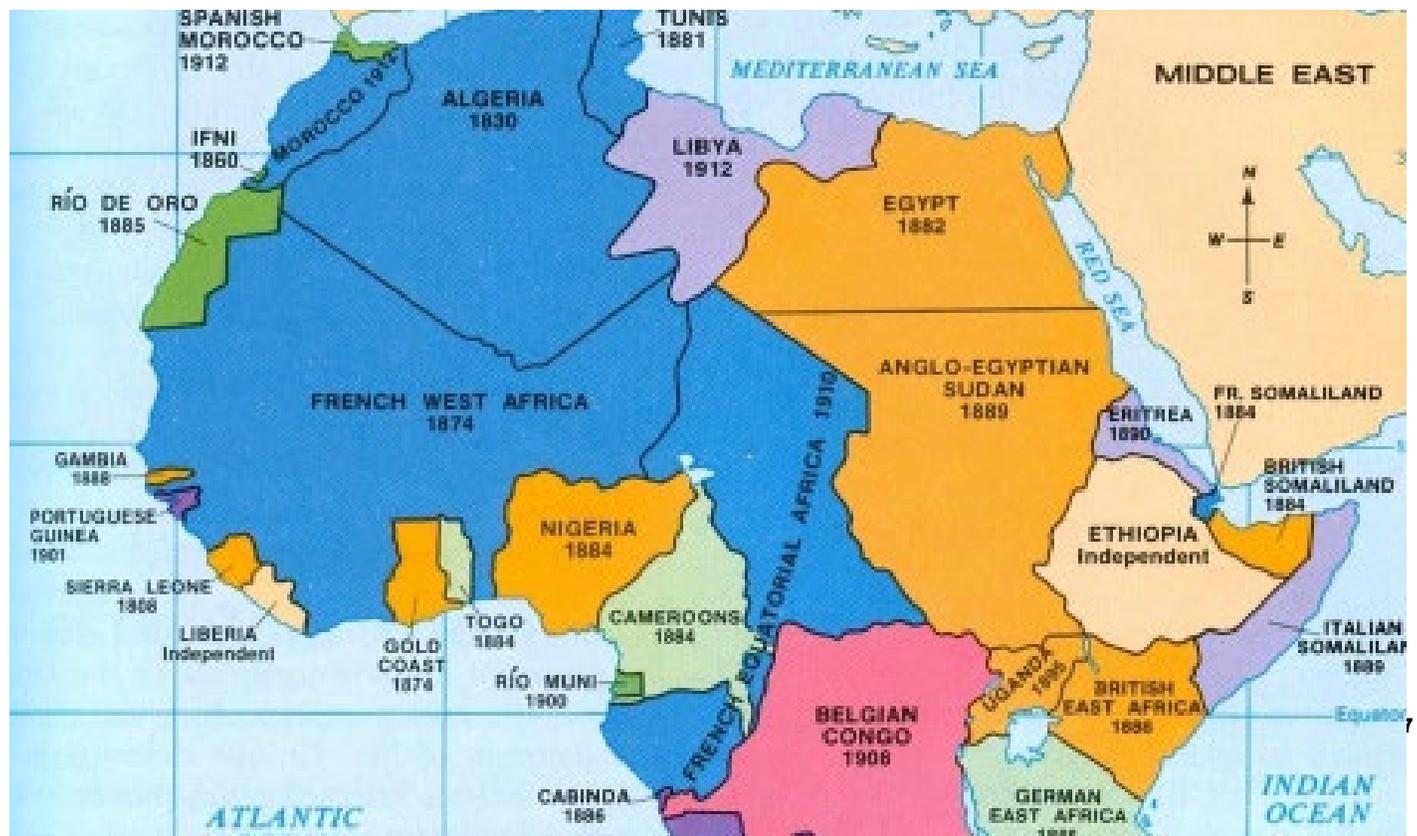
The state system, and the concomitant concept of territorial sovereignty, in contemporary Africa are essentially the products of the colonial experience. Fixed boundaries defining the postcolonial African state originate in the partition and division of the continent by imperial Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The combined impact of the political revolution in France and the economic revolution in England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries produced the Westphalian state system that transformed the political configuration of Europe. This European state system gradually extended to the rest of the world, with possession of territory as “the precondition for the exercise of legitimate political authority on the international level” (4).

