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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND  
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**MA PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND  
DIPLOMACY**

**POST-2018 ETHIO-ERITREA RELATION: CHALLENGES AND  
PROSPECTS**

**BY**

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**Declaration**

I enclose and announce that this Thesis:Post-2018 Ethio-Eritrea Relation: Challenges and Prospects is my original work and never been presented in any other organization or university. I also declare that any information used in the study has been properly accredited and specified in the completed references.

Mekbeb Tekleyes Gebrehiwot

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AENF - Alliance of Eritrean National Forces

AGOA - The African Growth and Opportunity Act

AMISOM - African Union Mission in Somalia

AU - African Union

BPLM - Benishangul People's Liberation Movement

EEBC - Ethiopian and Eritrean Border Commission

EFFORT - Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray

ELF - Eritrean Liberation Front

EPLF - Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EU – European Union

EZEMA - Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GCC - Gulf Cooperation Council

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GERD - The Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

HoPR - Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representatives

HOA - Horn of Africa

ICG - International Crisis Group

ICU - Islamic Courts Union

IGAD - InterGovernmental Authority Development

INGO - International Non-Governmental Organizations

IR - International Relation

MoFA – Minister of Foreign Affairs

NAMA or ABIN - National Movement of Amhara  
NGO - Non-Governmental Organizations  
OAU - Organization of African Unity  
OFC - Oromo Federalist Congress  
OLA - Oromo Liberation Army  
OLF - Oromo Liberation Front  
ONLF - Ogaden National Liberation Front  
PP - Prosperity Party  
PFDJ - People's Front for Democracy and Justice  
RSADO - Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization  
SA - Saudi Arabia  
SPDM - Saho People's Democratic Movement  
TFG - Transitional Federal Government  
TGE - Transitional Government of Ethiopia  
TPDM - Tigray People's Democratic Movement  
TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front  
TSZ - Temporary Security Zone  
UAE - United Arab Emirates  
UNECA - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
USA - United State of America  
UN - United Nation  
UNGA - United Nation General Assembly  
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
UNMEE - United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea  
UNSC - United Nation Security Council  
VOA - Voice of America  
WHO - World Health Organization

## **Abstract**

*The 2018 relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea has changed from antagonism, confrontation, and conflict to cooperation. The two states' friendship, as well as the peace and security in the Horn of Africa as a whole, would be improved by this cooperation. The purpose of this research was to examine how the 2018 agreement may become prospective by confronting its challenges. Data was gathered from primary and secondary sources, such as face-to-face semi-structured interviews, journals, books, documents, articles, newspapers, online sites, and chosen media. Many analysts, scholars and community of practice see the agreement positively and embrace it, but the study's findings show that there are various variables that make it difficult for the collaboration to be effective and successful. One of the most serious is the protracted civil conflict that has arisen in the northern Ethiopia (covering the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regional states), which poses a clear and present danger to peace and security; furthermore, according to the study, if Ethiopia's internal problems are not resolved within a short period of time, cooperation as neighboring states may face real challenges, with consequences not only for them but also for the region.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Background of the study

The Horn of Africa comprises Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan and the Kenya. The Horn has considerable resources which are potential for development. Like untapped oil and agriculture resources that qualify the sub-region as the breadbasket of Africa and the Middle East (Medhane, 2004 and Tesfatsion, 2007). Countries of the Horn are linked by history and overlapping socio-cultural values implying that conflicts in one country are likely to directly impact on neighbors. The Horn sub-region is one of the most unstable and conflict-prone areas in the world. It is integrated into regional and global circuits of political finance (Medhane, 2004 and de Waal, 2007). Medhane (2004) claims that identity fault-lines, resource constraints, poverty, power competition, porous borders, proxy war, and other studies also point out that hard security concerns like sovereignty, self-determination, and discontent with patterns of governance are key drivers of conflict in the area. System-induced conflicts are a critical, if not major, cause of all the region's instabilities (Medhane, 2004). Because Ethiopia and Eritrea are located in this region and circumstance, they cannot be insulated from the aforementioned issues.

Since ancient times, the core of Ethiopia has been established by the intermingling of social norms and practices, cultural affinities, and ideas across the Red Sea, culminating in a distinct Afro-Asian civilization. Aksum, the modern Ethiopian state's processor, was its stronghold. With the notable exception of Ethiopia, Eritrea, like many late-nineteenth-century African territorial republics, was result of European colonization. Beginning in 1890, Italian and British colonial control in Eritrea brought economic, social, and political changes. The emergence of the previous Mereb-Melash region as a new political boundary was one clear feature (Gebru, 2016; Erlich, 1983 and Medhane, 1999). It might be utilized as a jumping off point at times.

Following that, the UN issued a resolution describing how Eritrea would be handled if colonial rule was lifted. Semere (1987) states that because of Emperor Haile Selassie disregarded the provisions of the Federal Act in 1962, the Federation of Eritrea and Ethiopia have encountered problems. Woldeab Woldemariam, Ibrahim Sultan, and Idris Mohammed Adem, among others, created the ELF in July 1960 and staged armed struggle in September 1961 (Semere, 1987).

Several years later, the Eritrean movement joined forces with the TPLF to overthrow the military regime in 1991. After Eritrea declared its independence from Ethiopia in 1993, the two countries resolved to usher in a new era of progress and collaboration. However, there were debates, fears, and mistrust (Healy and Plaut, 2007). As a result, from 1991 to 1997, their friendship and cooperation degenerated into enmity and conflict in 1998.

The causes of conflict include contested identity, history, state formation processes, claims and counterclaims within multiple mythologies and master narratives, and their production and deconstruction (Bereketab, 2007). Many observers see the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict as the biggest source of "unpleasant surprise," awe, confusion, and terror (Medhane, 1999). The conflict between the two, among other things, made Ethiopia landlocked and relocated Ethiopia's access from Eritrean ports of Massawa and Asab to the Port of Djibouti (Lyons, 2009). In 2000, the two countries signed the Algiers Peace Treaty, which was supported by the international community. They did, however, remain in a state of no war and no peace from 2000 and 2018 (Aron, 2018).

The anti-government movement in Ethiopia that got started in the past was influenced by a number of things, including Meret Larashu, the results of the 1997 election, and other things. Additionally, according to UN, BBC, and Reuters (2018) following more than two years of anti-government protests, Ethiopia's new administration led by current Prime Minister Abiy in April 2018, rapidly initiated a flurry of internal adjustments. Lifting the state of emergency, releasing thousands of political prisoners, unblocking opposition websites, allowing exiled political groups to return, and extending media space are among them. However, the bold action was that played a key role in breaking the deadlock to contact Eritrea's President Isaias, to halt hostilities, which began with a territorial dispute (UN, BBC, and Reuters, 2018).

As a consequence, Prime Minister Abiy and Eritrean President Isaias proclaimed a cease-fire and signed a peace treaty in Asmara and Riyadh; issued a joint proclamation declaring that the deal helps to peace, promote security, stability, and collaboration between them and in the region (Cornwell, 2018).<sup>1</sup> Following internal political changes and improved ties between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy became eligible to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. According to sources, the reforms he implemented were unthinkable only a few years ago (UN,

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<sup>1</sup>On the list of agreement see <https://addisstandard.com/full-text-of-the-ethio-eritrea-agreement-signed-in-jeddah/>

2018 and BBC, 2019). The dramatic swift from longstanding hostility to expectant peace indeed had amassed extensive recognitions from all over the world. A few years later, the contributions of several actors in unlocking the impasse became a bone of contention. The former U.S president Trump claims that he deserved the Noble Peace Prize, for his contribution was no less to PM Abiy. Many more assertions and counter-assertion such kind rather rise more concerns on the perpetuity of peace than render certainty. Therefore, it is of an academic duty to look at the foremost factors led to the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement, examine future prospects and document the valid lessons.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Some agreements, negotiations, information, results, facts, and goals are not usually openly stated in international diplomatic engagements between countries. Depending on the problems and subject matter, details of each finding may not be made public, and certain crucial portions may be withheld for a short or long period of time. Even if the specifics of the deal were kept private, the political changes in Ethiopia since April 2018 and the ensuing rehabilitation of relations with Eritrea have given the area new hope for cooperation, peace, and security. In the media, authors and professionals have expressed a variety of perspectives and interpretations of the new accord. People in both countries and around the world expressed excitement and sincere welcome following the agreement. However, the Ethiopian and Eritrean people welcomed the accord for the following reasons:

a) Due to their leaders' antagonistic connection, which led to both countries' efforts for independence, a war from 1998 to 2000, and hostility between them, the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea has manifested more conflict than cooperation, at a great cost to the people of both states. However, an agreement was made between them in 2018 that is excellent and one of the anticipated factors to maintain their relationship. The reconciliation may be planned or merely a quick gesture and the agreement have created more dilemmas, whether firm or tactical. It is unknown if this peace agreement will enhance their relations in the long run. Because of opposition from the TPLF, which has criticized their partnership, the prevalence of discomfort and anxiety has increased from time to time as a result of their relationship, since the anticipated optimism could not be perceptible and meet the expectations of the people of the two nations.

b) According to Prime Minister Abiy, 'Badme' would be given in accordance with EPRDF and international agreements. It is excellent since it is one of the disputed areas that lead to their conflict, and it may be utilized as part of a solution to calm their tense relationship, but how can this be done without consulting all persons on both sides, especially the afflicted one, even if it is legal?

c) Former leaders of both countries, EPRDF Meles and PFDJ Isaias, had good relationship but they were not committed to institutionalized and eventually become antagonistic and conflicting. Despite repeated visits each other countries by the current leaders, PP Abiy and PFDJ Isaias, as an indication of their intention to expand their bilateral relationship, neither party was interested in institutionalizing their agreement. The situation would thereafter take the same approach to adversary and conflict that had not been lessened by the earlier mistake.

d) One of the differences between Ethiopian and Eritrean elites has been their historical narratives on sovereignty, state creation, and ideological disagreements. The relationship between the EPRDF Meles and the EPLF Isaias then deteriorated into the 1998-2000 conflict, a proxy war in Somalia, and years of antagonism. How can the present leaders reconcile the earlier differences? Furthermore, how will Abiy's 'Medemer' synergy give answers to old and new challenges in order to build national unity and regional stability, as well as transform the political environment between them and the HOA? In this case, the study discovers and attempts to resolve these concerns.

### **1.3. Core/Central Argument**

As long as it is not institutionalized, the post-2018 Ethio-Eritrea relationship will be a concord of the leaders rather than the two nation states. Moreover, internal political tension in both countries over the future Ethio-Eritrea relationship, as well as ideological differences between the two regimes constrained the agreement.

### **1.4. Objectives**

The primary purpose of this study was to look at the post-2018 Ethio-Eritrean relationship, with particular emphasis to the challenges and prospects for mutually rewarding collaboration. Based on the core purposes, it is aimed to accomplish the specific research objectives listed below:

- Identify the potential prospects and challenges surrounding the Ethio-Eritrea relationship;

- Assess the new development of Ethiopia and Eritrea post-2018 relationship, which has switched from challenges to collaboration.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

The general research question of the paper is: what is the importance of the new Ethiopia-Eritrea relationship to cooperation? In order to cover the concerns indicated in the study goals, the following interrelated questions are presented and addressed:

- ❖ How much influence does the Ethio-Eritrean Peace Pact have on the new Ethiopian-Eritrean relationship?
- ❖ What are the challenges, new constructive and destructive developments, and prospects of the Ethiopian-Eritrean relationship post-2018?
- ❖ How can this relationship be practicable and sustainable?

### **1.6. Research Methodology, Method and Instruments of Data Collection**

#### **1.6.1. Methodology and Method**

A research methodology is a "collection of protocols or regulations" that governs research, as well as the "principles, goals, and objectives" that guide the study approach. In research, methodology is described as a systematic approach to addressing a research topic through data collection utilizing diverse processes, data interpretation, and generating conclusions regarding the study findings (Bouchrika, 2022). It is a rigorous theoretical examination of the processes used in a certain field of study. It is the "how" of conducting research; it involves procedures for describing, evaluating, and forecasting occurrences in order to solve a problem. A methodology's goal is not to provide solutions, but rather to create the theoretical framework for understanding which procedure or collection of processes may be used in the research (Kenpro, 2012).

In addition, methodology refers to the general approach to the proposed study that is connected to the paradigm or theoretical framework to be applied, as well as the exploration of processes to answer a research question. It is the study of how to conduct systematic research (Ahmed; Opoku; Aziz, 2016 and Surbhi, 2018). It may be used to get in-depth insights into a topic or to generate new research ideas, and it can help to understand how people see the world (Bhandari, 2020). Furthermore, it delves further into the subject, aiming to characterize an issue in order to

perform more precise analysis or formulating operational research questions. Methodology, which is broader in scope than technique, is a collection of scientific methodologies used to solve research questions (Surbhi, 2018).

A method is a systematic methodology, strategy, or device for collecting and analyzing data (Ahmed; Opoku and Aziz, 2016). Researchers use it to conduct research in order to solve a specific subject by conducting an experiment and deriving hypotheses and facts from it (Surbhi, 2018 and Yadav, 2022). A research methodology incorporates in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, focuses on the research process and meanings. It aids in the resolution of non-quantifiable issues. Furthermore, its primary benefit is the collecting of extremely wide and detailed data (Ahmed; Opoku and Aziz, 2016).

To achieve this objective, the study makes use of qualitative research methodologies. Bhandari (2020) qualitative research deals with words and meanings. It is used to understand concepts, thoughts or experiences. This type of research enables to gather in-depth insights on topics that are not well understood. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Data analysis involves interpretation and narrative analysis. Results are presented descriptively (Bhandari, 2020).

### **1.6.2. Data Collection**

Data collection is the systematic acquisition and evaluation of specific information in order to offer answers to applicable questions and analyze the consequences. It concentrates on knowing everything there is to know about a certain subject. Data acquired using quantitative or qualitative methodologies to ensure the integrity of the research question, to reduce decision-making errors that are consistent with the results, to save time, and to support the necessity for a new concept, change, and/or innovation. Furthermore, the purpose of data collection is to collect high-quality information that will allow analysis to lead to the formulation of convincing and credible answers to the topics addressed (Formplus, 2022).

Focus groups, discussions, interviews (structured, unstructured, and semi-structured), record reviews (including literature), and observations are some of data-collection methods used in

research design. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews are the most often utilized approach in qualitative research. Depending on the study topic and aims, this approach collects more and more precise data by recording respondents' sentiments and body movements in addition to what they say vocally. Documents and data for the study were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of information include collecting data through semi-structured interviews with key informants who can provide detail pertinent information which cannot be expected from anybody but knowledgeable practitioners and scholars. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, key informants were chosen based on their expertise and institutional position, which allows them to have some understanding on the subject and so provide more accurate and trustworthy data.

To this end, key informants from the AAU, MoFA, ISA, EZEMA, IGAD in Ethiopia and HoPR was interviewed.<sup>2</sup> An interview guide was prepared in English since almost all of the interviewees are able to communicate in this medium. Accordingly, a total of thirteen key informants were listed to make an interview but nine of them were interviewed for the purpose of this study. Moreover, secondary sources that include a comprehensive review of publications such as pertinent journal articles, books, documents, newspapers, internet sources, and selected media posts that are directly related with information on the two countries relations was consulted. Both data sources are used to aid in the analysis and provision of responses to the research questions.

### **1.7. Scope of the Study**

The scope of this analysis is confined to new developments in the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea after 2018.

### **1.8. Limitation of the Study**

It is vital to comprehend and describe some of the key issues encountered by the researcher during the inquiry. Because the research topic is a dynamic phenomenon, the conditions are continually and rapidly changing, resulting in a paucity of literature or limited secondary sources. Furthermore, the researcher seeks to acquire a much more balanced picture from a separate in-depth interview with key informants, but is faced with resistance from organizations

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<sup>2</sup>I did not conduct interviews with AU, UNECA, Eritrean Embassy in Ethiopia and Prosperity Party as a result of their unwillingness, political and different reasons.

and people to provide information throughout the study. Finally, due to the financial and current status of internal issues in Ethiopia, the researcher was unable to interview Eritrean informants in their natural location, Eritrea. This limitation would pose some difficulties in adding and balancing the issue raised by key informant from Eritrean thinking in the research.

### **1.9. Significance of the Study**

Despite the fact that many scholars and authors have addressed the Ethio-Eritrean relationship since 2018; the majority of them have focused on development concerns such as Otieno 2019, while some have dealt with another issues. This study was included, and it focuses on the interstate relationship and how the relationship between the two countries may be changed to cover more ground. Because the subject of understudy is a new phenomenon, it is difficult to find multiple publications that deal with it. In this respect, this research seeks to contribute to efforts to address future areas of collaboration and add to the current literature on the subject, which has resulted in peace and stability between them and the rest of the region. Finally, it serves as a springboard for academics interested in doing in-depth studies on Ethiopian-Eritrean bilateral relationship.

### **1.10. Organization of the study**

The thesis has five chapters: accordingly the first chapter encompasses parts of the proposal of the research like background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and other parts that were included. Chapter two of the study presents literature review and theoretical perspective, and Chapter three deals with the history of Ethio-Eritrea's relationship. Chapter four of the study deals with the drivers for a breakthrough in the 2018 Ethio-Eritrea peace agreement. Chapter Five of the study presents post-2018 Ethio-Eritrea relation: challenges and prospects. Finally, Chapter six is conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives**

Engaging in academic studies necessitates the explanation of terms, concepts, literature sources, and theoretical perspectives in order to provide a foundational analysis of the issue under study. Different academics have produced literature in a number of ways that can be used to discuss a range of subjects. Their works might serve as a citation or explanation for more works.

#### **2.1. Bilateral Relation**

Bilateral relations are cross-border political and non-political interactions between two autonomous social actors, most typically sovereign states, within the global system. A friendly country may be a powerful bilateral trading partner, boosting the economy and commerce. Diplomatic countries may also be long-term military allies, providing support, land usage, and critical resources in times of military crises. A positive bilateral partnership is the most prevalent sort of alliance, whereas a declaration of war is an example of a negative bilateral relationship (Ludwig, 2021 and Carrier, 2022). Each state may choose a diplomatic ambassador or regional representative to serve as a liaison between the two. Heads of state may also conduct frequent cross-regional visits to meet with government personnel in order to promote public trust. In contrast to unilateralism and multilateralism, bilateral ties include numerous nations rather than a single rogue one. Then their agreements can be more easily implemented and the likelihood of conflicts is reduced with bilateral agreements (Carrier, 2022).

#### **2.2. Bilateral Relations between African States**

The formation of the OAU on May 25, 1963, marked the beginning of regional accords among African governments. This is Africa's first attempt at economic integration, socio-cultural alliance, infrastructure development, and worries over colonial independence and security (Emmanuel, 2016). Africa's integration attempts have as far yielded just little results. While other areas (Western) have employed integration strategies to strengthen their economies, Africa falls behind in terms of GDP growth, per capita income, capital inflows, and overall living standards. The efforts of African leaders to develop and unite their nations have largely been unsuccessful. With a combination of clever policies, they aimed to achieve at the continental level what they had failed to do at home: economic growth. Therefore, regionalism in Africa can be viewed as both a method of avoiding pressing local concerns and a strategy for forging

coalitions that will advance the interests of member states. While Africa and its leaders are on the receiving end of global events, their elites also have a say in the process of crafting foreign policy decisions. Furthermore, in international relations there are no permanent opponents, just permanent interests. What nations do, how they act, who they support, what they authorize, and so on are all influenced by their national interests (Qobo, 2007 and Adebayo, 2016).

Due to colonial boundary disputes, the bilateral relations between African governments, particularly after independence, have primarily focused on conflict and tension; yet, on the other hand, they have attempted to collaborate in a variety of areas. Because Yoon (2014) said that European colonialism in Africa left numerous irreparable legacies in the continent from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s, their conflict and tension relationship primarily began during this time. Based on their scant understanding of Africa's pre-colonial history, ethnic makeup, and physical terrain, they created the borders (Yoon, 2014). Africa's bilateral relations have been ruined by many types of warfare since this century. Imperial wars, anti-colonial wars, intra-state warfare, inter-state wars, and international wars can all be distinguished based primarily on their political objectives and ideological tendencies (Zezeza, 2008). Inter-state and intra-state wars have received more attention in the study.

For people in many countries, the independence provided little relief from the effects of war. The political and cultural economies of colonialism and the post-independence order itself, which are anchored to the shifting configurations and conjunctures of the international division of labor, particularly the legacies and difficulties of state-making and nation-building, are the root causes of the instabilities and insecurities of postcolonial Africa (Zezeza, 2008). The struggle for independence did not result in a peaceful coexistence of African governments; rather, Zezeza (2008) identified two main types of postcolonial war in Africa: intra-state war and inter-state war. Then, the first one that Africa neighboring states connection has been experienced inter-state wars (Zezeza, 2008); the bilateral relationships between the states have been strained as a result. The frontiers of modern Africa were established by European colonialism, which divided the continent among itself without much consideration for or knowledge of its sociocultural traits. A typical African boundary might produce a state whose physical attributes make it difficult to maintain political, social, or economic stability, or it might cut over several ethnic or national

lines in another. Conflict between African states is mostly a result of artificial boundaries in the continent (Boyd, 1979).

