

# Annexes to the Press Release of Eritrea's Foreign Ministry

On Aug 24, 2021



- US Diplomatic Note 33 August 2021

No. 215/21

The Embassy of the United States of America respectfully would like to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the State of Eritrea that at 10:30 am Eastern Standard Time today the United States will designate Chief of Staff of the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) General Filipos Woldeyohannes under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act for being a leader or official of an entity (the EDF) that has engaged, or whose members have engaged in, serious human rights abuse committed during the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. The Embassy regrets that the Ministry refused to grant Charge Walker an appointment with HE Foreign Minister Osman or any other Ministry official. Charge walker would have preferred, in the spirit of mutual respect and candor that characterizes our bilateral relationship, to deliver the following points in person and to answer any questions.

The EDF is responsible for massacres, looting, and sexual assaults. EDF troops have raped, tortured, executed civilians, and destroyed property and ransacked businesses.

The EDF has purposely shot civilians in the street and carried out house-to-house searches, executing men and boys, and forcibly evicted Tigrayan families from their residences and taken over their houses and property.

**DIPLOMATIC NOTE**

The United States calls upon the Eritrean government to withdraw its military forces immediately and permanently from Ethiopia.

The United States underscores the need to press all parties to the northern Ethiopia conflict to immediately end the violence and begin ceasefire negotiations.

General Filipos is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world.

As a result of these sanctions, all property, and interests in property of designated persons that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons, and of any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by the designated persons, are blocked and must be reported to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of persons who are designated or otherwise blocked.

The United States intends this action to send a strong signal to all armed actors in northern Ethiopia that human rights abuses will have consequences. During his May 6 visit to Asmara, Special Envoy Feltman



made clear to President Isaias the United States' grave concerns about the deplorable conduct of Eritrean forces in Tigray and the possibility of sanctions if the human rights abuses continued and if the EDF did not withdraw.

The EDF have reentered Tigray and are supporting ENDF operations in northern Ethiopia. As we have repeatedly conveyed to you publicly and privately, the EDF's continued presence in Ethiopia is exacerbating the conflict, destabilizing Ethiopia, and impeding progress towards a negotiated ceasefire. Eritrean forces should immediately and permanently withdraw from Ethiopia.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Tigray in November 2020, the United States has been very clear about its approach to improve the situation in northern Ethiopia: to end the conflict, provide humanitarian access to people in need in northern Ethiopia, and bring about peace and security in the form of a negotiated political solution. Continued conflict in Tigray and northern Ethiopia places the national unity, stability, and territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state, and thus the security of the greater Horn of Africa region, at risk.

The United States does not favor or support any particular group or party in this conflict. We support a stable, secure, and unified Ethiopia. We have repeatedly and publicly called on the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Amhara regional forces, the Ethiopian National Defense Forces

(ENDF), and associated regional militias as well as the EDF to end this crisis and move toward a negotiated ceasefire in the interest of protecting civilians, including Eritrean and other civilian refugees in the region, and to preserve the unity of the Ethiopian state.

The Ethiopian Government and the TPLF need to begin ceasefire negotiations immediately and without preconditions. This should lead to a broader dialogue to find a durable political solution to the conflict.

Finally, the United States has called repeatedly on all armed actors in Tigray to comply with their international humanitarian law obligations, including those regarding the protection of civilians, and made it clear that those responsible for atrocities, violations of international humanitarian law, and human rights abuses must be held accountable.

This designation of General Filipos is a first step to impose costs on those responsible for abuses committed against civilians in Tigray.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to assure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea of its highest consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America,  
Asmara, August 23, 2021.



- **Letter of US Secretary State to Eritrea's Foreign Minister**



THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 8, 2021

His Excellency Osman Saleh  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the State of Eritrea  
Asmara

Dear Mr. Minister:

Thank you for your recent letter as I begin my role as Secretary of State. I hope to work constructively with you and the State of Eritrea to address the most pressing issues in the region, including the Tigray crisis. Our bilateral relationship, however, will largely depend on the actions your government decides to take on the Tigray crisis.

The United States is deeply concerned by the presence of Eritrean military forces in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and by multiple UN and civil society reports documenting human rights abuses by such forces. I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our calls for these forces to be withdrawn immediately. The international community cannot remain silent in the face of the atrocities taking place in Tigray. Those responsible must be held to account.

We are calling on all parties to the Tigray conflict to declare unilateral cessations of hostilities without preconditions. This will help alleviate the suffering of the Tigrayan people and allow critically needed international assistance to enter the region.

We face many crises across the globe, including in the Horn of Africa region, and it is imperative that all countries work together peacefully to meet these historic challenges. Now more than ever, our citizens depend on our leadership; we have an opportunity and a responsibility to build a peaceful future rooted in freedom and prosperity for all.

Sincerely,



Antony J. Blinken

- **Response of Foreign Minister Osman Saleh to US Secretary of State 130321**





ሚኒስትር ጉዳዮች ወጻኢ. وزير الشؤون الخارجية  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Asmara, 13 March 2021

His Excellency Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
The United States of America  
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary of State,

Allow me to extend to Your Excellency my greetings and best wishes for success in your heavy responsibilities.

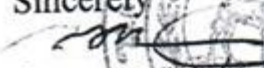
Let me also thank you for your letter of March 8 this month.

It is unfortunate that you have drawn certain conclusions on the basis of unsubstantiated media disinformation. In my view, prior consultations to ascertain our perspectives would have contributed to an accurate and holistic picture as well as better understanding.

I am also dismayed by the tone of your letter which seems to revert to unconstructive policies successive US Administrations have pursued on Eritrea in the past thirty years. I do not wish to go into acrimonious details in this letter but earnestly hope for timely remedies.

But I wish to avail of the occasion to reassure Your Excellency that the Government of Eritrea will not spare efforts to cultivate genuine bilateral ties and cooperation on the basis of the following fundamental parameters: respect of international law; respect of the sovereignty and independence of nations and peoples; non interference in sovereign affairs; and, that is not based on the logic and use, or threat of use, of force.

Sincerely

  
Osman Saleh