The extension of the Westphalian state system to Africa occurred through colonial occupation. Driven by increasing demand for African labour, raw materials, minerals and markets, ascendant Europe set on the scramble for, conquest and partition of Africa (5). Under the aegis of the Berlin Conference, “Europe invaded Africa, took possession of Africa, and divided Africa into colonies of Europe” (6). In pursuing the interests of the imperial powers, the colonial system carved up new territorial entities that shaped the present political map of Africa.

“The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 on the partition of Africa marked the formal beginning of the imposition of the European territorial model on the continent” (7). Using “diplomacy, power politics and international law”, the conference aimed to provide a legal and political framework to resolve, by peaceful means, the growing competition for colonies among Europe’s nascent imperial powers, rationalise the scramble for Africa, and facilitate colonial expansion without resorting to conflict (8). Essentially, the General Act of the Berlin Conference mediated the European scramble for Africa and sanctioned the colonial conquest, territorial partition and political domination of the continent.

The resultant partition of Africa and the delimitation of colonial borders were arbitrary acts which the imperial powers imposed without regard to local conditions (9). “The colonial powers aggregated varied geographical regions and ethnic groups into artificially constructed territorial entities” often cutting “across ethnic lines separating peoples” without regard to local realities or the interests of the affected populations (10). In effect, the European colonial powers drew up lines that signified artificial territorial delimitations on a map of Africa as boundaries creating multinational states and arbitrarily splitting nations by state boundaries (11).

Two of the most glaring cases illustrate the results of such artificial lines and arbitrary divisions in the Horn of Africa: one, the five-way splitting of the Somali people between the then British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, British Kenya and Imperial Ethiopia; and two, the three-way splitting of the Afar people between the then French Somaliland, Italian Eritrea and Imperial Ethiopia. The colonial territories so constructed throughout the continent evolved into the colonial nation states and, eventually, into the independent nation states of contemporary Africa.



3. The Boundary Question in Africa

The boundary question in Africa has been at the forefront of the continent's post-independence concerns. The concept of a fixed, stable and internationally recognised boundary in modern Africa is a European construct implanted on African soil as a result of the territorial partition and colonial conquest of the continent. As explained above, European colonial powers partitioned, carved up and forged the modern nation states of Africa.

The new state frontiers were drawn in a haphazard manner without regard to the interests and customary relations of the affected populations. In most of Africa's regions, the frontiers artificially split same communities between two to five different colonial systems. In the process, the colonial system undermined or totally eliminated most forms of traditional African autonomy, structures of authority and self-governance (12) and entrenched the European Westphalian conception of the nation state, territory, sovereignty, territorial integrity and nationality (13).

Upon its creation in 1963, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted the principle of the sanctity of colonially inherited state borders existing at the time of accession to independence and rejected the advocacy of Pan-Africanist leaders for the redrawing of Africa's colonial borders in favour of the political union of Africa. The OAU Charter and the 1964 Cairo Resolution (14) enshrined territorial integrity within the colonial border as a cardinal principle of the organised community of sovereign African states. This aimed to preserve the colonial legacy of the Westphalian state system and the fragmentation of the continent. When the African Union (AU) succeeded the OAU, its Constitutive Act upheld the sanctity of colonial borders.





4. The Post-Independence Experience

The liberation of Eritrea in May 1991 ended Ethiopian annexation and installed the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in power in Asmera. The concomitant overthrow of Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam's military regime, or the Derg, installed the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Movement (EPRDF) in power in Addis Ababa. The ascent of the wartime allies to state power heralded the apparent resolution of the historical antagonism and the advent of a new era of durable peace between a free, democratic Eritrea and a liberated, democratic Ethiopia. The independence of Eritrea dissolved the forced union between Eritrea and Ethiopia and created two sovereign states.

