



Forum: United Nations Peacebuilding Committee
Question of: Negotiating reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea for sustainable and continuous peace
Student Officer: Henri Willems
Position: Main Chair

I. Description of the Issue

The longstanding conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been a significant source of instability in the Horn of Africa. Beginning with Eritrea's struggle for independence from Ethiopia, which culminated in 1991, the relationship between the two nations has been fraught with tension and conflict. The most notable of these conflicts was the Eritrean-Ethiopian War from 1998 to 2000, which resulted in significant casualties and displacement. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2018, the path to sustainable and continuous peace remains challenging due to unresolved border issues, economic integration hurdles, and internal political dynamics. This report seeks to analyze the various aspects of this complex issue, explore previous peace attempts, and propose solutions for lasting reconciliation.

II. Definition of Key Terms

Peacekeeping

A method employed by international organizations, such as the United Nations, to help countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. It involves the deployment of international personnel to monitor and observe peace processes, protect civilians, and assist in the implementation of peace agreements.

Reconciliation

The process of restoring fractured relationships and building trust between former adversaries. It often involves addressing historical grievances, ensuring justice for past crimes, and promoting dialogue and cooperation.

Border Demarcation



The process of defining and marking the boundaries between two territories. This is often a contentious issue in post-conflict scenarios, as seen between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Algiers Agreement

A peace agreement signed in December 2000 between Ethiopia and Eritrea to formally end the Eritrean-Ethiopian War. The agreement included provisions for the establishment of a boundary commission to delineate the border.

Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC)

An independent body established under the Algiers Agreement to determine the exact border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The EEBC's ruling in 2002 awarded the disputed town of Badme to Eritrea, which Ethiopia initially rejected.

No-War-No-Peace

A term describing the state of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea from 2000 to 2018, during which there was neither active conflict nor a fully implemented peace agreement. This period was marked by intermittent skirmishes and continued military preparedness on both sides.

III. Background Information

Pre-Independence Era

Eritrea, a former Italian colony, was under British administration after World War II and was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. In 1962, Ethiopia annexed Eritrea, sparking a 30-year war for independence. Eritrean forces finally achieved victory in 1991, and Eritrea became an independent nation in 1993 following a UN-supervised referendum.

Post-Independence Relations

Initial relations between the newly independent Eritrea and Ethiopia were relatively amicable, characterized by economic cooperation and mutual support. However, unresolved issues, particularly regarding the demarcation of the border, soon surfaced.

Eritrean-Ethiopian War (1998-2000)



The war erupted in May 1998 over border disputes, primarily around the town of Badme. The conflict led to extensive casualties, estimated to be in the tens of thousands, and massive displacement of civilians. The Algiers Agreement, brokered by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), officially ended the war in December 2000.

Algiers Agreement and EEBC Ruling

The Algiers Agreement established the EEBC to delineate the border based on colonial treaties and international law. In April 2002, the EEBC ruled that Badme belonged to Eritrea, a decision Ethiopia initially rejected, leading to a prolonged stalemate.

No-War-No-Peace Period (2000-2018)

Despite the cessation of active conflict, Ethiopia and Eritrea remained in a state of no-war-no-peace. The border was heavily militarized, and diplomatic and economic relations were severed. This period saw occasional clashes and continued tensions.

The 2018 Peace Agreement

In July 2018, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki signed a peace declaration, which restored diplomatic relations, reopened borders, and initiated cooperation in various sectors. This agreement marked a significant breakthrough, but its implementation has faced challenges.

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Ethiopia

As one of the principal parties in the conflict, Ethiopia's internal politics, including ethnic federalism and political reforms, significantly influence its relations with Eritrea. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's peace initiatives have been pivotal in recent reconciliation efforts.

Eritrea

Eritrea's political landscape, characterized by a one-party state under President Isaias Afwerki, and mandatory national service, plays a crucial role in the peace process. Eritrea's strategic interests and regional policies are key factors in the reconciliation efforts.



United Nations (UN)

The UN has been actively involved in peacekeeping and mediation efforts in the region. The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was deployed to monitor the ceasefire and assist in the implementation of the Algiers Agreement.

African Union (AU)

The AU, and its predecessor the OAU, have been instrumental in mediating peace agreements and supporting regional stability. The AU continues to play a vital role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

As a regional organization comprising countries in the Horn of Africa, IGAD has been involved in peacebuilding initiatives and conflict resolution in the region. IGAD's support is crucial for regional stability and development.

United States and European Union

Both the US and the EU have provided diplomatic and financial support for peace initiatives between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Their involvement includes development aid, capacity building, and diplomatic mediation.

V. Timeline of Events

Pre-1998

- 1962: Ethiopia annexes Eritrea, leading to a 30-year war for independence.
- 1991: Eritrean forces defeat Ethiopian forces, leading to Eritrea's de facto independence.
- 1993: Eritrea becomes officially independent following a UN-supervised referendum.

1998-2000

- May 1998: Conflict erupts between Ethiopia and Eritrea over border disputes.
- June 2000: A ceasefire agreement is signed.
- December 2000: The Algiers Agreement is signed, formally ending the war.