However, since independence, many inherited colonial borders have been challenged between states. A border needs to be demarcated and limited in order to be fully effective. In this case, colonial delimitation treaties were insufficient because they lacked key information (Yoon, 2014). Conflict between African states may result from this circumstance. A place where ethnic population overhang has been particularly noticeable and where its connection to boundary dispute has been particularly clear is the HOA. The conflict and strain in bilateral relations between African governments could be shown by the instance of Somalia. The Somali Republic is the main place where ethnic Somalis live, however many also reside in Eastern Ethiopia, Northern Kenya, and Djibouti. Somalia was a staunch opponent of the boundaries. Since gaining its independence, the Somali Republic has asserted claims based on cultural considerations, which has caused ongoing conflict with Kenya and Ethiopia, particularly when Ethiopia went to war in 1963–1964, and again in 1977–1978 (Boyd, 1979; Dimma, 2013). A few border conflicts have even resulted in war, such those between Morocco and Algeria in 1963, Burkina Faso and Mali in 1985, Libya and Chad in 1973–1988, and Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998–2000 (Yoon, 2014).

The second is intra-state wars, which can be divided into six categories based on their objectives: secessionist, irredentist, devolution, regime change, social banditry, and armed inter-communal insurrections wars (Zezeza, 2008). Secessionist wars are highlighted because they fall under the scope of the study. According to Zezeza (2008), separatist movements are encouraged by areas or groups that want to break away from the postcolonial polity and form their own independent nation-state. The conflict and tension in the bilateral relations between African governments can be seen in the instance of Sudan and South Sudan. African (2016) Although Sudan and South Sudan share a border, little information about their bilateral relations existed before South Sudan's secession in July 2011 because the two states were one nation with ties to the same geography and history (African, 2016). In addition, it was thought that the surplus Sudanese pounds floating around in South Sudan after the country's secession posed a threat to Sudan's economy. Khartoum abandoned the old pound it shared with Juba and swiftly adopted a new one. The possibility of conflict and aggression loomed, South Sudanese employees in Sudan had

to be fired, and border crossings had to be restricted and, halted. In April 2012, the lucrative Heglig oil complex, which Khartoum manages but Juba claims, sparked a brief but deadly war between the two countries. Then, each side accused the other of supporting rebel movements to topple their own governments through slander and rhetorical propaganda. Additionally, a number of the topics including nationality, borders, commerce, the Abyei Administration and referendum, Southern Kordofan, and popular consultations on the Blue Nile rose to become crucial but very contentious problems (Okuk, 2021; African, 2016).

In continuation of the preceding, the secession of the Igbo-dominated districts in south-eastern Nigeria that declared themselves the Republic of Biafra (Zezeza, 2008), and examples of this kind include Eritrea's 1991 separation from Ethiopia. According to Zezeza (2008), many forms of violent conflict have plagued Africa and taken a severe toll on the cultures, polities, and economies of the continent, robbing them of their capacity for democratic growth. The difficulties in resolving the conflict are as complicated as its root causes (Zezeza, 2008).

Even if there is disagreement and strain in the relationships between African nations on a bilateral basis, a number of factors force the governments of the continent to take part in collaborating together on various subjects. Similarly, circumstances such as the recognition of the region's destructive character drive African governments to form bilateral relations; secondly, there are ecological problems, such as perennial droughts, whose solution is impossible for each country alone; third, there is a growing foreign debt; fourth, there is a problem with the use of Nile water; and fifth, there is the moral, political, and economic burden of an enormous number of refugees in the region (Yagya, 1990). To avert the region's devastation, African countries participate in cooperative political and economic cooperation. Barratt (2017) argued that if regional relations are to be normalized and more effective collaboration is to be accomplished, and cooperation between adjacent states works to their mutual advantage, while conflict works to the harm of everyone (Barratt, 2017).

Therefore, the relationship between Ethiopia and Kenya might serve as an example of a cooperative bilateral relationship between African nations. Ethiopia's bilateral relations with its neighbors are amicable and going in a positive direction through the past century (Adimasu, 2022). Ethiopia's foreign policy, which began in the second half of the 1970s, is sufficient for internal socioeconomic and political processes (Yagya, 1990). Ethio-Kenya bilateral relationship

was so good that Kenya granted the port of Mombasa for shipping Ethiopian freight in 1977-78, when Somalia soldiers invaded eastern Ethiopia and brought train traffic on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti line to a halt (Yagya, 1990). Moreover, in December 2020, they reaffirmed their commitments to continue the implementation of cross-border infrastructure projects and began work on the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor, which is being developed to complement the Mombasa-Nairobi-Addis Ababa Road Corridor, with the goal of providing multiple Eastern African nations with access to a large scale economic trade system, thereby promoting socio-economic development (ENA, 2020).

Another instance of a constructive bilateral relationship between African governments would be the case of South Africa. The overarching mandate of the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation is to work toward the accomplishment of South Africa's foreign policy objectives (Government, 2022). Zimbabwe is the strategic bilateral partnership neighbor South Africa's, and their mutual relevance has been heightened by their similar historical fights against white settler regimes. South African corporations have also strengthened their presence in Zimbabwe's tourist, services, and mining industries (Paterson and Virk, 2014). South Africa is the largest economy in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and is frequently involved in efforts to resolve political issues in surrounding countries through mediation. The country is a reasonably stable democracy with a sophisticated financial services industry that draws worldwide investment, making it a regional and continental economic powerhouse (Mpako and Moosa, 2022).

### **2.3. The Determinants of Bilateral Relations in Africa**

Many elements have been noted as markers of obstacles and bilateral ties between African states. These elements might influence a state's willingness to cooperate, integrate, or reject regional agreements (Emmanuel, 2016). Politics, geography, and the unequal distribution of earnings were some of the factors that overshadowed typical efficiency gains or losses across Africa's Regional Economic Communities. Because of Africa's small size, sparse population, fragmented economies, and frequent isolation, regional integration is strongly recommended in order to increase production, benefit from economies of scale, and slough off borders. However, the supply is now less responsive to regional initiatives aimed at market integration due to a lack of

partner complementarity and declining resource extraction profitability (Melo and Tsikata, 2023).

In keeping with the foregoing, leaders in the majority of African countries do nothing to foster the favorable conditions necessary for regional integration to succeed (Qobo, 2007). A lack of private sector involvement in regional integration, corruption, insecurity, undemocratic control, the promotion of human rights, porous borders that no one is responsible for securing, and initiatives to improve the economy that were poorly planned and carried out in some circumstances have all contributed to difficulties (Qobo, 2007 and Yoon, 2014). Partners have encountered challenges due to the relatively small markets of African states, the absence of complementary economies and a shared currency, ineffective customs, and improvements in the logistical performance of the exporting nation. Over the years, anti-market, anti-private sector, and anti-foreign investment policies have stymied African advancement. Countries were also hesitant to give up control to a supranational regional organization because they had doubts about the integration process. Progress has also been hampered by political upheaval and insecurity in a number of nations, particularly Somalia, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Liberia (Qobo, 2007; Emmanuel, 2016).

The trade-off between the benefits of common policies needed to manage cross-border externalities and their costs has also increased as a result of unequal resource distribution; this is made worse by the wide variations in policy preferences among African member states (Melo and Tsikata, 2023). African states remained mostly not integrated domestically in the postwar era. They weren't states in the true sense of the word, as the states of nineteenth-century Europe served as an example. Furthermore, Africa is constrained to a static production phase by a lack of or insufficient technological diversity, which, under ideal circumstances, follows political and economic liberalization in the form of improved governance mechanisms, robust macroeconomic policies and commercial frameworks, sound regulatory policies (including transparency), and trade liberalization (Qobo, 2007). The reduction of trade, investment, social and cultural exchange, political and diplomatic ties, as well as the upsurge in cross-border terrorism and criminal activity, as well as the spillover of intra-state conflicts to neighboring countries, are all consequences of these determinants (Yoon, 2014).

Even so, there are numerous regional agreements in Africa, and yet intra-African trade is still underdeveloped. The low rate of regional trade agreement implementation has made it challenging for African states to take advantage of and capitalize on the potential benefits of regional trade for development, according to a policy brief published in 2015 by the United States Conference on Trade and Development (Emmanuel, 2016). The majorities of the time, Africa's elites are focused on the incorrect set of objectives and show much too little genuine commitment to the continent's development. According to the report, "Africa's commitment to integration appears to have been emotional rather than logical, more rhetorical than actual." African leaders must go beyond grand gestures and ideals to succeed in regional integration. Practicality and a sense of urgency are required to address the problems in Africa (Qobo, 2007). However, compared to the Western developed nations, few advantages have come from Africa's integration attempts, as mentioned above.

## **2.4. Theoretical Perspectives**

International relations theories can help us understand how international systems work, how governments engage with one another, and how they see the world. Academic studies are backed up by theory established in response to specific issues or concerns raised by their subject matter (Norwich, 2017).

### **2.4.1. Realism**

Realism, the most dominant school of thought in international relations, is associated with the writings of twentieth-century scholars like as Carr, Morgenthau, Kennan, and Niebuhr, who followed in the footsteps of philosophers such as Thucydides (Amstutz, 1995). Donnelly et al. (2015) explained that political realism, sometimes known as "power politics," is the oldest and most widely used theory of international relations. Realists highlight the political restrictions imposed by human selfishness ('egoism') and the lack of international governance ('anarchy'), which called for the 'primacy of all political existence of power and security'. The main realism beliefs are typically identified as rationalism and state-centrism. The intersection of egoism and anarchy, and the ensuing imperative of power politics, constitutes realism (Donnelly et al. 2015).

Morgenthau (1978 cited in Amstutz 1995) contends that the primary purpose of a state-the national desire to increase power-is politics as a battle for power. In a war-prone environment, states understandably desire authority to safeguard their national interests and security (Amstutz,

1995). He went on to say those statesmen assume, think, and act in terms of power's interest. Because of the instability associated with the anarchic international order, governments' immediate objective is always the same-maximization of power, which is the technique by which all other goals are realized. It is suggested that the international community is a collective representation of human nature (Henderson, 1998).

As the name suggests, realism aims to represent and explain the reality of international politics as it is, rather than as it might be. Realists see the world as hazardous and insecure, with regretful but pervasive violence. Realists emphasize the importance of the nation-state as the world's top political power in their understanding of the nature of conflict in international politics (Burchill et al. 2001). The major concern in the Hobbesian universe of realists is concentrated on domestic societies since international relations would continue in a natural condition defined by conflict and war by nations that possess power and wield it as considered fit (Henderson, 1998).

Classical realism, neo-realism (also known as structural realism), and neoclassical realism are the three types of realism. As Jervis (1978 cited in Clackson 2011) stated they believe that humans in general are greedy and violent, classical realists are more concerned with human nature. This guides the key participants in the international system, the nations, and conflict is virtually unavoidable. There is plenty of evidence to back this viewpoint, such as Nazi Germany headed by Hitler or Iraq led by Saddam Hussein. Neo-realists are more concerned with the allocation of power in an international system devoid of a sovereign authority capable of making and enforcing binding agreements. Without such power, states are free to do anything they choose, making it impossible for states to trust and cooperate with one another. With no global authority to keep an eye on power-hungry governments, it's no wonder that realists regard international relations as a perpetual fight and survival struggle. Because all governments are aware of this, they are all attempting to protect themselves by growing their military capabilities and forming alliances with other states. Moreover, Peace is continuously in danger because the potential for conflict is always present (Clackson, 2011).

Neoclassical realism seeks to modernize classical and neorealist methods to foreign policy analysis by embracing domestic and individual levels as well as systemic concerns. According to neoclassical realists (Rose 1998 cited in Ucbas, 2014), a state's foreign policy is determined by its relative power capabilities in the international system. Such power capabilities have an

indirect and complicated impact, and how they are translated into foreign policy or security plans is dependent on a variety of intervening elements inside the state itself. As a result, foreign policymakers face constraints from both the domestic institutional framework and external risks and possibilities. Furthermore, neoclassical realism holds that the fundamental characteristics of a state's foreign policy are defined by its relative material might and position in the international system (Ucbas, 2014).

### **Optimist and Pessimist Realist Scenarios**

As Peale (1956 cited in Simple, 2019) pointed out, an optimist realist is someone who is hopeful about the future success of something and strives to find a positive viewpoint or outcome in a given situation. They have an internal center of control, focusing their concentration on what they can do to improve the circumstance. An optimist is the polar opposite of a pessimist. Pessimists view the worst-case situation and constantly anticipate the worst-case scenario to be widespread, as well as a pessimistic attitude on things. Pessimists anticipate all bad outcomes, allowing them to take a defensive attitude in the circumstance and plan for the problem(Simple, 2019). Furthermore, as power becomes more diffused, the global society's structure will become more multipolar (Amstutz, 1995). According to realists, the primary hurdles to collaboration are aggressive and selfish humans living in nations that are solely concerned with power and security as a result of the anarchical international order (Clackson, 2011).

There are criticisms in realist theory that the relevance of varied ideas of identity and culture in different nations is ignored by realist theory. Countries with similar religions and cultures, for example, are more inclined to cooperate; and it is often criticized for inflating the role of states while ignoring other players such as NGOs. Jarvis (1999) even believes that realists who deny the reality of global society will be unable to explain war or collaboration in the coming years (Jarvis, 1999 cited in Clackson, 2011). Rather, they see the international community as a disparate autonomous political society, each of which is concerned with its own security, economic, and social well-being (Amstutz, 1995). Realists cannot explain why Soviet leaders quietly relinquished power in Eastern Europe in 1989 and voluntarily disbanded the Soviet state in 1991, thereby ending the Cold War without any aggression, which realists failed to forecast(Henderson, 1998). Realist concepts of viewing governments as "black boxes" lack an awareness of what the national interest entails, and hence are critiqued for taking an overly

materialistic perspective by expounding on the underappreciated significance of ideas, values, institutions, and norms (Kat, 2015).

#### **2.4.2. Liberalism**

Liberalism is the most durable and powerful intellectual tradition that sprang mostly from European Enlightenment discussions. It is a political philosophy that stresses individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy, reason, political involvement, peace and security, private property; equality of opportunity helps to political stability and limits the state's capabilities. It is also a paradigm of economic organization that asserts market capitalism best advances the welfare of all by distributing scarce resources most effectively throughout society, as evidenced by two major tendencies in modern world politics. Liberalism aspires to improve the human condition and gives a reason for establishing cooperative institutions that can help people live better lives (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016).

By claiming that natural law gives birth to natural rights, offering a foundation for peaceful cooperation even in the absence of a civil state, John Locke (1632-1704) is considered as the pioneer exponent of classical liberalism (Lawson, 2015). The dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s increased the prominence of liberal theories of international relations that emphasize the recurring elements of international interactions (Burchill et al. 2001). This viewpoint gained popularity following the Cold War, when governments began to embrace international rules that strengthened the responsibilities of international institutions in supporting democracy in a number of countries (Clackson, 2011).

Liberals posit that the relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational societies in which they are embedded critically shapes state behavior by influencing the social purposes underlying state preferences that can be restated in terms of three core assumptions. First, Coleman (1990) and Kant (1991) emphasized the primacy of societal actors. The major actors in international politics are individuals and private groups, who on the average, behave in a rational and risk-averse manner. These organize exchanges and embark on collective action to promote different interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity, conflicting values, and variations in societal influence. Second, Representation and State Preferences: on which states (or other political institutions) represent some subset of domestic society on the basis of whose interests state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics.

Third, as Keohane (1984 and 1986) stated, the role of Interdependence and the International System is underlined. The configuration of interdependent state preferences determines state behavior that reflects varying patterns of state preferences. States require a 'purpose' and a perceived underlying stake in the matter at hand in order to provoke conflict, propose cooperation, or take any other significant foreign policy action (Moravcsik, 1997).

Liberals say that the individual's well-being is critical as the fundamental building component of a democratic system. Liberals are particularly concerned by militaristic foreign policy, primarily because conflict compels nations to build greater military might. This power may also be used to oppress one's own people. As a result, political regimes based on liberalism frequently limit military authority by maintaining civilian control over the military (Meiser, 2018). Liberalism, like realism, served as the foundation for a longer history of thinking; yet, unlike realism, at least in its classical form, liberalism is strongly identified with the phenomena of modernity (Lawson, 2015).

### **Optimist and Pessimist Views on Liberalism**

The optimist view holds that the development of international organizations will transform the world's political and socioeconomic situations. Domestic and international economic disparity, in particular, will fuel ethnic and religious nationalism, which will foster political disintegration inside and between nations (Amstutz, 1995). Liberals, unlike classical realists, believe that human nature is decent and capable of restraint. Their basic assumption is that conflict is not inescapable and that there is a lot more room for collaboration if anarchical global conditions are decreased, resulting in global transformation (Jervis, 1999 cited in Clackson, 2011).

For liberals, the fundamental impediment to collaboration is the insufficiency of international institutions (Keohane and Martin, 1995 cited in Clackson, 2011). States that are constrained by laws and norms established by institutions will be forced to cooperate. According to liberals, another impediment to cooperation is a significant democratic deficit at the global level, although democratic governments act peacefully with one another, and the majority of disputes and dangers in the globe originate from non-liberal states (Clackson, 2011).

There are critiques in liberal theory that when World War II broke out, liberalism took a tremendous hit, and most political scientists grew distrustful of liberal thinkers' pacifist beliefs

until the Cold War ended (Clackson, 2011). Another critique against liberal theory is that the conclusion of the Cold War revealed that liberal democracy has no major ideological adversary since it is the “final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1992 cited in Burchill et al. 2001). This argument has been strengthened by transitions to democracy in Africa, East Asia and Latin America (Burchill et al. 2001: 30).

### **2.4.3. Neo-Neo debate**

The neo-neo debates shaped policymakers' thinking and behavior in the 1970s. Both schools of thought responded to the "behaviorist revolution" by striving to scientifically prove their assumptions, culminating in the birth of neorealism (or structural realism) and neoliberalism (neo institutional liberalism), concepts that challenged earlier paradigms. The neo-neo argument focuses on issues of state power, interactions between states, and ties between state and non-state actors (Paiolletti, 2011 and UKEssays, 2018). Neorealism strives to explain why countries engage in the way they do in the absence of a higher authority, even while treaties and the United Nations exist. It aims to give structure to foreign policy tendencies. Furthermore, they emphasize power maximization, security concerns, the balance of power, and rivalry among themselves, either to obtain power at the cost of others or, at the very least, to ensure that they do not lose power, over economic growth. According to neorealists, the state is the most important player in international politics for peace (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018).

Neoliberalism, on the other hand, is concerned with how to achieve cooperation among states and other actors in the international system; it believes that international institutions can play an important role in resolving disputes and encouraging governments to collaborate as a means of surviving and prospering in the face of anarchy. Furthermore, they place a higher value on economic well-being (Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018).

According to neo realism and neo liberalism, anarchy restricts but does not exclude the potential of collaboration. According to neorealists, regime efficacy is more narrowly defined, and international institutions are incapable of alleviating anarchy's stifling effects on inter-state collaboration. Even though anarchy reduces the necessity for governments to cooperate, neoliberalism maintains that nations may still work with the support of international organizations to minimize international anarchy, but neo realists do not. Neo-realists criticize the

achievement of international cooperation, claiming that neorealists believe it is considerably more difficult to achieve than neoliberals (Pfefferle, 2014; Joseph, 2020 and Gadfly, 2018).

All governments, according to neorealists, must be concerned with the absolute and relative advantages produced by international accords and cooperative efforts. While neoliberals are less concerned with relative gains, they believe that both will benefit from absolute gains. In the quest of relative benefits, neorealists may turn their friends into their enemies in battle. According to neoliberals, if governments seek profits, they may cooperate with one another and prevent war by adhering to the international ideal of a "positive game." Furthermore, neorealists care more about states' short-term competitive advantages and focus on capabilities rather than intentions, whereas neoliberals care more about long-term absolute gains and focus on intentions and perceptions (UKEssays, 2018).

Both theories were included in the study, but the emphasis was placed on the Neo-Neo debate theories because of the post-2018 bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as the situation and government activity of the state. Since neoliberalism is focused on fostering collaboration among governments and other international players so that they place a higher importance on economic well-being, there are many cooperation-related concerns amongst them. Because Eritrea's ports are accessible, and Ethiopia has a sizable market, it is possible that these factors contribute to the realization that both countries have valid needs. However, they have not taken advantage of this kind of chance; instead, they have been concentrating on the goals of neorealism, which include power maximization, security concerns, and intra-personal competitiveness.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **3. The History of Ethio-Eritrea's Relationship**

The disintegration of empires resulted in the formation of roughly half of today's nation states. Interstate relations in the aftermath of state fragmentation can be calm in some circumstances, but violent in others. The Ethiopian and Eritrean instances may be among the violent in this condition, Kidanu (2014) the Ethio-Eritrean scenario was achieved via force (Kidanu, 2014).