The peaceful accommodation of this new reality required Asmera and Addis Ababa to agree on a set of political, economic, and trade arrangements to enable a stable transition to a cordial relationship. Furthermore, they needed to institutionalise and broaden their bilateral relations at the levels of State, government, Front, civil society, and people. Such measures would have reinforced the apparent reserve of political will to overcome the residual inertia of a contentious historical narrative and expedient alliance and helped sustain friendly relations, close cooperation, and durable peace between the two sovereign states.

Eritrea and Ethiopia maintained cordial relations during the seven years of peace between the liberation of Eritrea in May 1991 and the outbreak of hostilities in May 1998. They established joint commissions and signed several agreements, including a mutual defence pact, to promote closer cooperation in the political, security, economic, trade, and social spheres. They started initiatives to coordinate foreign policy and diplomatic action on major regional issues, such as the crisis in Somalia, the threat of militant political Islam in Sudan, and the revitalisation of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The new relationship held great promise and generated high hopes that Ethiopia and Eritrea, having finally secured the peace, could serve as a nucleus for political cooperation

and economic integration among the states of the Horn of Africa. Belying the outward manifestations of a close cooperative relationship, however, was an undercurrent of latent discord over several crucial issues. These issues included different visions of state construction, divergent policies of national development, discord over trade finance, and trouble in the borderlands. These issues of disagreement were not a problem per se. Rather, the problem lay in the nature of the personalised relationship between the two states and the absence of institutional and legal mechanisms to address and resolve, minimise or contain the disagreements.

Eritrea-Ethiopia relations were managed at the top, confined to the leaders of the PFDJ (that succeeded the EPLF in 1994) and the TPLF. Affairs of State were personalised while the mandated state or government institutions were marginalised. The arrangement worked peacefully when personal relations between the two leaders were good. When their personal relations turned sour, however, things went wrong. When the push came to shove, brinkmanship came to the fore and took over. The absence of wise leadership and prudent statesmanship led to the outbreak of war. Once joined, both sides used territorial sovereignty as the trigger and the *casus belli* for the border war.



5. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Conflict

As outlined above, Eritrea and Ethiopia, like virtually all African countries, owe their constructions, geopolitical formations and respective international boundaries to imperial division, conquest and partition of territory. The international boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia was clearly delineated by three treaties signed between Italy and Ethiopia in 1900, 1902 and 1908. The three colonial treaties define three sectors of the entire 1,000 Km-long Eritrea-Ethiopia boundary, tracing it along river beds and geometric coordinates. Thus, the Eritrea-Ethiopia colonial treaty border is one of the most clearly defined boundaries anywhere in Africa or in the world, for that matter.

Thus delimited, the international border separating Eritrea and Ethiopia held untouched for an entire century. The historical colonial treaty border had remained remarkably stable, from Eritrea's birth as an Italian colony in 1890 until Ethiopia's (TPLF) unilateral re-drawing of the boundary in its favour in 1997, whence it became a subject of precipitous dispute between the TPLF and the PFDJ, not between the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