2001-2017

- April 2002: The EEBC rules that Badme belongs to Eritrea, a decision Ethiopia initially rejects.
- 2000-2018: Ethiopia and Eritrea remain in a state of no-war-no-peace, with intermittent skirmishes and no diplomatic relations.

2018-Present

- July 2018: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki sign a peace declaration, restoring diplomatic relations.
- 2019-Present: Efforts to implement the peace agreement continue, with mixed success and ongoing challenges.

VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Algiers Agreement (2000)

The Algiers Agreement was a significant milestone, ending active hostilities and establishing mechanisms for border demarcation and compensation. However, its full implementation was hindered by Ethiopia's initial refusal to accept the EEBC's ruling.

UNMEE (2000-2008)

The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea was deployed to monitor the ceasefire and assist in the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. However, the mission faced significant logistical and political challenges, leading to its termination in 2008.

Bilateral Peace Initiatives

Various bilateral initiatives have been attempted over the years, with varying degrees of success. The most notable recent effort was the 2018 peace agreement brokered by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, which led to the restoration of diplomatic relations and economic cooperation.

VII. Possible Solutions

Comprehensive Border Resolution

A definitive and mutually accepted border demarcation is essential for lasting peace. Engaging neutral third parties to mediate and oversee the process can help build trust and ensure fairness.



Economic Cooperation

Joint economic projects, such as infrastructure development and trade agreements, can foster mutual benefits and strengthen the peace process. Establishing regular economic forums for dialogue and cooperation can further enhance economic integration.

Political and Social Reforms

Encouraging governance reforms that promote political inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in both countries is crucial. Addressing human rights concerns and empowering civil society will also help create a more stable and just environment.

Regional Collaboration

Strengthening regional security mechanisms through the African Union and IGAD can help address broader regional conflicts and promote stability. Diplomatic engagement with neighboring countries is essential to build a regional framework for peace and development.

International Support

Increased development assistance focusing on infrastructure, education, and healthcare can improve living standards and reduce conflict drivers. Supporting capacity building in governance, security, and civil society will create resilient institutions capable of sustaining peace.

VIII. How to prepare as a delegate

Research and Understanding

- Historical Context: Study the history of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, key events, and peace agreements, such as the Algiers Agreement.
- Stakeholders: Understand the positions of Ethiopia, Eritrea, regional organizations (AU, IGAD), and international actors (UN, US, EU).

Formulating Your Country's Position

- National Interests: Define your country's interests and policies regarding Ethiopia-Eritrea reconciliation.
- Official Policies: Reference your government's statements and actions on the issue.



- Potential Alliances: Identify countries with similar interests or regional ties for strategic alliances.

Engaging in the Debates

- Position Papers: Prepare a position paper outlining your country's stance, proposed solutions, and potential allies.
- Draft Resolutions: Draft resolution clauses that reflect your priorities in areas like border demarcation, economic cooperation, and political reforms.
- Diplomacy: Practice negotiation, public speaking, and consensus-building to effectively present your position and work collaboratively.

Key Characteristics for Preparation

- Alliances: Identify countries with shared interests to form alliances.
- Involvement: Highlight your country's involvement in past and current peace processes.
- Regional Dynamics: Understand the positions of neighboring countries and regional organizations.
- International Frameworks: Familiarize yourself with relevant UN treaties, resolutions, and peacekeeping efforts.

Questions Delegates Should Consider during Research

1. How can economic cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea be enhanced to support sustainable peace?
2. What role can regional organizations such as the AU and IGAD play in promoting reconciliation?
3. How can international actors support the peace process without undermining local ownership and sovereignty?
4. What measures can be taken to address human rights abuses and empower civil society in both countries?

IX. Relevant UN Treaties and Events



1. UN Security Council Resolution 1297 (2000): Called for the cessation of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea and demanded that the two countries honor their commitments to a ceasefire.
2. UN Security Council Resolution 1298 (2000): Called for a cessation of hostilities and imposed an arms embargo on both Ethiopia and Eritrea.
3. UN Security Council Resolution 1312 (2000): Established the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and

X. Useful Links

1. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions>
2. <https://www.peaceau.org/>
3. <https://peacemaker.un.org/ethiopiaeritrea-algiers-agreement2000>
4. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia-eritrea>

XI. Sources

1. United Nations. (2000). "Security Council Resolution 1298 (2000)." Link: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions>
2. African Union. (2020). "AU Peace and Security Efforts in the Horn of Africa." Link: <https://www.peaceau.org/>
3. International Crisis Group. (2018). "The Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace: Breaking the Stalemate." Link: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia-eritrea>
4. United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). Reports and assessments. Link: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unmee/>
5. BBC News. (2018). "Ethiopia and Eritrea Declare End of War." Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44764597>
6. Human Rights Watch. (2019). "Eritrea: Events of 2018." Link: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/eritrea>
7. Abebe, T. (2015). "Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict: Dynamics and Challenges." African Journal of Political Science and International Relations. Link: <https://academicjournals.org/journal/AJPSIR/article-full-text-pdf/4522C3B55102>