#### **3.1. The Historical Background that Examines the Interstate Relationship Prior to the War in 1998**

The HOA has significant resources with development potential and is regarded as the breadbasket of Africa and the Middle East (Tsfatsion, 2007). The HOA's strategic geographic location, adjacent to Middle Eastern oil production nations and a vital international sea route connecting the West to the East via the Suez Canal, has given the region tremendous prominence, garnering superpower attention since the 1970s(Cardoso, 2016). Conflicts in one nation have a direct influence on its neighbors since they are linked by history and overlapping socio-cultural values, and the region is one of the most unstable and conflict-prone in the world, as well as being integrated into regional and global political finance circuits (Medhane, 2004 and de Waal, 2007).Poverty, power rivalry, borders, sovereignty, self-determination, dissatisfaction with patterns of governance, and proxy war are among the major sources of conflict in the region (Medhane, 2004).

Along with the aforementioned, a number of additional variables have been found to be predictive of bilateral ties between African states. These factors could be the cause of state cooperation, integration, or outright opposition to regional agreements (Emmanuel, 2016). Insecurity, undemocratic rule, the advancement of human rights, the use of a common currency, ineffective customs, and politicians who make little effort to create these conditions is among the factors that most African countries lack, as discussed in the conceptual and theoretical chapter (Qobo, 2007). Neorealism encourages states to compete for power and emphasizes security concerns and the balance of power (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020; and UKEssays, 2018). Security worries regarding the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea are one of the numerous elements that influence it, yet politicians rarely take action to create such conditions, furthermore, shifting its support one another in the name of 'the enemy of my enemy is my

friend,' or 'I scratch your back and you scratch mine,' and being an agent of their colonial master are also the additional problems including dangerous tactics and common practice in the region. Then Ethiopia and Eritrea, as members of the HOA, are not immune to the aforementioned issues.

Since ancient times, the heart of Ethiopia has included much of Tigray and much of Eritrea. Interlink ages with West Asia, the Mediterranean, and the Indian Ocean placed the area in a zone of extensive intercommunication and commercial networks characterized by intermingling of humans, cultures, and ideas across the Red Sea produced a distinct Afro-Asian civilization whose heartland was Aksum, the antecedent of the modern Ethiopian nation. Tigrayans and Eritreans of the southern highlands (Kebessa), descended from the Axumite civilization, speak the same language (Tigrinya) and use the same script. Furthermore, for millennia, they belonged to the same political sphere and church (Orthodox Christian), with its Geez liturgy, and shared the same agricultural lifestyle and social structure. An apparent feeling of independent identity did not arise until the start of the nineteenth century (Gebru, 2016).

The historical narrative also explains how many concerns have focused on Eritrea's relationships with previous Ethiopian administrations during its pre-Italian colonial history and position, even though there are certain variances in the Ethio-Eritrea bilateral relationship as detailed above. Bereketeab (2007) claims that Ethiopians have traditionally asserted that Eritrea has been an important part of the country for thousands of years, whilst Eritrean nationalists have always contended that Eritrea was never a part of Ethiopia in the form we know it today. The Ethiopians' and their researchers' perspective is predicated on an assumption of historical heritage, which claims legitimacy in the declaration that the Ethiopian empire has maintained unity and authority for the last three millennia (Bereketeab, 2007). Meanwhile, the Ottoman Turks and subsequently Europeans sought to attack and settle Ethiopia's interior using the Eritrean coast as a staging ground since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Egypt, operating on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, retreated from the Red Sea coast near the end of the nineteenth century (Cardoso, 2016).

Additionally, as mentioned in the chapter before, African countries were not actual states in the post-colonial era and were not generally integrated domestically (Qobo, 2007). This took place in Ethiopia; Erlich (1983) who contended that Eritrea, like many late-nineteenth-century African territorial organizations (with the noteworthy exception of Ethiopia), was an artifact of European

colonial power. In 1885, the Italians arrived in Massawa. They succeeded to seize the lands between the Red Sea and the Mereb River after a long and arduous war with Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889) and his commander in Asmara, Ras Alula. They declared their new colony, Eritrea, on January 1, 1890. The Italians had stretched their colony into Ethiopia's interior but were defeated in March 1896 at Adwa by Yohannes' successor, Menelik II (Erlich, 1983). Following this, Ethiopia and Italy signed a peace agreement in which Italy acknowledged Ethiopian sovereignty but also required Ethiopia to accept Italian rule over Eritrea (Cardoso, 2016). Since then, Eritreans have felt estranged from their country, filled with hatred and loneliness. As Erlich (1983) argued, the fight between Eritrea and the HOA might be seen as a component of Red Sea and Middle Eastern affairs rather than an African issue. All local actors in the Eritrean conflict are inextricably linked to and allied with a number of Middle Eastern Arab countries and organizations (Erlich, 1983).

Subsequently, when Italy surrendered in 1941, during the height of World War II, Eritrea was taken over by the British, who ruled the colony in accordance with the principles of the 1907 Hague Convention, which were based on "care maintenance" of the Trust Territories (Bereketeab, 2007). Between 1890 and 1952, Italian and British colonial authority in Eritrea brought economic transformations, as well as social and political schisms (Erlich, 1983 and Medhane, 1999). Becker (1952) stated that the question of the former Italian colonies was presented before the UN General Assembly in 1949, and it was the most difficult subject the UN has faced since its inception. The UN resolved to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia, declaring that: a) consideration of the welfare of the Eritrean people; b) Ethiopia's lawful claim to an outlet to the sea; and c) a desire for international peace and security (Bereketeab, 2007) should be followed. However, Semere (1987) states that the federation of Eritrea and Ethiopia, as well as the accompanying Federal Act designed in the spirit of General Assembly Resolution 390-A (V), were riddled with ambiguity, resulting in one of the region's most combustible challenges. This issue has plagued the HOA since Emperor Haile Selassie broke the terms and conditions of the Federal Act in 1962. This is still prevalent in the region today (Semere, 1987).

From the start, the federation faced several challenges. As mentioned in chapter two, neorealism contends that security concerns and competitiveness among them would hinder collaboration (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018). As a result, integration was hindered not just

by the imperial regime's management of the federation, but also by the Eritrean elite's view toward Italian colonial authority as helping their growth. Based on this, it regarded the rest of Ethiopia as barbaric and backward. Eritrea's comparatively improved economic situation drew a huge number of migrant laborers from neighboring Tigray, who were frequently accused by Eritrean nationalists of being Ethiopian operatives. Thus, the federation and its dissolution in 1962, as well as the brutal civil war and a sense of Eritrean consciousness, spawned an insurgent nationalist movement. Many major government opponents, including Woldeab Woldemariam, Ibrahim Sultan, and Idris Mohammed Adem, established the ELF in July 1960 and conducted armed action in September 1961, leading in a nearly thirty-year struggle for Eritrea's independence (Dimma, 2013; Cardoso, 2016; Erlich, 1983, and Semere, 1987). As noted in chapter two, secessionist movements are encouraged by areas or groups that want to break away from the postcolonial polity and form their own independent nation-state, as the Sudan and South Sudan would be good example for this situation (Zezeza, 2008 and African, 2016), encourage secessionist movements. One example of this is the EPLF's attempt to do so in 1991 separation from Ethiopia.

Neoliberals contend that if states desire profits, they may cooperate with one another and avoid war by adhering to the international ideal of a "positive game" (UKEssays, 2018). Despite what neoliberals would say, Dimma (2013) asserts that the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been volatile during the last half-century. In the last several decades, the two have gone from federation to union, war to peace, integration, secession, back to conflict and collaboration. The Eritrean independence war not only lasted three decades, making it one of the longest in modern African history, but it also destabilized the Ethiopian state, resulting in the toppling of two subsequent administrations (Dimma, 2013); additionally, as said in the conceptual chapter, it was noted that few African states have the necessary framework for achieving regional integration, and political leaders put little effort into forging ties of collaboration (Qobo, 2007). However, the year 1991 was a watershed moment in Ethiopian history. After seventeen years of iron rule, Ethiopia's military government was destroyed by rebel alliance forces from Eritrea and Tigray, dividing the country in two, with the EPRDF in Ethiopia and the EPLF in Eritrea (Kinfe, 2004 and Gebru, 2016). The ruling EPLF re-launched itself PFDJ as the sole legal political party in Eritrea after formal independence in 1993 (Sally and Plaut, 2007).

As a result, the two countries committed to ushering in a new age of prosperity and collaboration. Because, bilateral agreements, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, reduce the likelihood of disagreements and make agreements easier to implement (Carrier, 2022), but there were challenges in the Ethiopia-Eritrea relationship, as Sally and Plaut (2007) asserted that in reality, there were disagreements, concerns, and mistrust. The researchers suggest that they want to be devoted to fulfilling the liberalist viewpoint presented in chapter two, that government emphasizes individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy, reason, political participation and stability, peace, security, and limiting the powers of the state (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016). Subsequently, between 1991 and 1998, Ethio-Eritrean friendship, partnership, and cooperation abruptly deteriorated into hatred and war, which lasted until 2000.

### **3.1.1. Alliance between EPLF and TPLF**

In Eritrea and Tigray, insurgencies emerged in neighboring regions with shared historical, linguistic, and cultural linkages, yet they were extremely distinct in origin, length, and end. The Eritrean nationalism movement began a decade before the Ethiopian revolution and was one of its catalysts, whereas the Tigrayan ethno-nationalist insurrection began immediately after the Ethiopian revolution began. The two groups' alliance has been rocky, alternating between camaraderie and disastrous enmity. Both revolutions attained their objectives not because they were democratic, but because of their exceptional military organization and prowess. Their mass mobilization strategies were varied and sophisticated, but eventually permission was secured through a delicate combination of persuasion and compulsion (Gebru, 2016).

Furthermore, as mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, neorealism emphasizes countries engaging in power maximization, security concerns, power balance, and rivalry among themselves, either to obtain power at the expense of others or, at the very least, to ensure that they do not lose power (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020, and UKEssays, 2018). A situation in the EPLF and TPLF alliance occurred that, as neorealism advised on countries, prior to 1988 that their relationship was marked by conflict rather than collaboration. During the freedom war, their relationship was not always as friendly as often depicted. One of their differences arose when the TPLF addressed the idea of the Greater Tigray Republic, which by implication was considered to encompass the Eritrean highlands, which were not welcomed by the EPLF. The TPLF's

expansionist views strained their relationship, but in the 1980s, agreement between the two fronts was re-established (Kinfu, 2004; Jacquin, 2004, and Terefe, 2019).

However, as mentioned in the theoretical viewpoint section, neorealist argues that governments should be concerned with the absolute and relative advantages produced by international treaties and cooperative efforts (UKEssays, 2018). Similarly to the neorealist, the alliance and collaboration between the two groups for the re-establishment of cooperation was reinforced by a high degree of pragmatism practiced by all sides in response to the EPLF's military wins in Afabet and the TPLF's victories in numerous Tigray towns. Furthermore, the TPLF was concerned that if the EPLF reached an agreement with the military administration, it would put the TPLF in a difficult position, forcing it to confront military authority on its own. To prevent uncertainty, the TPLF and EPLF signed an agreement in 1988 on the TPLF's acknowledgment of Eritrean aspirations for independence and the EPLF's acceptance of the right of all ethnic groups in Ethiopia to self-determination (Kinfu, 2004). Because the EPLF and TPLF had previously employed mutual assistance during Ethiopia's war with the military government, this type of activity was not novel in Africa, as presented in chapter two, South Africa's Tshwane's diplomatic backing for Angola's defense of Laurent Gbagbo's effort to cling to the presidency in Côte d'Ivoire after losing the election to Alassane Ouattara in 2011 signals a fundamental shift in Southern Africa's post-apartheid security dynamics (Paterson and Virk, 2014).

The EPLF and TPLF were seen to have the closest relations of any two parties. Several indicators pointed to the TPLF owing its beginnings and expansion, as well as eventual acquisition of state power, to EPLF backing during vital periods of its development. Furthermore, the Tigrean insurgency against the government in Addis Abeba and its direct military assistance for the EPLF, particularly during the pivotal "Red Star Campaign" in 1982, as well as the defeat of the rival ELF, was critical for the EPLF. Most crucially, Eritrea's independence (de facto in 1991 and de jure in 1993) and international recognition would not have been possible without the support of the TPLF serving as Ethiopia's government (Dimma, 2013).

### **3.1.2. Ethio-Eritrea Relations: 1991-1997**

As stated in chapter two, an optimistic realist is someone who is optimistic about the future success of something and attempts to find a good outlook or conclusion in a particular circumstance (Simple, 2019). As a result, the researcher suggested that Ethiopia in May 1991, as

the country that effectively gave birth to Eritrea's independence, has offered political and other assistance to the newly formed Eritrea. It had also provided diplomatic support to the OAU (now AU) and IGAD that tumultuous history as a significant milestone. Rather than a true partnership between leaders, EPLF-TPLF relations showed a transient political marriage of convenience based on common political and economic goals.

In the years following 1991, the TGE, an EPRDF-led coalition government, worked with Eritrea's temporary government to control bilateral relations. They were seems committed to achieve cooperation between them as the liberals and neo liberals suggested that mentioned in the preceding chapter, liberals argued that there is a lot more room for collaboration (Clackson, 2011), and neoliberalism that concerned how to achieve cooperation among states and other actors in the international system (Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018). This statement, supported by Kinfе (2002 cited in Kinfе 2004) emphasized that in Asmara, the first Ethio-Eritrean Joint Ministerial Council Meeting was conducted; this resulted in the signing of the Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation in Addis Ababa in July 1993. On the occasion, both delegations expressed their pleasure with the efforts and actions taken by both governments to open a new chapter in their ties and begin a multi-dimensional partnership of collaboration. The agreement resulted in the creation of three joint committees in the political, economic, and social sectors (Kinfе, 2004).

Furthermore, both parties agreed that Eritreans living in Ethiopia would be considered as Ethiopian citizens, able to engage in economic activities and hold jobs in the public service and the state-controlled sector of the Ethiopian economy (Trivelli 1998 cited in Kaleab 2019). Moreover, the researcher also claims that these new leaders got recognition and support from their alliance; because, in the 1990s Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders were considered as members of a new generation of progressive African leaders by the West(Kinfе, 2004 and Ottaway 1999 cited in Dimma, 2013).

In terms of international relations, the two parties agreed to strengthen their collaboration in promoting peace and stability in the HOA, the Red Sea region, and the globe at large (Kaleab, 2019 and Kinfе, 2004).As the liberals argued it mentioned in the preceding chapter, the link between a nation and the surrounding domestic and international communities in which they are situated, fundamentally impacts nation behavior by affecting the social goals behind state

choices(Moravcsik, 1997). As a viewpoint of the liberals, when the new leaderships took power, declared their determination to renew IGAD as an instrument of sub-regional cooperation and integration(Kaleab, 2019 and Kinfe, 2004), they joined Yoweri Museveni in Uganda, resulting in a period of brief detente (1991-1994). This was marked by an increase in political interactions and various regional initiatives on conflict settlement in Somalia, Sudan, and Djibouti, as well as the implementation of regional economic integration procedures.However, new developments such as Sudan's and Somalia's civil wars, Djibouti's political instability, rebel groups operating in many regions, and Sudan's establishment of an Islamic government all contributed to the worsening of regional ties (Cardoso, 2016 and Dias, 2008).

According to Tekeste and Tronvoll (2000 cited in Kidanu and Endalkachew (2015), lack of political will and inability to act in the best interests of both countries are among the factors that hindered the implementation of agreements and harmonization of relations. This was one of the basic factors that not only escalated tension between the two countries but also changed their relation from cooperation to war and confrontation. Moreover, it resulted in a reduction in interpersonal relationships, trade, and diplomatic participation(Kidanu and Endalkachew, 2015), and few anticipated the bright dream of the May 1991 regime change to descend into the nightmare of the Ethio-Eritrean conflict in May 1998-2000 (Kaleab, 2019). Unfortunately, the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea failed to alter their comprehensive cooperative agreements, and they became antagonistic between 2000 and 2018.

### **3.1.3. Cause of the Ethio-Eritrean war (1998-2000)**

International wars are typically waged to gain territory, gain economic benefit, and topple a despised or threatening neighboring regime, for religious or ethnic causes, or to better a country's position on a regional or global geostrategic chessboard. The causes of conflict may be found in human nature, specific types of states and the international system's anarchic structure (Plaut, 2004 and Jacquin, 2004). As stated in chapter two, the neo realists care more about states' short-term competitive advantages and focus on capabilities rather than intentions, whereas neoliberals care more about long-term absolute gains and focus on intentions and perceptions (UKEssays, 2018). The researcher observed that the Eritrean government prefers neorealist recommendations, whilst the Ethiopians prefer the neoliberal approach, making it difficult to create and sustain collaboration and deteriorating their bilateral relationship.The situation was

argued by Kinfu (2004) that Eritrea was alleged to have attacked Badme and parts of Sheraro with tanks and heavy artillery in May 1998. When the dispute erupted, an Ethio-Eritrean Joint Boundary Commission was convening in Ethiopia to negotiate the delimitation and delineation of the shared border (Kinfu, 2004). The Ethiopian parliament immediately proclaimed Eritrea's aggression against Ethiopia and warned Eritrea that failure to withdraw its soldiers from 'occupied' Ethiopia land would result in war (Dias, 2008).

According to Lauterpacht (2002 cited in Plaut 2004), at the time of its onset, both nations' authorities claimed to be unaware of the cause's origins, and former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles told Ethiopian media in May 1998 that he had no adequate explanation for why relations had deteriorated so dramatically. Furthermore, Clapham (2003) stated that when asked by a reporter from the Washington Post why he felt the conflict arose, Eritrean President Isaias reacted in similar words, "It's really tough to readily find an explanation" (Plaut, 2004: 2). In this case, the researcher claimed that both understood the underlying source of the disagreement since they are leaders of a sovereign country, have power over authorities, and must approve every major decision, but they were unwilling to do so. It was said by Sally and Plaut (2007), in truth, profound divisions had hampered ties between the EPRDF and EPLF for many years, leaving a residue of animosity and suspicion. Their diplomatic ties had deteriorated to the point of open antagonism and, at times, fighting, despite the fact that the outside world was generally unaware of the problems and insecurity of the entire region (Sally and Plaut, 2007). Even though Ethiopia and Eritrea were allies who had promised to cooperate, they went to war for various causes.

### **Economic Issues**

The economic aspect is one of the main causes of the war, because Dias (2008) stated that Ethiopia became a landlocked country but gained access to the Eritrean port of Assab when the TPLF/EPRDF quickly acknowledged Eritrea's independence. In the past time, following the 1977-78 conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia, the military dictatorship avoided the Port of Djibouti route and relocated to Assab, which hosted 90% of Ethiopia's overall import and export traffic, while the remaining 10% was routed through the Djibouti Port (Dias, 2008). After taking power in 1991, the EPRDF-led government did the same.

Furthermore, Dias (2008) added that the Assab corridor's traffic share increased from 700,000 tons in 1991 to nearly 2.7 million tons in 1995. At this time, the transportation of products from the Port of Assab to Ethiopia accounts for 90% of imports and more than 50% of Ethiopian exports. Exports through Eritrea to Ethiopia accounted for 63% of total exports in 1997. The subject of finding an alternative to Assab was raised shortly after 1998, and Eritrea's port service to Ethiopia remained the most competitive in the area. Indeed, prior to the conflict, Ethiopia's reliance on Eritrean ports for sea access for international commerce was matched by Eritrea's industry reliance on the Ethiopian market, particularly the Northern Region of Ethiopia, Tigray. As a result, there were reasonable expectations that Eritrea's industrial base, linked to its natural markets in northern Ethiopia and eastern Sudan, would serve as the backbone of the Eritrean economy after 1991 (Dias, 2008).

According to Kiefe (2004), even after 1991, Eritrea perceived several Ethiopian firms as impediments to its economic activities (Kiefe, 2004). It demonstrates that there are complaints on the Eritrean side and a desire to regulate any interaction between them. As mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, all governments, according to neorealists, must be concerned with the absolute and relative advantages produced by international accords and cooperative efforts. While neoliberals are less concerned with relative gains, they believe that both will benefit from absolute gains (UKEssays, 2018). According to these theories the researcher argued that the Eritrean government appears to be biased toward absolute economic advantage over Ethiopia, whereas the neo liberal assumption that seems supported by Ethiopia will benefit or that a win-win strategy will result in absolute gain was not accepted by the Eritrean side, leading to disagreement.

However, based on the above theory, and Kiefe (2004) claims experts believed that this was due to the divergent economic strategies implemented by both countries after 1991, making it inevitable that a gap would emerge (Kiefe, 2004). Again Dias (2008) suggested that Eritrea pursued an export-oriented growth strategy for development, with Ethiopia serving as the primary destination for its products. Ethiopia seems to embrace an import substitution approach in order to preserve its Northern Region's fledgling sectors against Eritrean competition. As a result of the examination of the ties between the party-owned firms revealing a discriminatory

trade policy that had grown previous to the establishment of Eritrea's own currency, rivalry for market access grew in the Humera area(Dias, 2008).