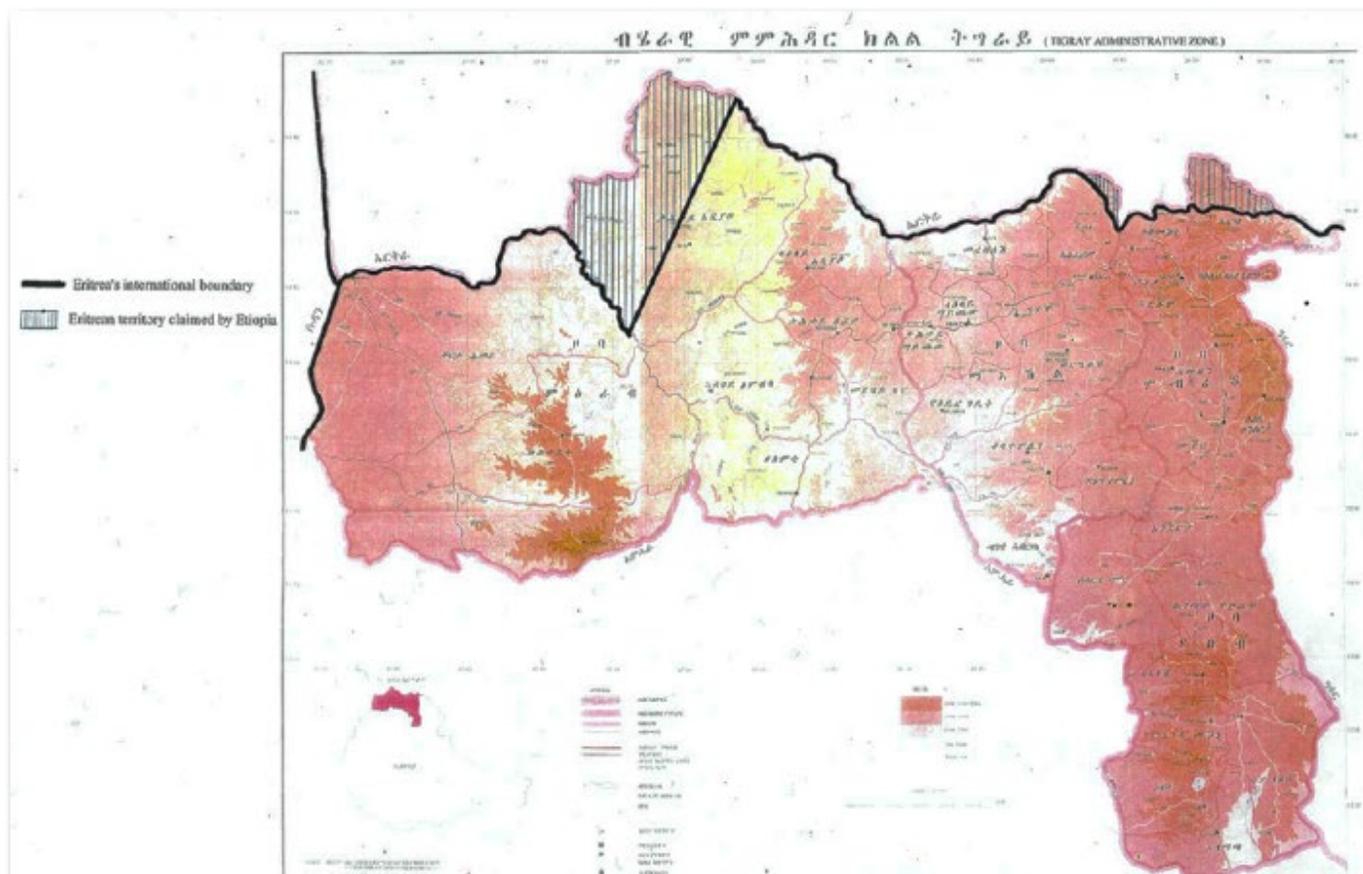
Otherwise, Eritrea had retained the integrity of its territory and the configuration of its boundary as defined by the three colonial treaties. The boundary enjoyed formal international status, both *de jure* and *de facto*, during the periods of Eritrea's Italian colonial rule (1890-1941), British military occupation (1941-1952) and federation with Ethiopia (1952-1962). Even when it became *de facto* an internal border during the period between Ethiopian annexation in 1962 and Eritrean liberation in 1991, it retained its *de jure* international status.

The stable international status of the colonial treaty border was sanctioned by the 1950 UN Federal Resolution and Eritrea's 1993 declaration of sovereign independence. The *de facto* dissolution of the Ethiopian Empire State in 1991 resulted in the separation of Eritrea and Ethiopia and Eritrea's accession to *de jure* independence in 1993, with its one hundred years old colonial borders holding intact. The independence of Eritrea confirmed the OAU and AU principle, policy and practice of the inviolability or sanctity of colonial

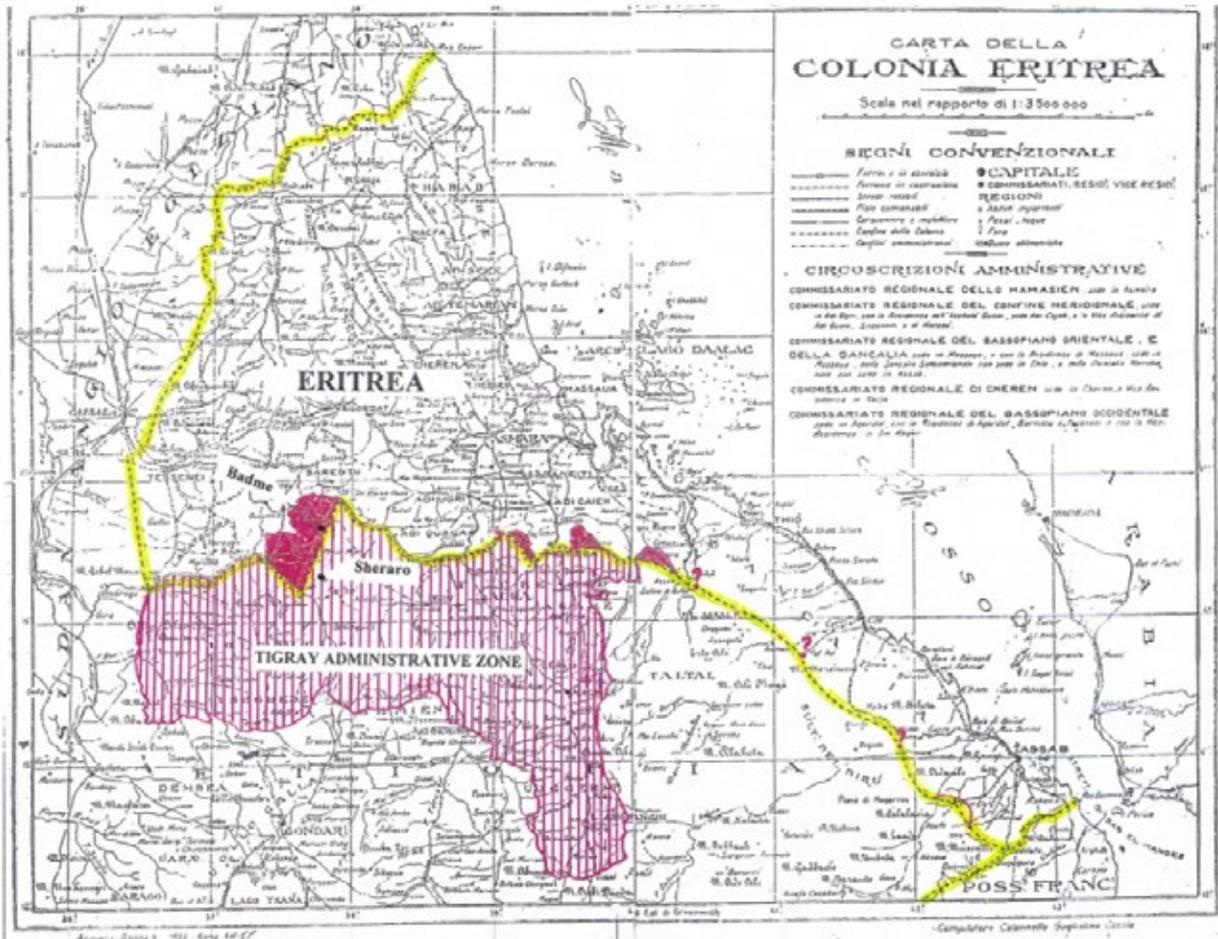
borders existing at independence.

Ethiopia's unilateral redrawing of the boundary happened four years after the independence of Eritrea. With the assistance of the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ, now GIZ), the Tigray Administrative Zone produced, a map of a significantly expanded Tigray (15) which unilaterally redrew the historical colonial treaty border in its favour (see highlighted areas in Map 1 and Map 2). The map, replicated in the new map of Ethiopia issued by the Ethiopian Mapping Authority and embossed in the new Ethiopian currency, altered Eritrea's international boundary with Ethiopia for the first time in a century (16).

Furthermore, it served as a blueprint for Ethiopia (the Tigray Administrative Zone) to deploy regular army and militia forces to occupy hitherto uncontested swathes of sovereign Eritrean territory around Bada (Adi Murug) and Badme between 19 and 26 July 1997, remove boundary markers erected under Italian colonial rule in the Badme area, dismantle local Eritrean administrative structures, expel Eritrean farmers who refused to take up Ethiopian citizenship, and establish Tigrayan authority over these newly occupied Eritrean territories. These violations of Eritrea's sovereignty and territorial integrity constituted acts of aggression under international law.