Kassahun (2000 cited in Dias, 2008) that research in the Humera region gives substantial evidence of the growing animosity between the PFDJ and the TPLF. The loaded trucks owned by the Eritrean Red Sea Corporation were stranded in Humera for several days due to a regional government order demanding that the Corporation transport its merchandise to Eritrea after meeting a host of requirements such as making the items ready for export by attaching labels indicating the items were made in Ethiopia. It was claimed that the Corporation was not made aware of this conditionality when it came to Humera to acquire farm supplies. The Firm does not reappear in the Humera market after 1996(Dias, 2008). Another economic reason was that Eritreans and the Eritrean government were involved in illegal commerce, such as the smuggling of Ethiopian coffee, oilseeds, and other items (Mulugeta 2011 cited in Kaleab 2019). In consequence, Eritrea became a significant coffee exporter despite not producing a single ounce of coffee and instead was actively involved in the Ethiopian black market, forgeries, and unlawful commercial operations, which harmed Ethiopia's economy. As a result, the basic commodity prices of salt sold from Eritrea and teff exported from Ethiopia surged instantly (Kaleab, 2019 and Dias, 2008).

Following the split of Sudan and South Sudan their bilateral relationship was not led by institutions that faced the prospect of conflict and aggression, as detailed in the preceding chapter, Okuk (2021) and African (2016) stated that the number of superfluous Sudanese pounds floating in South Sudan was viewed as a threat to Sudan's economy. Khartoum quickly changed its currency to a new pound while abandoning the old one it shared with Juba. Then in April 2012, the two nations engaged in a brief but lethal conflict over the rich Heglig oil complex, which Khartoum manages but Juba claims (Okuk, 2021 and African, 2016). It is, however, the same history that saw Ethiopia and Eritrea go to war in 1998-2000.

A similar situation occurred in the neighboring countries of Sudan and South Sudan; according to Dias (2008) the bilateral agreement preserved the free movement of people and products between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as the usage of a single currency. When the crisis instigated in 1997, Eritrea established a new currency, the Eritrean Nakfa (ERN), which was to be traded on a par with the Ethiopian Birr (ETB), sparking a heated rivalry. The Ethiopian

government rejected the suggestion, insisting that the transactions be conducted in real cash using Letters of Credit (Herbst, 2000 cited in Dias 2008). Following the disagreement, Ethiopia released new Ethiopian Birr notes, fostering anger among Eritreans. The new policy established a barrier between the two countries that had never existed before. With the Eritrean Central Bank holding a huge amount of worthless previous Birr notes, Eritrea's survival as a state was seriously called into doubt in the absence of any type of affiliation with Ethiopia. The adoption of the Nakfa, with its concomitant challenges, is one telling incident illustrating Eritrea's fragility as a separate economy from Ethiopia. According to political observers and economists, a clear link between the economic crisis and the introduction of the new Eritrean currency resulted in the intensification of the war, which was the result of years of distrust and enmity that ended in open violence (Kinfe, 2004; Dias, 2008; Kaleab, 2019 and Plaut, 2004).

### **Political and Security Issues**

Other elements that contribute to the situation include politics and security, as explained by Kinfe (2004) and Terefe (2019) the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean war revolved upon political and security problems such as Eritrea's colonialism and independence from Ethiopia, the gap caused by Eritrea's secession while under colonial authority, and federation with Ethiopia. Furthermore, the TPLF's ambition to build a Great Tigray Republic by annexing several Eritrean outlying provinces and ethnic minorities was severely opposed by the EPLF (Kinfe, 2004 and Terefe, 2019). Following the fall of the military rule, Eritrea evicted 120,000 Ethiopian people, including members of the previous province's army and administrative staff (Gilkes and Plaut 1999 cited in Dias, 2008). Similarly, the Ethiopian government launched a strategy of gathering up and deporting Eritreans living in Ethiopia, stating it was a security precaution. The sentiment of resentment was palpable, in part because no one had anticipated expulsion. Eritreans claim that even Mengistu, the former Ethiopian tyrant, never did it because his goals were different (Last, 2004).

Furthermore, Terefe (2019) claims that their state building objectives were distinct, the leadership of both nations began to cement their separate positions against one another, and the dynamic character of ties between the two political factions, TPLF and EPLF, was significantly modified once they came to power. Eritrea became a unitary state, whereas Ethiopia established an ethno-federal system. The two nations took opposing political approaches, which opened the stage for

their conflict, which led to the 1998 war. Eritreans fought for independence from Ethiopia for 30 years, enabling Eritrean elites to regard Eritreans as homogeneous, powerful, and unified. As a result, they created a sense of pride and claimed sole responsibility for the 1991 triumph over the military dictatorship (Terefe, 2019).

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, all governments, according to neo realists, must be concerned with the absolute and relative advantages produced by international accords and cooperative efforts. In the quest of relative benefits, neorealists may turn their friends into their enemies (UKEssays, 2018). The researcher suggested that this remark supports the Eritrean government's actions regarding Ethiopia, which strives to dominate and obtain an entire advantage at the expense of Ethiopia in order to become superior;Kinfе (2004) also claimed that Ethiopian politicians held strong opinions on why the Eritrean administration was acting so aggressively. According to former Ethiopian officials, Eritrea sought to:

- ❖ maintain its sovereignty at the expense of Ethiopia's instability;
- ❖ dictate or instruct Ethiopia on what type of productive activities to engage in so that it can use the farmer as a market for its industrial merchandize;
- ❖ force policy change in Ethiopia through coercion.
- ❖ disobey international standards and norms that regulate polite behavior among nations (Kinfе, 2004).

### **Territorial Claims**

Despite the fact that most African boundaries were the consequence of European colonial designs that were implemented without consideration for historical and ethnic constituents, post-independence African authorities opted not to meddle with those boundaries. When the OAU was formed in 1963, the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, as well as respect for the borders acquired at independence, became essential principles of African interstate relations. The norms of territorial integrity and noninterference were breached more frequently in the HOA. Somalia was an outright opponent of the idea, claiming Eastern Ethiopia, Northern Kenya, and Djibouti. Somalia and Ethiopia went to war in 1963/64 and 1977/78. Eritrea's claim to independence from Ethiopia is based on its status as an Italian colonial territory

from 1890 to 1941. Border and territorial disputes are relatively unusual in Africa, but none have been as violent as the war that erupted between Ethiopia and Eritrea (Dimma, 2013).

The question of borders was not addressed when Eritrea gained independence in 1993, partially due to the euphoria of triumph against the military dictatorship and the necessity to deal with other critical and pressing challenges. As a result, the problem of delimitation and demarcation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea border has been postponed (Kilfe, 2004). For the time being, Eritrean peasants and their Tigrayan neighbors resided in Badme, which had been under the local government of Ethiopia's Tigray province since independence, and even though there were neighbors, some Eritrean people grumbled. The Eritrean government responded indifferently, but following the introduction of the new Eritrean currency, border difficulties became more acute (Last, 2004).

Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles said that Badme was not the problem. "Badme is nothing to us, but the principle behind attacking Badme is everything. For us, what is at risk in Badme is just a piece of physical estate but a core principle of international law". The significance of the border town of Badme is uncertain, since it is described as little more than a barren piece of ground with no valuable resources that explain its value, indicating the presence of economic considerations as a trigger. As a result, ownership of this small and barren community was inextricably related to the political fortunes and survival of both governments (ICG, 2008). According to the study, Meles told Ethiopian media in the 3.4 cause of the Ethio-Eritrean conflict section that he was unaware of the beginning of the war and could not offer a suitable explanation. It contradicts the preceding remark since he attempts to explain that Badme was not the problem, but the idea underlying the attack on Badme is everything. This claim implies that Badme is not the primary cause of the war.

As previously noted in the previous chapter, Bereketab (2007) argued that the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea contested identity, history, state formation processes, claims and counterclaims within multiple mythologies, and the building and deconstruction of conflicting narratives are all underlying causes of conflict (Bereketab, 2007). Moreover, Kidist (2011) argued that Eritrea got fighter jets and anti-tank weaponry from Russia, making it the world's second most military state (ICG 2003 and International Institute for Strategic Studies 2009 cited in Kidist, 2011). Badme has become the political survival of Ethiopian and Eritrean

administrations. Because the Eritrean leader said that “pulling out of Badme may be likened to insisting that the sun will not rise in the morning ... it is unthinkable” (Tronvoll 1999 cited in Lyons, 2009: 168-69). Then, as described in the theoretical viewpoint section, the situation deteriorated because pessimists' realists are continuously anticipating the worst-case scenario to occur (Simple, 2019), and both of them experienced the predicted confrontation.

As listed in the previous section, liberalism stresses individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy, reason, political involvement, peace and security; equality of opportunity helps to political stability and limits the state's capabilities (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016) and neorealist emphasize power maximization, security concerns, the balance of power, and rivalry among themselves, either to obtain power at the cost of others or, at the very least, to ensure that they do not lose power, over economic growth (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018). According to this statement, their bilateral relations were deemed to satisfy the liberal perspective at first, but after a time, their relationship deteriorated and they were unable to control their capabilities, so they focused on concentrating power and going to war. The war between the two countries has arisen from the system's anarchic nature and flaws in the international system, as neorealists argue.

Furthermore, in accordance with the preceding theory, the 1998-2000 conflict began in May 1998, when Eritrea invaded the disputed but previously controlled Ethiopia border hamlet of Badme (Dimma, 2013). Ethiopia and Eritrea could not settle their problems through diplomatic manner and they resorted to war, as previously indicated in the previous chapter, failure to maintain diplomatic relations can result in extreme conflict, bloodshed, and war. When a country believes that its fundamental interests are at issue, it may refuse to reach an agreement regardless of what concessions are made or what rewards or sanctions are presented (Wardle, 2021 and Roy, 1984). The researcher mentioned that, their previous historical interactions have failed to address their problems in diplomatic approach, in addition it is not their core interest that the reason region of Badme to deny them to make agreement, leading them to go to war. Moreover, as described in the previous chapter, as Zeleza (2008) identified two main types of postcolonial war in Africa: intra-state war and inter-state war. Then Africa neighboring states connection has been experienced inter-state wars, and colonial delimitation treaties were insufficient because they

lacked key information (Zezeza, 2008 and Yoon, 2014), under these circumstances, the Ethio-Eritrean War of 1998–2000 is regarded in this manner.

Furthermore, as Iavasile (2012 cited in Yibrah, 2019) argues that in May 2000, Ethiopia started further attacks along the shared boundaries against Eritrea, and Eritrea initiated strikes against Ethiopia (Yibrah, 2019). Besides, Lyons (2009 cited in Kaleab 2019), argues that both nations deployed more than 200,000 soldiers, according to estimates. The fighting resulted in several deaths and enormous expenses on both sides. An estimated 70,000 to 100,000 people were murdered, and Mulugeta (2011 cited in Kaleab 2019) one million were displaced, with a massive amount of money spent totaling up to \$1 billion (Kaleab, 2019). The fight between them meets the standard requirements for qualifying as an interstate war, notably the severity of violence and the standing of the protagonists. Meanwhile, Algerian mediators sought a long-term solution to the crisis (Dias, 2008 and Yibrah, 2019). The situation and actions between Ethiopia and Eritrea appeared to be as neorealists predicted during and after the 1998-2000 war.

#### **3.1.4. Role of International Communities in Mediation**

Since the conflict's intensification, various foreign mediators have sought to resolve it. Major mediators in the war resolution were the US, Rwanda, UN, and AU (Terefe, 2019). As previously discussed in the previous chapter, neoliberals embraced the notion of institution even if it is criticized by neo realists, which argued that international institutions can play an important role in resolving disputes and encouraging governments to collaborate as a means of surviving and prospering in the face of anarchy (Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018). The international reaction to an Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict is plainly based on the calculations of self-interested member states, notably those with permanent seats on the UN Security Council. By the end of May 1998, the US-Rwandan diplomatic mission had proposed a proposal that would serve as the foundation for future peace efforts, and in June 1998, the OAU dispatched a high-level team to Eritrea and Ethiopia (Jacquin, 2004). Despite their own interests, these institutions played a significant role in ending the open conflict and reaching the Algiers agreement, even though they were unable to avoid a no peace-no war situation, which resulted in no change in the bilateral relations of the two governments after that.

## **The Algiers Agreement**

As Dimma (2013) stated that, following the end of the horrific conflict, the two governments declared a cease-fire, and the Algiers Peace Agreement was signed in December, 2000, with international backing. The agreement is divided into three sections: (a) an Investigative Body to investigate the origins of the conflict, (b) a Boundary Commission with the authority to delimit and demarcate the border, and (c) a Claims Commission to arbitrate loss, damage, or injury suffered by one party against the other. EEBC (2002 cited in Dimma 2013) that the UNSC [Resolution 1320 (2000)] approved the establishment of UNMEE, a force of 4500 troops and civilian employees stationed in a TSZ 25 kilometers from the Ethiopian border within Eritrea, to separate the military of both governments (Dimma, 2013).

## **The Ethiopia Eritrea Border Commission (EEBC)**

The EEBC was instructed under Article Four of the Agreement to delimit and demarcate the colonial era boundary based on relevant colonial treaties (1900, 1902, and 1908) and applicable international law (ICG, 2008). The Algiers Agreement established a truce, established a 25-kilometer TSZ buffer zone monitored by UNMEE and EEBC, and partially executed border delimitation and other stipulations. Furthermore, the EEBC announced its verdict in April 2002, ruling that the town of Badme was on the Eritrean side of the boundary, but other less symbolically significant sites claimed by Eritrea went to Ethiopia (Lyons, 2009 and Lyons, 2006). Eritrea, on the other hand, violated the UN Charter by using force to invade and occupy Badme, which was then under Ethiopian authority, and is thus obligated to pay Ethiopia for damages inflicted. The Security Council failed to carry out its warning of sanctions on Eritrea and issued a similar threat to Ethiopia for failing to comply with the EEBC ruling (ICG, 2008).

Moreover, in September 2003 Ethiopia's former Prime Minister Meles appealed to UN Secretary-General Annan alleging that the EEBC ruling on Badme was "completely unconstitutional, unfair, and reckless". In addition he added that it is "unimaginable for Ethiopia to tolerate such a flagrant miscarriage of justice" which would be 'a recipe for ongoing instability and repeating conflicts'. He also stated that he does not accept the EEBC ruling and instead presented a five-point peace effort as an internationally well-received tension-reduction approach (Demarcation Watch 2003 cited in Sally and Plaut, 2007: 4). However, Cardoso (2016) pointed

out that in November 2004, Ethiopia proclaimed in principle agreement of the boundary judgment and called for peace-building discussion. The proposal received no positive response from Eritrea, which reminded Ethiopia that under the Algiers Agreement, all parties promised that the EEBC judgment would be "binding and final" and would not allow for other possibilities. Eritrea, on the other hand, insisted on completing the boundary delineation before moving on to other matters, including as peace-building measures (Cardoso, 2016; Sally and Plaut, 2007).

Meanwhile, Eritrea chose to put direct pressure on the UN and Ethiopia to enforce the Algiers Agreement. Lyons (2006) stated that Eritrea has prohibited road traffic and helicopter flights, hampering UNMEE's operations. In accordance with this, the UNSC approved Resolution 1640 in November 2005, threatening Eritrea with economic consequences unless it lifted its limits on UNMEE and also requested that Ethiopia adopt EEBC's boundary delineation determination that both governments refrain from force deployment. Again EEBC (2005 cited in Lyons, 2006) stated Eritrea complained that the international community treated Ethiopia's breaches of the Algiers Agreement unjustly. It then evicted Western observers from UNMEE and imprisoned UN volunteers and local Eritrean UN officials. As a result, it was believed that the likelihood of conflict would increase. There were "worrying signals that the countdown to fresh violence may have begun" in December 2005. The border was regarded as "tense and possibly explosive" by UN monitors in early 2006, and the standoff lasted since neither Eritrea nor Ethiopia had strong reasons to violate the truce (Lyons, 2006: 9).

The two countries' ties were characterized by reciprocal recriminations, saber-rattling, and instability (Bahru, 2006 cited in Wuhibegezer, 2014). According to UNMEE (2008), the Mission withdrew its soldiers after being requested to leave Eritrean territory by the Eritrean government. Following this, Eritrea stationed its forces in the TSZ, claiming that the continuing presence of UNMEE or Ethiopian troops on its territory amounted to occupation, and asked that UNMEE withdraw several observation stations from the TSZ (ICG, 2008). As a result, there was no military force preventing the two countries from conducting overt and covert military actions (Kidist, 2011). Even while these institutions played a significant role in bringing the war to an end, they were unable to maintain smooth bilateral relations between them, as neo realists stated in the previous chapter, ... international institutions are incapable of easing the stifling

consequences of anarchy on inter-state cooperation (Pfefferle, 2014; Joseph, 2020 and Gadfly, 2018). Furthermore, International Crisis Group Report (2005) stated that another wave of warfare appeared to be on the horizon as a result of military buildup, with tens of thousands of troops stationed along both sides of the border, where the two militaries were barely separated by a few meters, frequently less than a 'football pitch's distance' (Wuhibegezer, 2014).

### **Weaknesses of the Algiers Agreement**

The Algiers Agreement of 2000 prioritized two essential issues: a ceasefire and a procedure to resolve the border issue, neither of which was completely fulfilled (Prendergast, 2001 cited in ICG 2008). According to the same source, the ceasefire was a must for progress on other substantial matters. It forced both sides to return to pre-war positions and established a demilitarized zone under UN supervision. According to EEBC (2006 cited in ICG 2008), the EEBC was unable to persuade Ethiopia to accept the physical line envisioned in Algiers, resulting in a political impasse. After offering demarcation by coordinates, the EEBC folded in November 2007. Furthermore, Heinlein (2007 cited in ICG 2008) claims that Ethiopia regards the EEBC's virtual demarcation as "legal nonsense" and continues to emphasize the importance of conversation on ties normalization prior to physical demarcation. Eritrea, for its part, sees discussion and restoration of relations as Ethiopian ploys to undermine the EEBC verdict and, eventually, its sovereignty (ICG, 2008).

Sally and Plaut (2007) argued that the roots of the conflict were certainly more complicated than a single problem, border delimitation, because there are several examples of un-delineated boundaries that have not resulted in war. The EEBC's Badme ruling could only result in winners and losers, and a significant emphasis on delimitation may have eased tensions. A strategy that aimed to address the war's consequences rather than its alleged origins may have resulted in the opening of doors for discussion (Reid, 2005 cited in Sally and Plaut 2007). This is primarily due to the political ethos that they fostered, which was shaped by years of guerrilla warfare in which compromise is synonymous with submission. This was aggravated by previous mistrust and enmity between the two groups, and there was nothing the outside world could do about it (Sally and Plaut, 2007).

### **3.2. Ethio-Eritrea Relations in the Aftermath of War and its Implications for Interstate Relations**

The 1998-2000 conflict harmed both regimes' reputation, undermining their essential economic and political backing from friends and the international community (Dimma, 2013). According to ICG (2008), Ethiopia and Eritrea have taken no steps to address their unresolved border war, which both utilized as a pretext to strengthen their internal power at the price of democracy and economic progress, making diplomatic engagement less appealing. Furthermore, foreign actors permitted this scenario to persist due to overarching USA priorities centered on counter-terrorism (ICG, 2008). In addition, as mentioned in the conceptual chapter, the Ethio-Eritrea no-war, no-peace situation from 2000 to 2018 was seen as; little effort to address cross-border externalities, lack of leaders' political commitments and trust which is exacerbated by large disparities in policy preferences were problems to solve on time and also considered as one of the factors determining their cooperation for many years (Qobo, 2007; and Melo and Tsikata, 2023).

The conflict and following confrontation between the two nations have a harmful impact on their respective peoples, states, and the region as a whole. For over 20 years, the border regions and bilateral relations between the two sides were restricted in various ways. ICG (2003 cited in Kidist, 2011) reported that in Eritrea, the majority of the youthful population is enlisted in the military, and people from 18 to 50 are recruited, creating a perilous scenario. According to the same source, around 6% of the country's population, mainly the youth, has gone to neighboring countries, primarily Ethiopia, to seek work (Kidist, 2011). Besides, Woldemariam (2018) and Abbink (2001) stated that people living near the two nations' borders were the most impacted; their movements were impeded, and many farmers on both sides were unable to live a continuous and tranquil existence as a result of the ongoing confrontation. As a result, ethnic Tigrayans, Kunama, Afar, and Irob on both sides of the border have been shut off for over 20 years (Mitiku and Mahlet, 2020).

The war and continued stalemate have been devastating both countries, therefore, as described in the prior chapter, that neorealism strive power maximization, security concerns and the balance of power (UKEssays, 2018) they are focused on power and security. Eritrea has been spending millions of dollars to militarily match Ethiopia and maintain troops along the border and took the view that the stalemate has forced it to remain on a war footing (Wuhibegezer, 2014). As SIPRI (2007) stated, Eritrea spends more on defense than any other country in the world with 21

percent of its GDP allocated to defense expenditure in 2003. Moreover, Mengisteab and Yohannes (2005) claim that Eritrea's economy was more dependent on external infusion, with 35 percent of its GDP coming from remittances from abroad (Dimma, 2013). Furthermore, the Eritrean diaspora that financed Eritrea's war effort had questioned the government's strategy and has reduced its remittances by half (Lyons, 2006 cited in Wuhibegezer, 2014). The same source also stated that in Ethiopia the residence fees and taxes levied on the local people has increased and brought depreciation of exchange rates by dwindling foreign exchange reserves and increasing defense expenditures (Wuhibegezer, 2014; Kidist, 2011; and Sally and Plaut, 2007).

According to White (2005); Berhe (2001), and Sarbo (2006 cited in Wuhibegezer, 2014), emphasized that during the confrontation in Eritrea, homesteads, roads, and bridges were attacked and destroyed. The devastation of infrastructure and essential services wreaked havoc on people's daily lives. Similarly, Ethiopia's loss of port access and suspension of air routes impacted both Ethiopian farmers and Eritrean customers who rely on imported food. Furthermore, Ethiopia and Eritrea were denied access to loans from international financial organizations, including debt cancellation options. All of these variables combined to cause a fall in GDP and investment rates in both nations, resulting in greater inflation rates (Wuhibegezer, 2014). Somaliland and Djibouti, on the other hand, gained economically by the war's continuation since their ports became Ethiopia's main access to the sea (Jacquin, 2004).

The continued animosity has led in groups and divisions within Ethiopia's and Eritrea's major political parties, and both countries' authoritarianism has become entrenched, slowing the transition to democracy to differing degrees (Lyons, 2006), and Tawolda (2000 cited in Wuhibegezer, 2014) argued that dissatisfied with Eritrea's independence, some TPLF members were determined to return Eritrea to Ethiopian sovereignty (Wuhibegezer, 2014). According to Cliffe and Tronvoll (2009; Lyons 2009; and ICG 2010 cited in Kidist, 2011), that both nations rely on military might; in Ethiopia, the TPLF/EPRDF declared victory in successive elections, including one in 2005. In the aftermath of the 2005 election crisis, the government imprisoned opposition leaders and sympathizers. This provided the government power to successfully implement its programs, but also restricting civil freedoms, narrowing the political field, and limiting the operations of NGOs, the media, and political parties. As a result, the TPLF had no intention of opening up the political field or relinquishing control. Domestic and foreign

circumstances damaged the governing party's legitimacy, while power remained in the hands of a single party or in the custody of a single individual (Kidist, 2011).

In Eritrea, on the other hand, Berhane (2006); Mulugeta (2011); Sally (2007), and Ogbazghi (2011) opined that the post-war impasse gave rationale for the leaders to postpone the execution of the 1997 draft constitution, and the political environment resembled "Personal Rule," with the governmental machinery placed under the control of the current President (Kidanu and Endalcachew, 2015). Furthermore, a schism within the PFDJ about the value of the war erupted in open resistance when top officials made calls for renewed democracy, as well as the need to confront economic downturn and corruption (Wuhibegezer, 2014). Eritrea has been described as a state that "openly abuses its populace and functions as a destabilizing dictatorship in the region" by the US (Swan 2007 cited in Lyons, 2009: 177).

In contrast, the Ethio-Eritrea conflict resulted in good diplomatic influence for Ethiopia from the world community, but not for Eritrea. It is asserted by Terefe (2019); Sally and Plaut (2007), and Kidist (2011) that the international community chose Ethiopia because of its considerable economic strength and other qualities. According to Frewieni (2016 cited in Terefe, 2019), claims that Ethiopia and Eritrea desired excellent relations with the USA. Due to the United States' interest in battling terrorism, Ethiopia won the day. Despite its legal edge, Eritrea was unable to win the race due to the international community's backing for Ethiopia. Owing to this, Shabait (2006) underlined that President Isaias slammed the USA administration's measures as 'pro-Ethiopian,' blaming the USA for delaying the demarcation process (Terefe, 2019; Kidist, 2011; and Sally and Plaut, 2007).

As Mengisteab (2009 and Reid 2009 cited in Kidist, 2011) argues, Eritrea has been accused of training and arming Islamist militants in Somalia, which has strained relations with the US as well as numerous European and African nations. Eritrea's push into Djiboutian territory estranged it from France and other Arab states including the AU (Kidist, 2011). In addition, Eritrea suspended its membership of IGAD, sometimes calling it Ethiopia's 'Trojan Horse'. Thus, the Eritrean government's undiplomatic tactics had no purpose other than to alienate the country from international political circles, which benefited Ethiopia (Senai, 2020; Kidist, 2011, and Sally and Plaut, 2007).

Another effect was a media propaganda war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as Kidist (2011) claims that both countries have kept up their wartime propaganda. In addition, Solomon (1998 cited in Kidist 2011), stated that Eritrea's official radio, 'Voice of the Broad Masses,' criticized the Ethiopian government as though war was still raging. Both countries' media outlets had been spewing misinformation about how the other was domestically weakening and may fall at any time (Kidist, 2011).

Furthermore, from the beginning of the stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the conduct of both nations and their alliance has shifted between adjacent countries, reflecting the structure of anarchic systems, as neo realists have stated. Ethiopia sought to repair ties with Sudan in order to reduce its involvement on a variety of fronts. This allowed for more regional security coordination. In 2004, according to ICG (2010) and Schmidt (2013), the Sanaa Alliance was formed after Ethiopia, Sudan, and Yemen formed an informal alliance to resist Eritrea (Cardoso, 2016). On the Eritrea side, Reuters (2006) emphasized that in order to weaken the Sanaa Pact; Eritrea re-established diplomatic relations with Khartoum and attempted to enhance relations with Yemen and Djibouti in 2007. In line with this, Eritrea requested to become an observer member of the Arab League, however the Arab League Charter does not allow for this (Lyons, 2009). Sudan, on the other side, has benefited from the crisis, as Washington's regional alliance against Sudan has disintegrated (Dimma, 2013).

### **3.2.1. Proxy War**

Ethiopia and Eritrea have shifted their direct military battle to a proxy war in neighboring Somalia. Furthermore, Eritrea's 'cold peace' with Ethiopia was mirrored in its operations in Somalia (Kaleab, 2019). Tomlinson (2006) stated that both compete by backing opposing parties in neighboring Somalia. The bigger prospect of direct battle between them had waned, and instead a proxy war had quickly spread (Lyons, 2009). In addition, Lyons (2006) indicated that the unexpected intensification of the proxy war may cause instability and expand prospects for terrorist infiltration, starting a bigger regional battle in the Horn (Lyons, 2006). Ethiopia's assistance for the TFG in Somalia, on the other hand, was reflected by Eritrea's backing for the ICU in Mogadishu. Following that, Ethiopian soldiers drove the Islamists out of Mogadishu and established the TFG in power. According to the Somali Sanction Monitoring Group report (2006), Eritrea, on the other hand, played a critical role in transferring sophisticated weaponry

and equipment from nations such as Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Libya, Syria, and Saudi Arabia to the Islamic Courts. Ethiopia, with assistance from Uganda and Yemen, provided guns and ammunition to the TFG's military (Sally and Plaut, 2007).

In addition to this, in November 2006, the USA proposed a UN resolution authorizing Ethiopia to send soldiers into Somalia in support of the TFG. The ultimate decision (UN Resolution 1725) enabled intervention by non-neighboring states, although Washington had no problems with Ethiopia acting in Somalia (ICG 2006 cited in Lyons, 2009). Menkhaus (2007) emphasized that Ethiopia's action in Somalia is an example of the USA 'subcontracting' the war on terror to a regional partner; Ethiopia would have acted with or without Washington's implicit consent. Furthermore, in September 2007, Eritrea maintained its support for the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) in Asmara (Lyons, 2009).

Furthermore, the Eritrean government seeks to destabilize Ethiopia by applying pressure and using the Horn's history, *Reuters* (2008 and ICG 2003 cited in Kidist, 2011), stated that Eritrea implemented a strategy aimed at both eliciting international pressure and undermining Ethiopia by inciting a political crisis in Somalia (Kidist, 2011). As detailed in chapter one, the Horn nations are linked by history, and disputes over overlapping socio-cultural norms in one country are likely to have a direct influence on neighboring countries (Medhane, 2004). The turmoil in Somalia was likely to flow over into Ethiopia, according to the report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia (2006 cited in Daniel and Paulos, 2011) and worsening and driving unrest in Ethiopia's Ogaden area. According to the same source, Somalia has regularly claimed possession of Ethiopia's Ogaden area. The two countries went to war on multiple occasions over this subject. Despite the fact that Eritrea's goal was to destabilize Ethiopia by supplying, funding, and training Somali militants opposed to both the Transitional Government of Somalia and Ethiopia (Daniel and Paulos, 2011). Again, *Reuters* (2008 and ICG 2003 cited in Kidist, 2011) stated that this tactic may backfire, forcing Ethiopia to resort to military force.

*Ethiopian News Agency* (2007) stated that the ex-Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles, asserts to Ethiopian parliament on January 2007 that Eritrea's participation in funding and arming of the ICU 'is apparent that the Eritrean Government is willing to fight Ethiopia till the last drop of blood' (Sally and Plaut, 2007). Furthermore, *Addis Standard* (2017) argued that "the anti-people forces were creating a strategic consensus and exploited the assistance of the Eritrean and

Egyptian governments to try to overthrow the constitutional system through sectarian violence and riots" in Ethiopia(Kaleab, 2019: 86). According to Abbink (1998 citing in Kidanu and Endalcachew, 2015), Meles highlighted that peace in the Horn is “impossible with Eritrea's current administration in place”.Again, Tekeste and Tronvoll (2000 cited in Kidanu and Endalcachew, 2015) added that the Eritrean administration would be a foe to both Eritreans and Ethiopians(Kidanu and Endalcachew, 2015: 3). The Ethiopian government then declared officially for the first time that it would use "whatever measures at its disposal" to depose the existing authority in Asmara (Williams, 2011 cited in Kaleab, 2019: 86). Abbink (1998) the Eritrean administration has never shied away from explicitly stating that an agreement with the TPLF/EPRDF-led Ethiopian government was inconceivable under any circumstances(Kidanu and Endalcachew, 2015).

However, the Security Council voted Resolution 1907/2009, which imposed sanctions on Eritrea, including a general and total arms embargo on imports and exports, as well as a prohibition on Eritrea providing support to armed organizations involved in Somalia's instability. Again, on November 14, 2017, the UN Security Council renewed arms embargoes against Eritrea by passing Resolution 2385 (Kaleab, 2019).

### **3.2.2. Support for Opposition Groups**

Ethiopia and Eritrea not only fought a proxy war in Somalia, but they also worked to destabilize one other by sponsoring opposing factions.According to neorealism, which was discussed in the theoretical perspective section, nations compete with one another while also focusing on security, the balance of power, and power maximization in order to either gain control over others or maintain their current level of control (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020; and UKEssays, 2018). The actions of both administrations support what neorealist claimed, because UNSC (2011 cited in Kaleab 2019) stated that the report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea in July 2011 stressed Eritrean post-war subversive operations "... could only be understood in the context of the 1998-2000 conflict with Ethiopia. Ethiopia's failure to implement the EEBC ruling on the disputed border, as well as the continued presence of Ethiopian civilian officials and military forces on territory awarded to Eritrea, served as justification for its support for Ethiopian armed opposition groups"(Kaleab, 2019: 86-87), to which Ethiopia responded by supporting Eritrean armed opposition groups.

Likewise, each side then accused the other of backing rebel movements to overthrow their own governments by defamation and rhetorical propaganda during the terrible battle between Sudan and South Sudan in April 2012, as described in chapter two (Okuk, 2021; African, 2016). After their 1998–2000 fight to overthrow one another, Ethiopia and Eritrea, like their neighbors, went to back one another's resistance rebels.

The Ethiopia and Eritrea governments assisted each other's armed opposition with political and military assistance, including weapons, training, and military bases (Reuters, 2008; ICG, 2003 cited in Kidist, 2011). Each side was persuaded that the other's destruction was impending, resulting in peace and normalcy. They felt that conquering their adversary would result in national and regional stability. As a result, the Ethiopian government accused Eritrea of providing extensive support to various Ethiopian insurgent opposition groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front, Ginbot 7, the Ogaden National Liberation Front, the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement, and the Tigray People's Democratic Movement and others while Eritrea condemned the Ethiopian government for providing aid to Eritrean opposition organizations such as the Alliance of Eritrean National Forces, the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization, and the Saho People's Democratic Movement (Kidist, 2011; Kaleab, 2019, and Wuhibegezer, 2014). Both governments intended to undermine each other by providing extensive backing to opposing opposition organizations (Kaleab, 2019). Even though both nations experienced ups and downs in their undiplomatic approach for more than two decades, both nations forged an alliance to resume their bilateral relationship in 2018.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **4. Drivers for a Breakthrough in the 2018 Ethio-Eritrea Peace Agreement**

A peaceful agreement has the potential to create peace amongst fighters who disagree or are hostile. This peace would serve to open the way to peaceful dialogue, collaboration, and it minimizes antagonistic relations, and it might be the basic basis for a secure and successful future; however, war causes destruction and it may be inevitable in situations when competing interests exist. It is important to understand the rapidity with which the two nations reached an agreement, as well as the sociopolitical events that occurred in Ethiopia in April 2018.

#### **4.1. Developments in Ethiopia**

According to Bruh (2018) and Kaleab (2019), Ethiopia was controlled by the TPLF-led EPRDF from 1991 to 2018, which was a coalition of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the Amhara National Democratic Movement, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization, and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. *Addis Standard* (2017 cited in Kaleab 2019) emphasized that the TPLF dictatorship was accused by the world community of rigging several elections and imprisoning and torturing dissenters who questioned the authenticity of the elections and other rights. Later in 2015, Ethiopia's security situation worsened, and the government proclaimed rounds of state of emergency in response to violent demonstrations and targeted killings around the nation (Bruh, 2018 and Kaleab, 2019).

However, ethnic tensions reached an all-time high, and the administration was unable to keep them under control. Across Ethiopia, people came to the streets to demand dramatic sociopolitical reforms. Ethiopia is on the edge of collapse due to the people's dissatisfaction with the governing party's lack of governance and egregious human rights violations. The resulting sense of profound rage had a significant part in the decision of certain EPRDF members to start on change. According to Maru (2018 cited in Senai 2020), these domestic causes aided the internal schism within the EPRDF, which sought a different strategy to restructuring the country's administrative system. As a result, the new leadership shown desire to break the impasse in Eritrea-Ethiopia ties (Bruh, 2018 and Senai, 2020). The new reform government eventually known as the Prosperity Party (PP) came to power.

#### **4.2. Eritrea's Pull Factor**

There were elements on the Eritrean side that led to the Ethio-Eritrean agreement's success. As Wuhibegezer (2014) and Marchal (2020) explained that the PFDJ's political persecution has caused a widespread flight of Eritreans from their motherland. The Eritrean governing party's post-independence promises of peace, growth, and democracy were postponed for many years. While the status of Badme was no longer challenged as a result of the EEBC judgment, Ethiopian soldiers and heavy weaponry remained, and no substantial changes were observed. For many years, the delineation was contentious, but it was finally acknowledged in 2018. The failure of the two governments' peace-building efforts resulted in continuous tension and violence in the area (Wuhibegezer, 2014 and Marchal, 2020). However, these had not resulted in any meaningful change on the Eritrean side during the previous 20 years, which led to the acceptance of the Ethiopian peace effort in 2018.

As mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, the link between states and the surrounding domestic and international communities in which they are situated, according to liberals, fundamentally impacts state behavior by affecting the social goals behind state choices (Moravcsik, 1997). As a result, Eritrea closely monitored Ethiopia's reforms and the emergence of a new leadership. It is asserted by Senai (2020) that the Eritrean leadership attentively monitored the newly elected Ethiopian authorities' series of actions. The cordial reception given to new efforts by Ethiopians and the world community offered Eritrea optimism that a cooperative collaboration may lead to a better state of affairs. Furthermore, Andemariam (2015 cited in Senai 2020), stated that Eritrea's experience with the mounting economic, social, and political implications of UN-imposed sanctions played a role in its fast acceptance of Ethiopia's plea for peace. Furthermore, Eritrea's leaders argued that a peace agreement with Ethiopia would dispel the TPLF regime's false narratives and contribute to resolving Eritrea's difficulties (Senai, 2020).

#### **4.3. Driving Factors in the HOA**

The regional motivators around the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement in the strategic HOA drew regional and worldwide powers, primarily for economic and security advances. The Horn has long been one of the world's great marine transit centers, and its significance has grown over time. Furthermore, non-African military sites have grown, notably in Djibouti, involving significant powers like France and the United States. Furthermore, Belete, (2019 cited in Terefe,

2019) pointed out that following Qatar's separation from the majority members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), numerous Horn nations strengthened ties with the GCC, led by Saudi Arabia. According to the same source, the protracted Gulf conflict forced Eritrea and Djibouti to cut ties with Qatar. The GCC then strategically expanded its military bases to Djibouti (Terefe, 2019). One reason for creating an alliance between Ethiopia and Eritrea might be to counter external influence.

#### **4.4. The 2018 Ethio-Eritrea Peace Agreement**

The election of a pro-reform government in Ethiopia in April 2018 was a watershed point in contemporary Ethiopian history and the wider region. As previously discussed in the previous chapter, neo realists stated that states are free to do anything they choose (Clackson, 2011), then according to neo realists, Abiy has decided and chosen to say with reform; it said by UN, BBC, and Reuters (2018) that the newly chosen Prime Minister Abiy, launched a flurry of internal changes, including the lifting of the state of emergency, the release of thousands of political prisoners, the unblocking of opposition websites, the return of exiled political organizations, and the expansion of the media space. The most audacious action, however, was reaching out to Eritrea's President in an attempt to resolve hostilities that arose from a territorial dispute and resulted in a "no war, no peace" posture when Ethiopia refused to abide by an EEBC verdict that contradicted its claims. The new Ethiopian government was critical to breaking the deadlock, and the abrupt demand for peace was also unexpected (UN, BBC, and Reuters, 2018), however, the relationship's agreement was favorable since, as stated in the conceptual chapter, a friendly country may be a powerful bilateral trading partner, boosting the economy and commerce (Ludwig, 2021 and Carrier, 2022).

While Africa and its leaders are on the receiving end of global events, their elites also have a say in the process of crafting foreign policy decisions (Adebayo, 2016), as discussed in the preceding chapter. As a result, both leaders attempt to reach an agreement without waiting for the end of global events; it is asserted by Senai (2020) and Cornwell (2018) that the peace treaties signed in July 2018, Prime Minister Abiy and Eritrean President Isaias announced an end to their conflict by signing a five-article Joint Declaration in Asmara and in September 2018 a seven-article Agreement in Jeddah.

It was expected to meet the liberals suggested, as previously stated in the previous chapter, liberalism aspires to advance the welfare of all ...” with “the improvement of conditions for peace and cooperation” (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016),and may help shape both sides' geopolitics in the Red Sea and beyond (Senai, 2020 and Cornwell, 2018). Accordingly, President Isaias welcomed the start of a new era in a much-anticipated address on Independence Day in May 2018 (Stigant and Phelan, 2019). The event has symbolic importance for both parties,furthermore, the Abiy's action was largely applauded both within and beyond Ethiopia, resulting in diplomatic recognition for Ethiopia and aiding bilateral cooperation, then Mitiku and Mahlet (2020) claims that PM Abiy was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize primarily for establishing peace as a component of Ethiopia-Eritrea ties (Mitiku and Mahlet, 2020).

As stated in the preceding chapter, a state may empower itself quickly and directly through alliance, for the purpose of defending one another in a conflict or jointly attacking their opponent (Henderson, 1998 and Hussain, 1979). In this context, Ethiopia and Eritrea form an alliance to collaborate on a variety of problems, but their primary aim is most likely to combat Ethiopia's domestic force, the TPLF, as their shared adversary, in order to preserve their economic, political, and social interests.

However, Africa News (2019 b); Ezega News (2019); and VOA (2019) stated that the both leaders' political moves enraged the TPLF, who believed that if the two nations reached a peace agreement, grass-roots voices and stakeholders such as the TPLF should have been engaged in the conversation.According to VOA (2019), the TPLF has been in charge of Tigray's regional administration and an area that shares a 500-kilometer border with Eritrea; besides,Hirt and Abdulkader (2018) claim thatfrom a diplomatic and political standpoint, the exclusion of the TPLF from the peace talks was justified because the TPLF governs Tigray but not Ethiopia.Moreover, Mitiku and Mahlet (2020) claims that the terms of the agreement between the two in Asmara and UAE were not made public, raising legitimacy concerns not just about the process but also about the outcome and its viability (Mitiku and Mahlet, 2020). Furthermore, based on the information presented in the preceding chapters, it is anticipated that what would be the diplomatic bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea to bring post-2018 agreement from confrontation to cooperation.

#### **4.5. The Impacts of the 2018 Ethiopia-Eritrea Agreement**

The Ethio-Eritrea accord has both internal and exterior impacts. Some internal elements include the reopening of the border, the development of interpersonal ties, and the openness of the economy, the exchange of visitors between Asmara and Addis Ababa, and Eritrea's renewed relations with its neighbors and beyond (Abdeta, 2019 and Senai, 2020: 492-493). Moreover, the AU, UN, USA and Western countries show their readiness to mobilize support to solidify the restoration of relations; moreover, in September 2018, both leaders received the Order of Zayed, the highest honor of the UAE, in recognition of their work for peace between the two nations (Senai, 2020; Blanchard, 2021 and Carmody, 2018) could be external factors.