Map 1: Tigray Administrative Zone



Map 2 : Tigray Administrative Zone

These acts led to the displacement of thousands of people and the breakup of families in the encroached frontier regions and the destabilisation of the borderlands (17). The government of Eritrea failed to discharge its cardinal responsibility to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State and the safety of its citizens. Apart from two handwritten informal letters from “Isaias” to “Comrade Meles” in August 1997 (18), Eritrea failed even to lodge a formal protest or diplomatic *demarche* against the flagrant, creeping encroachment on Eritrean territory and harassment of Eritrean citizens.

Inability to defuse the resultant tension and resolve the issue through timely and institutionalised bilateral consultations or negotiation eventually prompted the outbreak of hostilities. An Ethiopian military attack on an Eritrean platoon on patrol inside Eritrean territory on 6 May 1998 that killed six Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) officers (18) provoked a forceful Eritrean reaction on 10-13 May 1998 and Ethiopia declared war on 13 May 1998, accusing Eritrea of aggression. Lack of statesmanship on both sides brought the issue to the brink and triggered total war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

As international mediation efforts by friendly third parties (US, US-Rwanda, Djibouti, OAU) were unable to stem the escalation of hostilities, mainly due to Isaias's arrogant and irresponsible intransigence (19), the two neighbours fought an unnecessary, avoidable and destructive war from May 1998 to June 2000.

One of the darkest sides of the war was the unprecedented mass deportation of innocent civilians on the basis of their nationality or national origin [or, as the then prime minister of Ethiopia, Ato Meles Zenawi, stated it, because of the dislike of the 'the colour of their eyes' (21)], accompanied by the confiscation of all their properties and lifelong earnings. The deportees included international civil servants working for the OAU, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and other UN agencies in Ethiopia, in violation of their diplomatic immunity under the Vienna Convention and the respective headquarters' agreements.

The Algiers Agreement ended the war and committed the two States to settle their boundary dispute through *final and binding* arbitration in accordance with the colonial treaties and applicable international law. A neutral body, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), delimited and set out to physically demarcate the boundary.

Following five years of Ethiopian obstruction, spanning from 12 April 2002 to 30 November 2007, an exasperated EEBC closed shop by declaring the virtual demarcation of the boundary. Ethiopia's refusal to accept and implement the Commission's delimitation and demarcation decisions resulted in the state of *no war, no peace* that formally ended when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power and declared Ethiopia's unconditional acceptance and readiness to implement the EEBC decisions about two years ago.





6. The Geopolitical Setting

In mid-2018, the world witnessed three sudden developments in the Horn of Africa. First, the rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia; second, the lifting of the UN imposed sanctions on Eritrea; and third, the signing of the tripartite agreement between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia.

These developments generated high hopes and great expectations that the era of bitter hostility and frozen conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia would come to an end and the process of healing the wounds of an unnecessary, avoidable and destructive war would begin. That reconciliation between the two countries would help promote peace, security and stability in the Horn of Africa. And that stable peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia would create a conducive climate for a new relationship of political and economic cooperation in the region.

It is quite clear that the tentacles of the conflict system in the highly strategic but extremely volatile region of the Horn of Africa extend to the adjacent Red Sea Basin and the Nile River Basin. The Horn of Africa is home to fragile states and dysfunctional regimes. It is a region known for its turbulence, democratic deficit and malgovernance, producing massive internal population displacements and extreme poverty for the large majority of the peoples.

Furthermore, the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Basin host the active military and naval presence of several world powers in the context of an intensifying geopolitical rivalry. The former US preoccupation with the so-called *war on terror* has given way to an increasing Sino-American competition for bases, ports and access to resources, markets and investment opportunities. There prevails a precarious alignment of forces and a constantly shifting mix of regional and international alliances.

The peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia has yet to be secured. In Eritrea, a brutal regime has brought about economic ruin, political paralysis and societal disintegration, turning the country into an earthly inferno. Ethiopia is facing the pains and pangs of transition,

fuelling great uncertainty. Conflict prevails within and between regional states, fanning inter-ethnic strife and internal displacement that exert a negative impact on economic development. Structural instability looms large, with no clear strategy or national consensus on the future political configuration of the Ethiopian State.