However, the advancement of Ethio-Eritrean relations might have a good spillover impact on Somalia's stability, even if it is insufficient to tackle the complex difficulties confronting that nation and the region in order to retain peace and security (Carmody, 2018). In addition to this, the researcher suggests that the two leaders' relationship efforts and attempts to solve their problem on their own have served as a springboard to attract and teach the Horn nations and world communities that African problems can be addressed by African solutions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. Post-2018 Ethio-Eritrea Relation: Challenges and Prospects

As outlined in chapter two, a variety of factors compel the region's governments to collaborate on various topics in order to benefit from mutual benefit (Yagya, 1990 and Barratt, 2017). In this regard, key informants from AAU and HoPR suggested that Ethiopia and Eritrea have comparable beliefs, customs, practices, and other qualities that allow them to collaborate.<sup>3</sup> Another key informant from IPSS emphasized that equally, peace and security are critical issues for the globe, as well as for Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the HOA, particularly for the people who reside along the border,<sup>4</sup> then this relationships as key informant claims requires tremendous effort and it is expected to bring durable, sustainable peace and security to cooperate and used to develop together through dialogue and negotiation to exploit and utilize their resources effectively and properly.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, a peaceful agreement is essential for long-term relationships between the parties, it must be explicit, unambiguous, guided by laws and institutions; this supported during an interview with a key informant from the AAU, he argued that, while the agreement has begun to smooth their bilateral relationship, it should become more specific and detail issues such as political, military, diplomatic, social, economic, portand a new lesson should be taken from their previous experience to prevent further war and confrontation,<sup>6</sup> because the new Ethio-Eritrea relationship in 2018 may be viewed as a change from animosity to peace and collaboration.

Furthermore, a peaceful agreement should not be secretive, as described in the conceptual chapter, bilateral agreements lower the likelihood of disagreements and make agreements easier to implement, and states works to their mutual advantage, while conflict works to the harm of everyone (Carrier, 2022 and Barratt, 2017). In addition to this, as described in theoretical chapter, peace is continuously in danger because the potential for conflict is always present. The

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office and Interview with Mr. Taye Merga, The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), Education Affairs Senior Expert, 15 June 2021/Office.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mr. Yonas Tariku, (PhD candidate), Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Lecturer and Academic Coordinator, 23 August 2021/Office.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mr. Taye Merga, The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), Education Affairs Senior Expert, 15 June 2021/Office.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

world always seems to experience wars and conflicts; history is filled with major wars. Despite the fact that people always talk about the need for peace, the world is replete with fear and constant security threats (Clackson, 2011). In this sense, both governments' leaders have been expected to pledge and focus on their agreement to strengthen their collaboration. However, if their collaboration is not prioritized, all parties, especially stockholders actors, may not be able to trust an agreement if it is not transparent and implemented on the ground. This could lead to conflict, which could then turn into a war that would be harmful to everyone because it would affect how states and people interact normally in terms of cooperation, security, and peace.

Even if there were opponents of the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean accord, the leaders of both nations were considered as a symbol of change in Africa, and Prime Minister Abiy, who received the 2019 International Nobel Peace Prize, increased their trust and acceptance. It would be anticipating more hope and effort to be effective by learning from their mistakes in order to bring about long-term peace, security, and collaboration between them and the area. Rather, the Ethio-Eritrean coalition to resist the TPLF, which has caused civil war in the Tigray region, has gone against expectations, creating challenges that their cooperation is to attack someone rather than to achieve the agreement's goals.

### **5.1. The Challenges Surrounding with the New Ethiopian-Eritrean Agreement**

In 2018, when a surprising decision altered the wind in the HOA, stronger expectations developed from a variety of sources. According to Otieno (2019), Eritrean President Isaias stated that the previous plot and legacy are ended, and that we must focus on our progress and bilateral concerns to make up for lost time (Otieno, 2019). In this situation, not only the leaders and peoples but also other scholars' expectations have increased to focus on development cooperation, and as one key informant argued, leaders' affiliation considered as public relations and it also shows the big picture of countries and peoples relations and cooperation,<sup>7</sup> and by following this, there was trust to continue their relations based on liberalist ideas that described in the prior chapter. While liberals emphasize individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy, peace, and security; promotes political involvement and stability and limits the state's capabilities (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016).

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<sup>7</sup>Interview with Mr. Taye Merga, The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), Education Affairs Senior Expert, 15 June 2021/Office.

Even though both leaders exchanged meetings and repeated trips to each other's nations, which may be an indicator that they could work towards improving their collaboration, as was predicted based on what neoliberals highlighted, since the nation's interest. Carrier (2022) supports, as previously stated in the previous chapter, that heads of state may also conduct frequent cross-regional visits to meet with government personnel in order to promote public trust (Carrier, 2022), then the researcher agreed with above and below scholars claims. According to Abdeta (2019), not only has concern and terror persisted and grown through time, but the anticipated hopes may not be perceptible on the ground and meet the expectations of the two nations' people (Abdeta, 2019). Because, the head visits between the two countries brought war rather than trust and bilateral relations, the experts above claimed, thus they were not relevant in Ethio-Eritrea. Along with other African leaders, as stated in chapter two, Qobo (2007) claimed that African leaders' attempts to advance and unify their countries had largely been unsuccessful (Qobo, 2007). One of the expected issues was in order to boost their bilateral ties and public interest, but the result was in the opposite.

Furthermore, as discussed in the chapter before, there have been several factors that have hampered bilateral ties between African governments; leaders in the majority of these nations do nothing to create the enabling environment required for regional integration to flourish. Lack of security, ineffective customs, and porous borders are some of these factors that have made uncertainty worse (Qobo, 2007; Yoon, 2014). As a result, as in the past and as it still does now, some of the factors that have affected Africa's relationships would negatively affect the connections between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Key Informant suggested the new 2018 Ethio-Eritrean deal cannot be called an agreement. Because it was not a formal agreement, they promised to smooth and modify the formerly hostile relationship between them and the rest of the region for the sake of peace.<sup>8</sup> Another IGAD Key Informant raised similar ideas, stating that they reached an agreement; issued a press release from the Eritrean side rather than the Ethiopian side, and Prime Minister Abiy stated that various committees and projects would be established and initiated to facilitate and smooth their relationship, but these promises were not fulfilled on the ground.<sup>9</sup> Then, the researcher suggests that in their agreement they didn't give detail information

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<sup>8</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

how their relationship may be implemented in their future political, economic, and social collaboration. In this context, the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement will confront certain challenges in being successful, viable, and long-term.

### **5.1.1 Institutional Weakness**

Institutions provide an important role in international relations because they have the ability to strengthen state ties and cooperation. In this scenario, the researcher believes that the Ethio-Eritrean relation cannot be claimed to be governed by institutions, and agrees with the following statements. Abdeta (2019) claims that the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement has been an affair between the two leader's relationships and that they have not been guided by rules and institutions from the beginning; if institutions are weak, the relationship between countries is dependent on the interests of leaders and may not be strong and beneficial to the state and people (Abdeta, 2019). Besides, as stated in chapter two, liberals emphasize that building institutions is one of the most important factors in nation-state relations and people's lives (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016).

Furthermore, according to Otieno (2019), Tronvoll claimed that the 2018 agreement is a good initial positive development-but it needs institutionalization (Otieno, 2019), and as outlined in chapter two, governments that are restricted by laws and norms formed by institutions would be pushed to collaborate (Clackson, 2011). Even if they agreed to continue their relationship through an institution as part of the agreement, they are not bound to do so. One explanation might be because the two countries partnership has been challenged in the north region of Ethiopia, resulting in civil war between the PP and PFDJ coalition and the TPLF. According to key informant, it is difficult to anticipate successful collaboration between the two countries without an agreement that is ratified, binding, and institutionalized,<sup>10</sup> and as the agreement was ignored by their respective government agencies, such as Ethiopia's HoPR. In this regard, Abiy and Isaias' relationship has taken a similar path in recent years, making the same error as before.

The ECSU Key Informant argued that there should not be a secret agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea like before, because Prime Minister Meles signed the 2000 Ethio-Eritrean Algiers agreement before and against the normal procedure, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Seyoum

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<sup>10</sup>Interview with Chane Kebede (PhD), Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA), Deputy Chairman, 14 June 2021/Office.

announced incorrect information about the EEBC decision that 'Bademe' gave to Ethiopia, which was not supported by institutions and was done in the leaders' interests. To defend against such treachery, leaders' intentions, preserve national interests, and sustain the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean accord, robust, effective, and functioning institutions that govern under the rule of law are required.<sup>11</sup> Because another systemic issue that might impact post-conflict peace building is a lack of institutions(Terefe, 2019).

The rapidity with which the Ethio-Eritrean leadership implemented the measures raised concerns about the agreement's lack of institutionalization (Abdeta, 2019),because after the Tigray war, their relationship was reduced and no institutions from both sides handled their relationship in a formal diplomatic way; among other Key Informants from MoFA claims that their institutional relationship was not strong even before, didn't organize it in a formal way, and their relationship was left to the interpretation of the leadership.<sup>12</sup>The researcher suggests that the leaders' past meetings, visits, open business, and any activities, notably in Ethiopia, did not continue as previously. Unless and until their relationship is institutionalized and their deep-rooted difficulties are resolved, they will have brought civil war to Ethiopia and may generate uncertainty in peace and security between them and the Horn.

### **5.1.2. Internal Political Difference**

According to chapter three's subheading 3.4.1, when Prime Minister Abiy assumed leadership of the new reform movement in 2018, he worked to resolve both old and new issues affecting the nation's connections with its people in order to mend problems with former adversaries. He traveled both inside and outside the nation to carry out this work, and both places welcomed him warmly and him a lot of support. When he was on tour in the USA, as VOA (2018) claims the Premier admits in August 2018, that many inmates were abused and that many disgusting things were done in Ethiopia, which he has condemned as acts of "state terrorism." He has stated efforts to probe abuses and seek retribution, yet he has also preached forgiveness, unity, and Medemer, which brushes Ethiopian issues under challenge. Addresses the country's diaspora with the theme "break the wall build the bridge" in Washington, July, 2018. In addition, Abiy stated that "I call

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<sup>11</sup>Interview with Mr. Endale Nigussie, Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer, 17 August 2021/Office.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

on us all to forgive each other from our hearts, to close the chapters from yesterday, and to forge ahead to the next bright future through national consensus" (VOA, 2018), yet things are not proceeding as planned.

Moreover, MFoA, (2018) in Minnesota, Abiy added that "we already hit and broke the wall it's time to clear the ruins". The Premier emphasized the need of learning from our past and the experiences of other countries in order to rebuild Ethiopia as a great state. During his journey, an unexpected inquiry from a Tigray community supporter expressed their fear and anxiety regarding the relationship between the TPLF and the government. He said that don't be busy with such ugly questions from political losers (MFoA, 2018). Based on this, it was assumed that it was time to close that old chapter and learn from the past, but this was not the case. The Ethiopian civil war in Tigray has confirmed that not only has the old chapter been closed, but a new chapter of antagonism has been opened, particularly within the PP, TPLF, and PFDJ, posing a real challenge and threat to Ethiopian sovereignty, Ethio-Eritrean relations, and beyond in peace and security. However, Abiy's reform and Medemer synergy has posed a severe challenge, causing disagreements over not only the viability of the Ethio-Eritrean states, but also between Ethiopian peoples, PP and TPLF relations in the future. Besides, Blanchard (2021) claims that some supporters of Ethiopia's ethnic federal system and greater cultural and regional autonomy saw the formation of a new party that centralized decision-making as a sign of Abiy's intent to eventually move away from multinational federalism and toward a unitary, centralized state (Blanchard, 2021). This demonstrates that political differences between internal groups like the TPLF, OLA, and other armed combatants have grown, which poses a threat to peaceful collaboration with Eritrea and other nations.

According to realists, as stated in the preceding chapter, the main barriers to collaboration are aggressive and selfish persons living in states that are primarily concerned with power and security (Clackson, 2011). On the basis of realists, Abiy and Isaias concentrated on strengthening their authority and creating alliances to confront their adversary, the TPLF, which is a power and security rival in a variety of ways, Senai (2020) argued that it is disputable if Isaias' references to "vultures," "scavengers," "game is over" and "brutally" were intended at the TPLF (Senai, 2020: 496).

Moreover, the PP and TPLF then declared each other "illegitimate" (BBC, 2021). As the deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea was lauded by many players, its influence on the peaceful breeze that was blowing through the HOA has deteriorated, it appears to have evaporated and multiplied into a lengthy civil war in Ethiopia. As stated by AEPAC (2021), the TPLF leadership planned and executed a large-scale attack on the Federal Northern Command facility in Tigray in November 3, 2020, and the TPLF triumphantly claimed responsibility for these activities. On the next day, Prime Minister Abiy stated Tigray had crossed a 'red line' and ordered the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) to safeguard the sovereignty of the nation (AEPAC, 2021), and it labeled the military's activities 'law enforcement operations'. According to liberals, as stated in the preceding chapter, states require a 'purpose' and a perceived underlying stake in the matter at hand in order to provoke conflict, propose cooperation, or take any other significant action (Moravcsik, 1997). The researcher agrees with the liberals' positions and against the TPLF's action, that the Ethiopian government was not in a position to provoke conflict, but as a government, it has a purpose to respond to the threat that comes from its opponent because its military forces were attacked and a direct threat of sovereignty came from the TPLF.

The researcher suggested that the situation might aid in increasing pressure, weakening, and sanctioning Ethiopia and Eritrea. Clackson (2011) claimed, in keeping with the preceding, that realists view IR as a constant battle and a struggle for survival. Since all states are aware of this, they all try to protect themselves by seeking control by increasing their military capabilities and making allies with other states (Clackson, 2011). Based on the realists, the researcher added for their survival, Abiy and Isaias have been attempting to strengthen their military capabilities and forge alliances in order to protect themselves, as the TPLF has become a clear and present danger not just to them but also to the region. TPLF also tries to reclaim its former power and raise the issue of survival as a cover to protect Tigrayan citizens. In addition, Pompeo (2020) claims that the TPLF chairman told the Financial Times that a breakup of Ethiopia could be one of the consequences of these actions (Pompeo, 2020). The prior conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998-2000 and followed their proxy war that manifested in Somalia (particularly between TPLF and EPLF) has turned into a confrontation and direct civil war in Tigray area between PP with its coalition PFDJ and TPLF, struggle for their survival as realists predicted.

During the interview, a key informant from the MoFA stated that the Ethiopian National Forces' technological capacity, military equipment, and manpower were focused in the Tigray area to guard the Ethiopian-Eritrean border. It would be simple to destabilize Ethiopia if this force was weak, but the Eritrean government supports the Ethiopian Force's re-attack on the TPLF. This kind of assistance from the Eritrean government would be difficult to envisage prior to the 2018 accord.<sup>13</sup> Another AAU key informant reports that the Eritrean government begged the Ethiopian government to cease the TPLF's actions, but the Federal Government was unable to respond since its armed forces had been weakened by the TPLF and could not do anything until it called in additional forces.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, if the case of the TPLF is an internal Ethiopian matter, key informant claims that what legal basis Eritrean forces intervened in the war in Tigray and what kind of secret agreement was made between Ethiopian and Eritrean governments' remains a mystery, as does why the US and its allies place so much emphasis on Ethiopia's internal affairs. When Eritrea's soldiers are invited into sovereign Ethiopia, it has demonstrated that it will invite other nations to do the same because it demonstrates Ethiopia's vulnerability and also encourages the TPLF to utilize this occasion to urge its previous allies to back it. Eritrea's invitation would pave the way for intraregional conflict.<sup>15</sup> The researcher does not favor the entry of Eritrean soldiers; rather, it would be better to assist without direct engagement in the Tigray war, as Turkey and Iran have done, even while it condemns the activities, it supports the Ethiopian government, according to Pichon (2022), numerous people were reportedly killed in government airstrikes utilizing Turkish and Iranian drones (Pichon, 2022). It was encourage other troops from the area and beyond into the conflict scenario. The consequence was not good for others because if Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, South Sudan, and others (Sudan has already used this chance) do the same, who would stop them? It indicates that the Ethiopian government was unable to defend itself and hence seeks assistance from Eritrea.

Furthermore, as stated in chapter two, realists view the world as a dangerous and insecure place where violence is regrettable but endemic (Burchill et al. 2001). Ethiopia's, as the realist view,

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<sup>13</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office.

current condition is perilous and unstable, with violence erupting practically everywhere in the country. Also, a Key Informant from EZEMA claims that even though we do not have good relationships between regional administrations leaders, some opposition parties and militant groups are thinking in their ethnic base, which creates differences and threatens Ethiopia's united aspirations, especially Medemer; this could be an additional problem in Ethiopian politics.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, when ethnic extremism persisted after 1991, it brought ethno-linguistic federalism, unhealthy ethnic competition, and resistance of ethno-nationalist elites to the current reform, and also civilians pose grave challenges to human rights and dignities, the security and well-being of individuals became more difficult and exacerbated the country's problems (Yonas, 2020). Besides, the Tigray civil war and TPLF actions have a spillover effect on other regions like OLA and others, according to an ISA Key Informant if there is a local crisis in the state, the governments may not be able to execute the principles of the agreement actively and freely.<sup>17</sup> It indicates that Ethiopia as a realist emphasizes an insecure and endemic place.

Even though the real issues are different now, Ethiopians have made the greatest sacrifices as a result of the internal political conflict between the PP and, particularly TPLF and OLA. This has been one of the difficulties in the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea that has prevented peaceful cooperation.

### **5.1.3. Divergent Political Ideology and Interest**

Ideology has played a significant role in shaping international politics and it has an ability to move mankind, destroy and construct society. Additionally, certain foreign governments persist in functioning as rogue states and are hostile to international society's norms and regulations (Roy, 1984 and Henderson, 1998). Once the argument has faded, the major focus is on establishing the proper link between former opponents, which includes a 'fundamental shift in personal and power relations' (Nguyen, 2008). This is both a process and a goal for that process, which relates to political, social, and legal components and, in reality, includes victim acknowledgment, truth telling, restitution, and justice (Nordquist, 2006), that would help to reduce problems and it was expected to be done between Ethiopia and Eritrea before they begin any relationship to smooth the previous antagonistic behavior because they were former foes.

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<sup>16</sup>Interview with Chane Kebede (PhD), Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA), Deputy Chairman, 14 June 2021/Office.

<sup>17</sup>Interview with Mr. Alemu Leta, Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA), Researcher, ISA, 08 June 2021/Office.

Even if the two governments had not clear ideology, they celebrated and continued their relationship without resolving their previous disagreements in detail. According to one key informant, in diplomatic relations, ideological differences are not the primary concern of governments; their first priority is always to maximize national interest.<sup>18</sup> The other AAU key informant suggested that each country's diplomatic relationship has its own way that cannot be determined solely by political ideology, and that each country can have its own ideology but cannot be forced to cooperate with others. Two or more governments can collaborate on shared interests, especially if they are neighbors, even if their political ideologies vary. Any country cannot choose its neighbors; if one is fortunate, things can improve; if one is unlucky, things can deteriorate.<sup>19</sup> Ethiopia and Eritrea are not safe from these conditions, and Ethiopia has better relations with its neighbors and other governments that follow democratic or alternative governmental systems than Eritrea.

According to one of the Key Informant from EZEMA, Ethiopia's government followed a 'revolutionary democracy' ideology that shifted into a 'developmental state' ideology during the TPLF/EPRDF period, but after the reform in 2018, this system was eliminated and an attempt was made to build democratic leadership that takes place with the motto 'Medemer' and attemptsto involve all concerned bodies in country issues.<sup>20</sup> However, the two IGAD and AAU key informants claimed that the previous and current approach would not be accepted by them and they suggested that ideology could not ensure the nations' relations would continue without difficulty. President Isaias' and his administration's ideological perceptions may differ from Prime Minister Abiy's and his administration's,<sup>21</sup> yet, the researcher contends that Eritrean leaders' opinions of Ethiopia may be a concern and a challenge in the Ethio-Eritrean relationship, as stated in chapter three, Eritrean elites acquired a sense of pride and claimed complete credit for the triumph against the military rule in 1991, and they dictate or teach Ethiopia on what sort of productive activities to participate in, causing Ethiopia to adjust its policies to Eritrea's favor (Terefe, 2019 and Kinfe, 2004). Despite their differences, key informants from AAU and MoFA

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<sup>18</sup>Interview with Mr. Alemu Leta, Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA), Researcher, ISA, 08 June 2021/Office.

<sup>19</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Chane Kebede (PhD), Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA), Deputy Chairman, 14 June 2021/Office.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office and Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

claim that Ethiopia made peace with Eritrea for the sake of peace and good relations, as the TPLF opposes the new government and also shows it's an agent of colonial masters, working always to maximize their interests. Prime Minister Abiy has moved one step closer to reaching an agreement with President Isaias without any conditions.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, key informant suggested that in the case of Ethio-Eritrean relations, their historical relationship will support and provide opportunities for them to cooperate better than their neighboring countries, because they have many similarities in social, economic, and political relations.<sup>23</sup> Even if this is suggested to be true, one of the key informants disagrees, claiming that the behavior of the Eritrean President, its administration, and their policy cannot be predicted because the country lacks a constitution, a free press, democracy, and elections, and is ruled by an autocrat.<sup>24</sup> The researcher also noted that their previous and present experiences with old moves may make it impossible to trust and establish any deal with them, because they demonstrate how much they disdain the international agreements and the Ethiopian government. Because they can do and determine anything they want without consulting the relevant authority or acting diplomatically on any topic.

The above statement is asserted by Senai (2020) argued that the Eritrean government demonstrated an old move behavior by closing the border crossing to Ethiopia without informing the Ethiopian government at the end of December 2018, because they can do and decide whatever they want without consulting the relevant body or acting diplomatically on any issue (Senai, 2020), among other IPSS and MoFA key informants, added that President Isaias and his ideological perception are unpredictable; he is not a Marxist, Liberal, or Social Democrat.<sup>25</sup> According to the US State Department's 2019 annual report, cited in a Conversation (2020) journal, Eritrea is a highly centralized authoritarian regime controlled by President Isaias Afwerki (Conversation, 2020).

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<sup>22</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office and Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Mr. Alemu Leta, Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA), Researcher, ISA, 08 June 2021/Office.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Mr. Yonas Tariku, (PhD candidate), Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Lecturer and Academic Coordinator, 23 August 2021/Office and Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

Furthermore, not only does the Eritrean leader and its administration pose a challenge to their relations, but Eritrean martyrs and diaspora threats may pose a challenge and disapproval for their relations, because Mohammed and Hirt (2018) and Taylor (2019) claims that in practice, the 2018 agreement has been described as 'largely unimplemented,' there were critics that may lead to key Eritrean national interests and sovereignty being negatively affected in the form of agreements regarding Ethiopian utilization of the Eritrean ports Assab and Massawa that statements speaking of both nations as 'one people', which disrespects the legacy of the martyrs of the independence struggle and the agreement that little had changed in trade and economic ties of both countries have not resumed to the desired extent or scale. In Eritrea, there was a lot of hope, but Eritreans observed that things were not changing on the ground (Mohammed and Hirt, 2018 and Taylor, 2019). In addition, two key informants from ISA and MoFA stated that there are few Eritreans and opposition organizations that see their relationship with Ethiopians as a challenge, because Eritreans have long been afraid and skeptical of the Ethiopian elite, fearing that they will return to swallow Eritrea.<sup>26</sup>

Despite their opposing ideologies, the Eritrean side looks to be content, one of the IGAD key informants argued that the Eritrean President and its administration were happy to reach an agreement with Ethiopia because they believe they have a chance to continue with the new reform administration, renew relations with other countries, they use this opportunity to build their image and the country, they want to defeat and avenge the long-standing enemy, TPLF.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the Eritrean government has a strong opportunity to continue its opportunistic foreign policy. Its primary goal has been to acquire regional hegemony at the cost of Ethiopia (Reid, 2022).

However, according to BBC (2021), President Isaias used the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia as an excuse to halt any moves toward democracy (BBC, 2021); the researcher emphasized that the Tigray war could be the same reason again to be a highly centralized, authoritarian regime and to halt any new moves toward democracy in Eritrea, because York (2023) argued Isaias used the Tigray conflict to expand his military power throughout the region,

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<sup>26</sup>Interview with Mr. Alemu Leta, Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA), Researcher, ISA, 08 June 2021/Office and Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

<sup>27</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

allowing him to play kingmaker in neighboring Ethiopia. Furthermore, "Isaias has enormous leverage over Abiy," according to HOA scholar Alex de Waal, and the former US special HOA envoy Feltman "Isaias aims to establish the regional hegemon by meddling in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan" (York, 2023). Besides, this is one of the reasons for the relative cooling of high-level communication between Ethiopia and Eritrea (Senai, 2020).

In addition to assuring his Ethiopian ally of his backing, the Eritrean leader has improved relations with several Sudanese tribal leaders, including from the Beja tribe, who have regularly revolted against the Khartoum transitional administration. President Isaias has publicly stated his desire to serve as a mediator in the disagreement between the administrations of Beja and Khartoum. Furthermore, he has the intention to persuade clan leaders to take a hostile stance toward the Tigrayan populace who have traditionally sought safety in their border territories. Simultaneously, he also intended to send a message to Khartoum and beyond by demonstrating his political authority and status inside the HOA. Sudan and Eritrea hope to use the Tigray war to solidify local authority and acquire regional influence. The tragedy would be if Eritrea and Sudan's manipulations at the expense of Ethiopia resulted in a regional confrontation and an ever-widening cycle of violence, devastation, and despair (Donelli, 2022).

Furthermore, according to liberals, Ethio-Eritrean collaboration may be jeopardized due to a huge democratic deficit in Ethiopia and Eritrea. As described in the prior chapter, democratic states act peacefully towards one another and most conflicts and threats in the world come from non-liberal states (Clackson, 2011). The democratic deficiency, particularly on the Eritrean government and its leader's actions, may impede their ability to openly ask for cooperation. Besides, according to Otieno (2019), who references Plaut, internal reforms on both parties, particularly Eritrea, are required to finalize the peace treaty. There are attempts on the Ethiopian side that have pushed ahead on the road of reforms, while Eritrea still has a long way to go in the road of reforms that would be required to bring dramatic pace in the area (Otieno, 2019). The liberalist and Otieno concepts were validated by one of the key informant argues that friendship is a vital aspect for their nations and leaders to smooth their rocky relationship, but Ethiopia and

Eritrea have unfinished business at home and should work on these matters after making their friendship smooth.<sup>28</sup>

They try to keep unfinished business continuing as long as things are going well, especially on the Eritrean side, Abdeta (2019) right after the 2018 agreement was signed, they would continue to do so. Eritrea's officials alleged the border Badme had never been the problem. They had decided not to make the border an issue so that the leadership of both countries would escape scrutiny and could concentrate on other matters (Abdeta, 2019: 4). Meanwhile, the researcher disagree on this Eritrean officials claims, since before the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean war started, even if Badme was not the main issues, but both government was gave too much serious attention that they would not leave the border area, especially Eritrean leaders, becauseas indicated in the prior chapter, Eritrean leader said that "pulling out of Badme may be likened to insisting that the sun will not rise in the morning ... it is unthinkable" (Lyons, 2009: 168-69).The varied perceptions of Eritrean officials would make it difficult to rely on them, because they reversed their prior advice and appear to be shrouded and uninterested.This idea poses a question, demonstrating how difficult it is to trust their changeable approach and how difficult it is to foresee their future relationship. One of the driving forces behind the above proposal could be a desire to enrage their adversary, the TPLF, because the border issue has yet to be resolved on the ground; alternatively, it could be difficult to implement without the consent of Tigray society and the TPLF, resulting in further conflict between them.

The Red Sea Forum issue might be one of their points of contention, as Eritrea is a member of the council but Ethiopia is not. According to Yosri (2020), Saudi Arabia inaugurated a regional council in the Red Sea corridor in January 2020, and the idea for the council was first proposed in 2018 as a joint Egypt-Saudi endeavor,the regional association was supposed to focus on a variety of issues, including economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, security and environmental concerns. Rendering to Yosri (2020), quoting Soliman, 'they don't want to confine participation to littoral nations alone there is a need to look at more inclusive involvement and membership around that,' alluding to Ethiopia's, the world's sixth biggest landlocked country, absence of council membership (Yosri, 2020).On this subject, the researcher

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<sup>28</sup>Interview with Mr. Yonas Tariku, (PhD candidate), Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Lecturer and Academic Coordinator, 23 August 2021/Office.

claimed that Ethiopia has grievances with Eritrea, and that if they do not include Ethiopia, Ethiopia's interests will be overshadowed.

To continue with the preceding, ENA (2022) contended that Dina Mufti, the former Foreign Affairs Spokesman stated that Ethiopia is requesting membership in the Red Sea forum since the nation is a regional champion in the effort to integrate the area, and that its absence is incorrect (ENA, 2022). The researcher believes one of the reasons Ethiopia may not want to be a member of the forum is Egypt, which might use this council to convince Ethiopia to continue its involvement in the GERD project and other concerns. Ethiopia expects the Eritrean side to do the same as it helps Eritrea achieve independence; avoid sanctions, and isolation from the rest of the world. The researcher also stated that Eritrea did not take any steps to ensure that its voice was heard in the Red Sea Forum for Ethiopia, according to Erlich (1983), that described in the prior chapter, the conflict over Eritrea in the HOA can be seen as an integral part of Red Sea and Middle Eastern politics rather than an African conflict, and all local actors in the Eritrean conflict are directly connected and closely allied with many Middle Eastern Arab countries and organizations (Erlich, 1983). Based on the existing situation, Eritrea, rather than Ethiopia, would be on the side of the Arab world to safeguard its national interests.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, liberals posit that several causal mechanisms exist posing peace building challenges; decision-makers calculate the costs of escalating disputes for a trading partner are highly interdependent then will be less likely to use force, if firms and workers benefiting from international trade and investment they pressure government representatives to de-escalate disputes and asymmetrical interdependence invites attempt to exploit weakness and manipulate behaviors (Walker and Rousseau, 2016). According to these liberals, the Ethiopian and Eritrean peace would not be affected and challenged because they are not currently strong trading partners, there is no symmetrical interdependence that creates a mutual desire for continued trade relations, their firms and workers are not benefiting from international trade and investment, but it affects in the asymmetrical interdependence view because Eritrean leaders wish to exploit and use the Ethiopian side's weakness. Even if the Ethio-Eritrean relationship will not be without obstacles, one thing should be clear: the Eritrean leader's unexpected, self-centered, uninformed, and undiplomatic acts will make collaboration difficult and may lead to unwelcome conflict or war in the future.

#### **5.1.4. Regional and the World Dimension**

The HOA, as described in the prior chapter, has considerable potential for development that have untapped oil and agriculture resources qualified that makes the sub-region as the breadbasket of Africa and the Middle East. On the other hand, the region is also known as one of the poorest in the world (Tesfatsion, 2007 and Cardoso, 2016). Even though the strategic geographic position of the HOA that is close to oil producer countries of the Middle East and the important international maritime route which connects the West to the East through the Suez Canal, has given the region great relevance attracting superpowers' attention since the decade the 1970s (Cardoso, 2016). Moreover, the Horn regions are interlinked in a regional security complex and the primary security concerns of a number of regional states are so closely interwoven that the national security objectives of each cannot realistically be considered in isolation (Carmody, 2018). Ethiopia and Eritrea are not isolated for the aforementioned reasons because they are members of the Horn, and in response to the circumstances. Ethiopia has taken the effort to negotiate a peaceful solution with Eritrea because, as indicated in the previous chapter, Ethiopia enjoys solid bilateral relations with its neighbors.

The domestic component of the Ethio-Eritrean accord only conveys half of the tale. It might be claimed that regional and global developments in the Horn, the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and elsewhere influenced and will be influenced by the agreement (Senai, 2020). As the new developments in Ethiopia have positive implications for Eritrea and the region in 2018, there are problems on the other side that Somalia was found in election problems, Kenya and Somalia have found in territorial dispute on water resource and the dispute over Ethiopia's use of the Nile waters for the construction of the GERD, which is the largest in Africa, with Egypt and Sudan and Sudan found in political instability (Abdeta, 2019), and these changes and problems drew, influenced the Westerns' and others' interest in power and economy, it shows how the Horn state found itself, and it could be a source of hope as well as anxiety, and this situation would force the states to form alliances, even if they are not balanced with the super powers. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Clackson (2011) claims that realists see international relations as a constant battle and a struggle for survival and try to protect themselves by seeking control by increasing their military capabilities and making allies with other states (Clackson, 2011), not simply Ethiopia and Eritrea, to aid enhance their expectations while lowering their

fears Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia inked a tripartite agreement to work together, defeat their foes, and fight any threat, but IGAD members remain cautious.

Moreover, as Senai (2020) contended that in September 2018, the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia met in Asmara and published a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation, as well as establishing a Joint High-Level Committee comprising their foreign ministries (Senai, 2020). They discussed promoting economic, social, peace, and security, as well as developing effective regional cooperation, but the reality on the ground has been different in recent years, and their peace deal has not brought the expected cooperation, instead bringing war in Ethiopia and additional chaos in Somalia. According to a Key Informant from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, President Isaias has profited from this situation since he has emerged as a regional leader and key player. This influence must be reduced or the last conflict will be repeated.<sup>29</sup> In this circumstance, not only has the Ethio-Eritrean accord become suspect, but the tripartite agreement has raised additional concerns and challenges for the Horn nations.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia and Eritrea's no-war-no-peace status damaged regional multilateralism for two decades. Again, the 2018 accord has exacerbated regional schisms, with Djibouti and Kenya dissatisfied and distrustful of the new developments. Kenya is unsure how the Asmara government would pursue its own interests, regardless of the consequences that rivalry among troop contributing countries in AMISOM has for Somalia's peace and security (Abdeta, 2019). During the interview, an IGAD Key Informant stated that President Isaias is one of the longtime Presidents in power in the HOA and that he advised his friends, Abiy Ethiopia and Formajo Somalia, particularly in Somalia, to follow his type of governmental system in order to dismantle the federal structures.<sup>30</sup> Eritrean politicians are generally averse to federalism, as seen by their own country's actions (Abdeta, 2019). In the same vein, the researcher suggests, there is a long history of support among the Horn nations that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend or I scratch your back and you scratch mine' is still there, because as Sally and Plaut (2007) claims that Ethiopia's assistance for the TFG in Somalia was matched by Eritrea's support for the ICU in Mogadishu in 2006 (Sally and Plaut, 2007). Moreover, in the Tigray war, Eritrea backed the Ethiopian federal government and Sudan, while others backed the TPLF and other terrorist

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<sup>29</sup>Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office.

<sup>30</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office

groups in Ethiopia. This might provide a new challenge not just for Ethiopia and Eritrea, but also for the region's future cooperation.

Similarly, another IGAD Key Informant said that the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean war challenged and weakened IGAD because President Isaias sought to make IGAD unwelcome, worthless, and undermined rather than support and strengthen it.<sup>31</sup> Again, a MoFA key informant added that the Eritrean narrative on IGAD and the AU during the 1998-2000 war and economic sanctions imposed on Eritrea they were expected to stand with Ethiopia and why should they need them now, as one reason Isaias made different regional integration a new organization that excludes the other IGAD member states. In this sense, the rest of the HOA countries will find it difficult to understand and believe Ethiopia following this.<sup>32</sup> Eritrean authorities noted that they have less power inside the organization than Ethiopia, Sudan, and Kenya, and that they have not played a peripheral role in the IGAD area (Abdeta, 2019).

By recognizing this reason, President Isaias and its administration aim to decrease the previous difficulties with its surrounding nations following the Ethio-Eritrea agreement. On the other side, Ethiopia has a very peaceful relation and wishes to continue cooperating with these neighbors. To address this disparity, IGAD member states should unite and work together to reconcile and settle their differences amicably. The Eritrean old move action would raise the question of existence or a re-organized IGAD, which would impede and raise doubts about future collaboration between Ethio-Eritreans and the area. A Key Informant from MoFA claims that even if Eritrea is not a good friend to its neighbors, its location in the HOA in terms of geopolitics attracts world competitive attention, to serve as a military base, giving Eritrea an opportunity to be a good friend country and build relationships with the US, Gulf States, China, Russia, and Europe.<sup>33</sup> Although if Eritrea and President Isaias have not cooperated with international organizations in the region, the ideological war between the superpowers has provided comfort for them, since, as noted before in the preceding chapter, the ideological conflict between the superpowers has strengthened the negotiating power of the comparably

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<sup>31</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

<sup>32</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

<sup>33</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

smaller states (Roy, 1984). Based on this, its comparative advantage of the smaller states enabled Eritrea and Djibouti have emerged as the most favored states in the Horn area for preserving their national interests through alliances with superpowers.

Based on previous experience, President Isaias would deny IGAD and AU the opportunity to mediate in the Ethio-Eritrean peace pact. According to an IGAD Key Informant, one of the causes is that IGAD as an organization has done little action, even after being revitalized in 1996, it has not done any meaningful activity on the region and also could not play its role on the 2018 Ethio-Eritrea agreement, which didn't say anything about Eritrea's involvement in Ethiopia's war with the TPLF, Sudan's violation of sovereign Ethiopia, and the border water resource dispute between Kenya and Somalia.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, in the opinion of Eritrea's authorities, the IGAD and AU's weakness was demonstrated when the UN withdrew the sanctions put on Eritrea without their influence. Eritrea expects both the IGAD and the AU to apologize for placing sanctions on it, and Eritrea's choice might be to withdraw or not fully engage in the peace talks (Abdeta, 2019).

Furthermore, one of the Key Informants states that it will be impossible to anticipate real success from IGAD since its character and structure as an institution are so poor that it cannot have any influence on any issue affecting the area.<sup>35</sup> The suggestions given by Key Informants above and below were also backed by realist theory, stated in chapter two, it is frequently attacked for exaggerating the importance of states while disregarding other parties like as NGOs (Clackson, 2011), again, Key Informant stated that once IGAD is reinvigorated, all decisions must be taken in consensus; if member states are not in agreement, IGAD cannot move an inch or react unilaterally without the interest of its member states. Besides, its current chairman is Sudanese, and its secretary is Ethiopian. Both nations appear to have decent diplomatic relations, yet they have a border problem, with financial and other issues making it difficult to function freely. As a result of these issues, IGAD has been unable to shine and has had an influence on the area, and it

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<sup>34</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

is now a paralyzed organization as a result of the aforementioned reasons, suspicion and mistrust among member nations.<sup>36</sup>

In February 2023, the IGAD's executive secretary Workneh stated that cases of border diplomacy and territorial disputes have reduced in the past year, as members routinely accept IGAD mediation. But in the other statement it contradicted the above said that tensions between members such as Ethiopia and Sudan over their common land border, and Kenya and Somalia over suspected involvement, had threatened to destabilize the organization (Mutambo and Kitimo, 2023). Based on these arguments, how could the two paradox statements be reconciled? If IGAD's mediation efforts were effective, why do these countries go to territorial disputes; does IGAD try to mediate in the first place, or is it merely to say IGAS is a live and oral proclamation rather than carrying out its tasks and attempting to keep the bloc organization intact? Moreover, the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) is a regional institution tasked with promoting peace and security in Eastern Africa. Among the 10 nations in the region are Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan (EASF, 2023). Nevertheless, EASF was unable to have a substantial influence on the difficulties of peace and security between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as Ethiopia and Sudan; it just looks like IGAD.

Sudan has several national interests at stake in Ethiopian events, owing to its closeness and multiple political, territorial, and economic conflicts. It is concerned that Ethiopia's instability would extend to some of its own festering domestic hotspots, such as eastern Sudan, and endangers the regime's existence. Sudan has undertaken a number of steps in order to gain from Ethiopia's vulnerability. Ethiopia's GERD and the al-Fashaqa territorial issue are at the heart of this. For Sudan, a weakened Ethiopia increases Sudan's relative influence in both the GERD and al-Fashaqa crises. Yet, Sudan's internal conflicts limit its ability and willingness to act more extensively in Ethiopia (Donelli, 2022). During the interview, an IGAD Key Informant also stated that Sudan wishes to exploit Ethiopia's weaknesses, which include the battle with the TPLF and other domestic issues. It was a good chance to seize border land by employing force, which had been disputed with Ethiopia for a long time.<sup>37</sup> Egypt and Sudan have claimed that

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<sup>36</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

<sup>37</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

their historical rights to the Blue Nile River should be respected, and they have used their influence to persuade Ethiopia on different methods to enter discussions with them on the dam's water usage. According to Blanchard (2021), Ethiopian authorities have accused Egypt of working with Sudan's military to harm Ethiopia's GERD project, notably through backing for the TPLF and other opposition organizations (Blanchard, 2021).

Furthermore, Sudan's conduct would constitute a new threat to the Ethio-Eritrean relationship, adding gasoline to Ethiopia's domestic difficulties, according to Country (2021), reports that Prime Minister Abiy linked the unrest in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz area to fighters obtaining training and logistical support in Sudan (Country, 2021). Moreover, the Sudanese government called for the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from the UN peacekeeping mission in Abyei, a contested area between Sudan and South Sudan. Sudan also claims that the number of Ethiopian refugees has grown since the war resurfaced (Blanchard, 2021). Even though they appear to be excellent, Ethiopia and Sudan are now under a negative peace that is defined by the presence of violence or the absence of conflict, as stated in the preceding chapter, that negative peace is the existence of violence or absence of war whereas positive peace is a means for enhancing integration of human society (Galtung, 1969 and 1964). The researcher argued, Sudan's violation of Ethiopian sovereignty was unexpected and regrettable, but it was done on purpose when Ethiopia was facing internal problems, and it could be seen as a betrayal to its honest neighbor, because Ethiopia was one of its supporters and negotiators when Sudan was facing problems, but Ethiopia did not do what Sudan did. According to Mumbere (2019), in May 2019, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy committed not to intervene in the internal Sudan political deadlock, emphasized the significance of inclusivity in the transition process, and stated that Ethiopia will simply provide ideas to its southern neighbor (Mumbere, 2019).