Beyond Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Tripartite Agreement between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia has not brought the three countries any closer. The standoff between Eritrea and Djibouti remains unresolved. The government of Somalia has yet to exercise central authority over its entire national territory. Civil war and internecine killings have badly scarred South Sudan. The popular resistance movement in Sudan, having won the initial battles, continues to face serious challenges in consolidating democratic governance.





7. Building Durable Peace

It is against the backdrop of this geopolitical context that we must take stock of the evolution of events on the ground in the Horn of Africa, in general, and in the relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as their respective internal situation, in particular. Given the lessons learned from the experience of 1991 to 1998, the apparent parallel between the personal relationships of Isaias and Meles post-independence and those of Isaias and Abiy post-rapprochement should be a cause of concern. The rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia has yet to deliver peace and institutionalised normal relations between the two countries. Normalised bilateral relations must be predicated on the removal of the trigger of the war, namely, the definitive resolution of the boundary issue.

Despite the public declaration on 5 June 2018 by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia's unconditional acceptance of the EEBC's boundary decision, neither the demarcation of the boundary nor the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops or Tigrayan settlements from occupied Eritrean territory has taken place. The four border crossings reopened between the two countries with considerable fanfare have been abruptly closed. The Ethiopia-Eritrean Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship remains mere ink on paper.

So, nearly two years on since the signing of the joint declaration of peace and friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia, it seems that we are still on square one. No decisive steps have been taken to address the trigger or the underlying cause of the conflict or resolve the issue of the boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The *status quo* demonstrates the precarious nature of the peace and overall relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as the structural instability of the two states in the setting of a highly volatile region.

Durable peace requires that Ethiopia recognise the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Eritrea, both in word and in deed, and withdraw its troops and the Tigrayan settlements from the occupied Eritrean territory as a gesture of goodwill to help build confidence and allow the displaced populations to return to their home villages and rebuild normal livelihood. It also requires that Ethiopia and Eritrea normalise and insti-

tutionalise their interstate relations. Once transparent state to state relations are set, all outstanding issues between the two countries can be resolved peacefully through bilateral consultation, negotiation or, if need be, third party mediation.

First and foremost on the agenda items for resolution should be the boundary issue. The decision of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission allows the two countries to agree on their common border. Failing such an agreement, the EEBC decision is *final and binding*. In the context of cordial relations and reciprocal goodwill, a feasible solution that ensures durable peace between the two countries is possible.

Given the African norm, principle and practice of the sanctity of colonial borders, upheld under international customary law, the affirmation of the historical colonial treaty border would avail a durable solution. It would also cause the least disruption of life, relations and national identity of the people on both sides in the borderlands. In a very real sense, settling the border issue on the basis of the colonial treaties will be a test of the federal Ethiopian government's and the TPLF's sincerity of seeking durable peace with Eritrea.

As a source of livelihood and identity, land in Eritrea is an ancestral heritage, duly codified under local customary laws. Land belongs to the village, irrespective of whether it is privately or communally owned, and each village possesses precise knowledge of the limits of its land vis-à-vis the other neighbouring villages, including the ones across the border. The physical demarcation of the boundary based on the colonial treaties can thus be informed by consultations with panels of elders in the borderland villages on both sides and facilitated by the expertise of the UN Cartographic Unit.

Today more than ever before, it has become increasingly clear that authoritarian rule in Eritrea is untenable, instability in Ethiopia is dire and peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia is precarious. Durable peace and viable bilateral cooperation require a transformed Eritrea and a stabilised Ethiopia, with both states committed to a constitutional order, democratic governance and inclusive development. It is possible to envision the evolution, in due course, of a new relationship built on common strategic interests and shared values of a future of peace, progress and prosperity for Eritrea, Ethiopia and the region at large.



References:

- (1) The Mereb-Belesa-Muna borderline formed the “historically evolved administrative boundary” between the areas located to the north governed by the Bahri Negasi (today’s Eritrea) based in Debarwa and the areas located to the south governed by the Tigre Mekonen based in Enderta (today’s Tigray). Cited from the work of the Portuguese Jesuit, Emmanuele Barradas, entitled “*Do Reino de Tigr*” written in 1633-34; in Trivelli, Richard M., *Divided Histories, Opportunistic Alliances: Background Notes to the Ethiopian-Eritrean War*, African Spectrum, Vol. 33, N°3 (1998: 259).
- (2) Trevaskis, G.K.N., *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition: 1941-1952*, Oxford University Press, London (1960: 7).
- (3) Olivier and Fage, *A short History of Africa* (3rd ed., 1970); Mair, *Primitive Government* (1962); id., *African Kingdoms* (1977); Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (eds.) *African Political Systems* (1940); and Shaw, *Title to Territory in Africa: International Legal Issues* (1986).
- (4) Friedrich Kratochwil, et. al, *Peace and Disputed Sovereignty: Reflections on Conflict Over Territory*, Lanham, Md.: University Press of America (1985:26).
- (5) Andebrhan Welde Giorgis, *Eritrea at a Crossroads: A Narrative of Triumph, Betrayal and Hope* (2014: 365).
- (6) Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (2000: 4).
- (7) Federica Guazzini, *State Institutions and Leadership in Africa* (2007: 21).
- (8) Anthony Anghie, *Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth Century International Law*, Harvard International Law Journal, Vol. 40, N° 1 (1999: 1-80).
- (9) Saadia Touval, *Treaties, Borders, and the Partition of Africa*, The Journal of African History 1966, Vol. 7 Issue 02 (1966: 279-293).
- (10) Andebrhan Welde Giorgis, *Eritrea at a Crossroads: A Narrative of Triumph, Betrayal and Hope* (2014: 365).
- (11) Erin E. Hughes, (1997: 279), quoted in Efem Nkam Ubi, *Territorial Theory and the Resolution of African territorial Conflicts: The Case of Ethiopia/Eritrea Boundary Conflict* (2010).
- (12) Christopher D. Zambakari, *Interrogating Liberal Theories of Rights and Interventions*, 2020 DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2020.1753550 (2020: 1).
- (13) Malcolm Shaw, *Title to Territory in Africa: International Legal Issues* (1986: 221).
- (14) Resolution AHG/Res. 16(1) on Border Dispute among African States, Cairo, July 1964.
- (15) *Weyn (ወይን)*, 1997, official organ of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF).
- (16) Hans van der Splinter, *Background to the Border Dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia* (1998, 245-272).
- (17) Andebrhan Welde Giorgis, *Eritrea at a Crossroads: A Narrative of Triumph, Betrayal and Hope* (2014: 510-511).

(18) The two letters from “Isaias” to ‘Comrade Meles”, dated 16 August 1997 and 25 August 1997, respectively, were handwritten on small pieces of pad paper, without letterhead or seal.

(19) According to information from a Brigadier General of the EDF, five officers were killed. This figure was used in the book *‘Eritrea at a Crossroads: A Narrative of Triumph, Betrayal and Hope’* (2014). The number of EDF officers killed has been corrected to six in accordance with information from an Eritrean journalist who visited the area immediately after the EDF’s recovery of Badme in May 1998..

(20) In a taunting display of bravado, Isaias stated: “The world should know that pulling out of Badme would mean like the sun is dead, that the sun would not rise forever”. [See Andebrhan Welde Giorgis, *Eritrea at a Crossroads: A Narrative of Triumph, Betrayal and Hope* (2014: 520)].

(21) Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Interview on Ethiopia Television, 9 July 1998.



About EPS

Eritrean People’s Sovereignty (EPS) is a consortium of organizations and individuals whose objective is to promote the rule of law, citizen’s bill of rights, peaceful transition, and the establishment of a duly elected constitutional government. The specific purposes for which EPS has been established include: building a secular, citizen-centered government; forming a participatory, accountable, transparent, and democratic government; reviving the Eritrean economy and its human capital; ensuring national unity and social harmony; and practicing good neighborliness and peaceful coexistence.

Contact

eri.eps2020@gmail.com