Furthermore, the researcher suggested that there is another possible concern in the area that, if a conflict breaks out between Ethiopia and Sudan, based on Eritrean unpredictability and previous experience, Eritrea will back Sudan because Eritrea has strong relations with Sudan, Egypt, and the majority of Arab governments. Egypt and Sudan have long been Eritrea's allies, and they were among the Arab countries that supported Eritrea's independence cause. Moreover, before reaching a peace accord with Ethiopia, Eritrea was one of the countries that openly supported Egypt and Sudan's plans to undermine Ethiopia on the GERD project. Because as Aman

(2020), claims that 'Ethiopia does not strive to develop power and economic progress for its people'. Other political goals of the project include utilizing Nile waters to scare Egyptians and Sudanese, similar to what Turkey did with Syria and Iraq, according to Afwerki in January 2016 (Aman, 2020). Furthermore, a Key Informant claims that Ethiopia should have resolved the Sudan issue diplomatically in order to prevent future challenges to not just the Ethio-Eritrean relationship, but also the Ethio-Sudan and Horn relations.<sup>38</sup> The AU and IGAD failed to engage and take responsibility; it was expected of them to discuss and resolve the Ethio-Eritrean relationship, as well as denounce and take action against Sudan for violating Ethiopian sovereignty.

The other difficulty is that South Sudanese rebels crossed the Ethiopian border 150 kilometers through the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) in June 2022, and took control of the Surma gold mining facility in Ethiopia's southwestern area. According to Bureau Chief Andinet Ashenafi, the area had a center called Mardur in the early 1990s, but owing to frequent raids and theft by South Sudanese rebels, the district was transferred to Kibish, and also the state has halted traditional gold mining (Chala, 2022). Even if this occurred, the Ethiopian government would be unable to defend and resist the situation because its sovereignty had been violated, perhaps leading to future issues.

The connection between the Gulf States and the HOA is centuries old and complicated. Ethiopia's role in the region was crucial not only for sustaining peace and security, but also for supporting Arab nations in maintaining hegemonic balance. As previously noted in the previous chapter, the hegemonic aspirations of Saudi Arabia and a number of other Arab nations to convert the Red Sea into "an inner sea of the Arabs" are counterbalanced by Ethiopia's goal to further enhance independence (Adimasu, 2022 and Yagya, 1990). Nevertheless, the 2018 deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea has cast doubt on this notion.

Furthermore, in the absence of the AU and IGAD, governments such as the UAE and SA have an effect on the function of the 2018 Ethio-Eritrea peace accord. This assertion was supported by two Key Informants who stated that by fostering friendship between Ethiopia and Eritrea, they hope to increase their national interest, boost their pride and image, demonstrate their influence

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<sup>38</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

in the Horn, particularly in Djibouti, where the Dubai port is located, and Somalia, where the Berbera port is located, and gain attention and recognition from the UN and global communities.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the other two Key Informants stated that the UAE and SA have their own agenda that is not just focused on bringing peace to the HOA. The UAE is also involved in the Tigray conflict, sending drones to Ethiopia. Because of the Horn region's volatility and proximity to the Middle East, there are contests between the Gulf States, with Qatar, Iran, and Turkey on one side and SA, UAE, Bahrain, and others on the other. The SA and UAE have their own agenda to sponsor, process, and involve themselves in the Yemen war, and they were using the port of Aseb, Eritrea joined the Saudi camp,<sup>40</sup> and a Key Informant from IGAD claims that the Somalia President Farmajo administration is also supported by the Saudi camp, and the Iran side group has different interests. On the other hand, the Gulf States seek to undermine HOA and IGAD in order for them to become a true market, because much Middle East politics is transactional. They had the money and came with it to buy what they wanted and go.<sup>41</sup>

The researcher suggested that the new Ethio-Eritrean relationship, the tripartite agreement between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, the involvement of Eritrean soldiers in the Tigray war and Prime Minister Abiy's denial of this action to UN Secretary General Guterres, and Ethiopians internal political problems will provide a playground for external powers to intervene in Ethiopia's internal affairs. The US, EU, Sudan, Egypt, and other nations and organizations are not interested in the existing Ethiopian government administration and wish to exert influence to get their agendas accepted. One piece of proof has been the sanction that these actors have been subjected to, especially in Ethiopia. The US, EU, and other organizations did not express any worry over the violation of Sudan in Ethiopia, but they did express their concern and attempted to intervene in Ethiopian domestic affairs with the Tigray problem, emphasizing Eritrean involvement in the Tigray conflict.

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<sup>39</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office and Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office.

<sup>40</sup>Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office and Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

<sup>41</sup>Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

One of the IPSS Key Informants claimed that the Ethiopian government had disappointed its Western alliance. The status of human rights violations in Tigray, the actions of the Eritrean Army, and the breakdown of command and control in the Ethiopian Army have all contributed to the scenario in the Tigray conflict that has forced them to intervene.<sup>42</sup> Another factor could be that they want PP to accept and negotiate with the TPLF or to return to its previous position because they believe that the TPLF was one of their former alliances to preserve their interests in Ethiopia and beyond. Furthermore, they are not supporters of the tripartite agreement because they believe that it does not fulfill their interests, particularly in their former colonies, and they believe that it makes them peaceful rather than conflict.

### **5.1.5. The Actors Interest in Shaping the Ethio-Eritrea Peace Treaty**

As previously noted in the previous chapter, liberals posit that the relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational societies...the major actors in international politics are individuals and private groups, who on the average, behave in a rational and risk-averse manner (Moravcsik, 1997). According to liberals, the 2018 Ethio-Eritrea peace process and agreement do not involve the key stakeholder of individuals and private groups, particularly those living in border areas, TPLF, civil society, and other concerned bodies that might have a significant impact on state actions. According to Getachew (2020), the Abiy and Isaias accords were elite-driven rather than policy-driven, and the concerns of concerned bodies, particularly border villages campaigning for people-to-people diplomacy, were not consulted during the peace process. When Abiy announced his acceptance of the UN border commission's verdict, Ethiopians residing in the disputed territories (Badme, Zalambessa, and their surrounds) protested peacefully. Protesters demanded that local narratives regarding the history, present and future linkages and interconnectedness of the communities most affected by the border rule be given sufficient respect (Getachew, 2020).

During the interview, Key Informant from ISA suggested that the proper implementation of the agreement would be called into question because it was kept secret and not made public. It affects the interaction of countries and societies, not only the relationship of the leader.<sup>43</sup> In this situation, expecting good relations from them may be difficult, because the grassroots people

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<sup>42</sup>Interview with Mr. Yonas Tariku, (PhD candidate), Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Lecturer and Academic Coordinator, 23 August 2021/Office.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Mr. Alemu Leta, Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA), Researcher, ISA, 08 June 2021/Office.

have expressed their displeasure in a peaceful way, their interests should be considered. There is no clear roadmap for how and when their agreement will be extended, the border situation resolved, and other matters addressed. Over and above, as one of the region's key stockholders, IGAD and AU, it is not expected of them to be inattentive, and they should express their concern, raise the matter more, and strive to address the difficulties because it is a direct issue and worry for them.

#### **5.1.6. Diplomatic Activity**

The researcher suggested that Ethiopia's diplomatic activity had been one of the oldest, strongest, and most widely acknowledged in the world, but its effect, recognition, and acceptability have dwindled from time to time during the TPLF/EPRDF, and it was maintained. The US punishment, particularly against Ethiopia, is one of the country's diplomatic flaws, and it has ramifications for future Ethio-Eritrean relations, as it comes after their partnership in the Tigary war. According to an EZEMA Key Informant, when Ethiopia nominated and appointed ambassadors and diplomatic communities, it was not based on merit and experience of those who are egger, trustful, motivated, and try to keep the interest of the country and people; rather, it was assigned in based on ethnic, retirement from the main duties, to benefit their kinships; expelling or sending outside if someone becomes a threat, challenge, not preserving and disrupting the dominating party's interest.<sup>44</sup>

Another issue between Ethio-Eritrea relationships is that, following the 2018 normalization deal, Getachew (2020) argued that both nations undermined the pact with exclusionary public diplomacy. In February 2019, an Eritrean artist group from various socioeconomic backgrounds visited Addis Ababa, Hawasa, and Bahir Dar. Similarly, an Ethiopian artist group visited Asmara, Keren, and Batsie in Eritrea. The Ethiopian group, on the other hand, lacked clarity in its makeup, with the selection process excluding musicians from Tigray and Afar, which border Eritrea and are home to thousands of people who were direct victims of the conflict and post-war socioeconomic suffering. This omission was worsened by the Eritrean artist group's failure to visit Tigray and Afar (Getachew, 2020). The researcher proposed that, while this type of diplomacy is valued and beneficial for future ties, the activity appears to be done on purpose by

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<sup>44</sup>Interview with Chane Kebede (PhD), Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA), Deputy Chairman, 14 June 2021/Office.

the politician, and the circumstance has the potential to alienate and overshadow people's relationships and social fabrication.

Neoclassical realists claim, as detailed in the preceding chapter, that a state's foreign policy is driven by its relative power capabilities (domestic and individual levels) in the international system (Ucbas, 2014). According to this idea, Ethiopia's current internal situation is unstable, and its relative power capabilities to influence others have been weakened from time to time, causing the country to become weak, causing injury and damage to its economy and image. It also has an influence on its external relations with worldwide societies, particularly following the Eritrean government's involvement in the Tigray conflict. According to a Key Informant, Ethiopia appears to lack a powerful diplomat capable of introducing or explaining the diplomatic stage in order to protect, maintain, and respect the country's interests across the world. This would be difficult for Ethiopia in its diplomatic relations with both Eritrea and the rest of the world.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, Adebayo (2016), as stated in chapter two, in IR there are no permanent opponents, just permanent interests. What nations do, how they act, who they support, what they authorize, and so on are all influenced by their national interests (Adebayo, 2016); As a result, the Ethiopian government's priority agenda must be on preserving and developing its national interests through diplomatic ties with other countries rather than by force and conspiracy, because there is no such thing as a permanent friend and opponent. In this circumstance, the 2018 alliance would be a scourge rather than a blessing since it would fail to establish long-term peace and mutual benefits; Ethiopia, in particular, is at a diplomatic crossroads.

## **5.2. Factors those are Constructive and Destructive in the Ethiopia-Eritrea Relationship**

According to Key Informants from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, peace is always a plus and cordial relationships are always welcome; but, because the HOA is a volatile zone, peace will not come easily. If we want peace, we must strive for it, and we must ensure that our peace is long-lasting and compressive, since there are other players in the region who want to maximize their interest in the playing field by causing issues for us.<sup>46</sup> Based on the above argument the researcher suggested that the Ethio-Eritrea peace treaty is in jeopardy since they were unable to preserve their peace for an extended period of time, and their potential peace has the potential to

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Chane Kebede (PhD), Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA), Deputy Chairman, 14 June 2021/Office.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office.

turn into conflict, resulting in civil war in Tigray, Ethiopia, they are putting a stumbling block in their future collaboration. Again, according to the above-mentioned Key Informant, Ethiopia and Eritrea are entitled to peace since they understand the effects of war and hatred. They have shared goals in order to foster collaboration and take peace seriously, which they cannot take for granted, and to focus on their prospects, since they know what the alternative offers in terms of 20 years.<sup>47</sup>

### **5.2.1. The New Developments to Constructive their Relationship**

The early euphoria around the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean relationship may have prevented a comprehensive analysis of the matter, which would have shown if the improvements were genuine and sustainable, or whether the advancements would have created new fault lines in the region while also making it feasible to treat those new fault lines (Abdeta, 2019). When the federal government declared victory after regaining control of Tigray in November 2020, it formally declared the conclusion of military operations and installed an interim regional administration in Mekele, the capital. Furthermore, Abiy and its officials said that the TPLF was 'no longer an existential menace' to the country and its military and organizational capability had been 'obliterated', moreover, TPLF is like dust scattered in the wind that cannot come back as before (Blanchard, 2021), and one of the Key Informants from ECSU adds that after this, one thing should be recognized that the TPLF cannot have the upper hand in Ethiopian politics.<sup>48</sup> This might be viewed as one of the constructive developments in the Ethio-Eritrea relationship.

An open discourse is the beginning point for peace, and peace is the fundamental foundation for future lives that are stable and successful. Terefe (2019) asserts that peace originates inside the self; it empowers and encourages people not to engage in violence and to rely on truth in order to contribute to peace (Terefe, 2019). The researcher claims that, nearly all hostilities between warriors would end, and they would be forced to put aside their differences by signing a peace treaty, which would help to open the door to prospects for collaboration and promote cooperation in a variety of fields. IR is an attempt to investigate and categorize global issues of importance to individuals in their individual capacities as well as nation-states (Adebayo, 2016). Since IR supports effective state-to-state trade policies in business, tourism, and immigrant travel, it also

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<sup>47</sup>Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Mr. Endale Nigussie, Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer, 17 August 2021/Office.

gives people an opportunity to better their lives. The post-2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement was almost as cooperative as their previous combat period, but as the Ethiopian civil war flared up in Tigray, the two nations' leaders prioritized their military alliance over other collaboration, causing tensions between them. Even if they run into challenges on one side, there are opportunities on the other side that might lead to a long-term collaboration.

There is a proverb that says, 'the close neighbor is better than the far relative.' According to this proverb, if something happens until a distant relative comes to aid, the neighbor's support might be advantageous to tackle the situation and strengthen bilateral relationships. As noted in the previous chapter section, Ethiopia's bilateral relations with its neighbors are amicable and going in a positive direction through the past century, however, among others Ethiopia's relations with Kenya and Djibouti are founded on their shared security concerns in the face of Somalia's irredentist aspirations (Adimasu, 2022 and Yagya, 1990). Ethiopia's alliance with its neighbors is not based on defeating its internal opponent TPLF, but rather on diplomacy and focusing on national interests. If Ethiopia has this sort of bilateral relationship with its neighbors, why not follow suit and do the same with Eritrea? This might be an opportunity for them to settle their concerns and focus on their chances for strengthening their bilateral relationship.

Moreover, as mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, liberals' assumption is that war is not unavoidable and there is much more potential for cooperation if anarchical global conditions are reduced leading to global change (Jervis, 1999 cited in Clackson 2011). Based on this view, how long can Ethiopia's economy afford the war and be capable of remaining and continuing in the conflict situation? Not only are the consequences of starting a new war and remaining in it unknown, but the displaced citizens have yet to resume their regular lives, and the process of rebuilding and repairing the damage has yet to be completed. All of the warriors' parties, particularly the PP, TPLF, and PFDJ, must resolve their adversarial relationship and assume accountability for establishing lasting harmony between them in order to put their agreement into action, deepen their relationship, and enhance their cooperation.

Based on this, Pichon (2022) claimed that following two years of destruction and civil war, the Ethiopian government and the TPLF began peace discussions in Pretoria in October 2022 and signed a peace accord, which was supplemented with implementation measures reached in November 2022 in Nairobi (Pichon, 2022). It was organized by the AU High-Level

Panel, continues to actively encourage the parties to stay on the path to peace, working with partners such as the US, EU, and UN (ICG, 2023). As the realists were hesitant to give too much attention to NGOs, the liberals against the realists, as outlined in chapter two, that in IR non-state actors such as international organizations are increasingly being acknowledged as essential (Henderson, 1998). Based on this statement the AU was crucial in negotiating a truce between the PP and the TPLF in Pretoria and Nairobi. This project would affect the future of the Ethiopia-Eritrea relationship in its own way. As a result, the PP and TPLF should have to honor their agreement in actual action on the ground rather than only for publicity and to win points with one another and please their supporters and backers. Even if this agreement is one of the constructive measures to Ethio-Eritrea relationship, but there has been a problem that is destructive to their relationship.

### **5.2.2. The New Development to Destructive their Relationship**

According to some commentators, the 2018 deal creates an alliance between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which allows the Eritrean government to become involved in the Ethiopian civil war in order to back the Ethiopian government in its fight on the TPLF, rather than focusing on collaboration. As indicated in the theoretical perspective section, neoliberals worry more about long-term absolute gains and emphasis on intentions and perceptions, therefore it was believed that the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea would pay attention to what the neoliberal advocates would promote in their bilateral relation. Instead, they stress on the neorealist' emphasis that these thinkers are more concerned with governments' short-term competitive advantages and place more emphasis on capabilities than on intentions (UKEssays, 2018). In that case, the outcome would test their future bilateral relations and bring war to Tigray region rather than long-term cooperation.

For the time being, an unanticipated TPLF move poses a greater threat to peace and security for the Horn of Africa, the rest of the globe, as well as Ethiopia and Ethio-Eritrea. Again, some claim that this is a violation of Ethiopian sovereignty, while others claim that it is not. However, one key informant from the AAU claims that it is not a violation because when Somalia subjugated Ethiopia, Cuban soldiers fought alongside the Ethiopian side in March 1978, and it is not a violation of Ethiopian sovereignty because they received recognition from the Ethiopian government. One nation's defense force may invite or come by itself to assist the other country;

this may be viewed as mutual collaboration and willingness, which may or may not be publicized.<sup>49</sup>

The researcher acknowledges that the Ethiopian government has acknowledged and invited the Eritrean military to interrogate in Ethiopia, but this has not been made public. Whether it is acknowledged or not, the invited force has been criticized for what it did in the Tigray region, and it will have the opportunity to take the battle to an international level. Furthermore, the researcher did not agree with the above Key Informant from AAU Sisay Mengiste (PhD) suggestion that the 'Cuba's soldiers' involvement' was between Ethiopia and Somalia war and the support was given between two sovereign states, but the issue of Ethiopia is not between two sovereign states; it is internal Ethiopian matters. As a result, the engagement of Eritrean soldiers in the Tigray conflict was not accepted by the researcher as extra gasoline to the fire and a time bomb for their future bilateral relationship.

Furthermore, the TPLF fighters have continued to combat in Amhara and Afar, as well as in Addis Ababa. At the same time, AFP (2021) reports that Abiy's administration released a statement urging all capable Ethiopians of military age to join the armed forces as the battle worsens (AFP, 2021). The researcher suggests, if the officials' statements to the public about TPLF conditions are to be believed, how can the military operation be changed from one of law enforcement to one of survival of the country, and as TPLF would no longer be an existential threat and obliterated situation to become a clear and present threat to the country and Abiy's administration? The researcher indicates that the public was provided incorrect information, that they did not understand the circumstances and capabilities on the ground, that the opposition came from the TPLF, Tigray side, or that they did not want to disclose the truth. Based on this evidence, how can we trust the officials' announcements not only for today, but also for the future? Following this, it would be difficult to trust the authorities, and it would also be unwise for the government to accept, trust the people, and administrate in such a circumstance.

Moreover, on December 2021, Abiy claims that the first phase of the 'Operation for National Unity in Diversity' conflict against Tigrayan forces has been completed, but 'the struggle isn't yet finished' (Aljazeera, 2021), the TPLF has not announced a cease-fire, demonstrating and

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<sup>49</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

affirming that peace will not come easily. As presented in chapter two, Clackson (2011) claims that peace is continuously in danger because the potential for conflict is always present and people always talk about the need for peace, the world is replete with fear and constant security threats (Clackson, 2011). The researcher then stated that peace in Ethiopia and the conflicting area is not assured based on Abiy's statement, other militant fighters, and Clackson's comments that peace is in jeopardy since there is a prospective and ongoing conflict in the future in the shape of a second, third, and fourth phase, and another would follow. In Ethiopia, the possibility of conflict is evident and present in several locations; people constantly talk about the desire for peace, but it is met with anxiety and continual security concerns, as it encourages another catastrophe.

Meanwhile, the researcher argued that Abiy and his officials declare that Ethiopia has won the nation election and battles with the TPLF, but if Ethiopia has won the election and battlefields, the issue of whose Ethiopia should be posed. Ethiopia implies the people, and the people include those who are compelled to live under the fear of war, as well as those who have suffered and killed as a result of TPLF and other terrorist operations in the country. If Ethiopia or the people triumphed, why and how could they be compelled to live in such conditions? Furthermore, whether a citizen elects or not, an elected leader has a responsibility to defend that individual from any risks, as Slaughter (2017) argued that the government's role as a protector is to protect citizens from violence, each other, foreign foes, and to provide the safety of law and order (Slaughter, 2017).

Furthermore, Kidanu (2014) claims that the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905 and Estonia-Russia relations in the aftermath of the breakup of the ex-Soviet Union were peaceful and smooth, in contrast to the Ethio-Eritrean situation (Kidanu, 2014), as previously discussed in the previous chapter, because half of today's nation states originated as a result of peacefully or peacefully breaking up of empires and conflict. Similarly, Ethiopians have invariably claimed that Eritrea has been an integral part of the country for thousands of years, but when it finally secedes from Ethiopia by force, it demonstrates how much the Horn region's 'fragility of states' occurs, and Eritrea's forcible independence is an unwelcome trend that might be emulated by militants, especially in Tigray and Oromia, both of which have vowed to secede. Particularly Tigray region, according to Blanchard (2021), TPLF officials said Tigray's secession choice

would be based on "politics in the center, and if they don't want us, why should we stay" (Blanchard, 2021).

Furthermore, VOA (2022) states that the TPLF is initiating and encouraging the Tigray Orthodox and Muslim religions churches to separate from their main office in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) and establish their own main office in Tigray (VOA, 2022), indicating that they are on their way and ready to separate from Ethiopia. However, on the other hand, according to Shaban (2018), Prime Minister Abiy won a special peace and reconciliation award from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in September 2018 for his work in uniting competing synods groups within the church (Shaban, 2018). Likewise, he reconciles opposing factions of Muslim churches. This assisted the faction's transition from the regional to the main office, rather than opposing the most hazardous action of the TPLF, and it is one of the signs of the road of separation and secession from the country.

According to Human Rights Watch, over 712,000 people were internally displaced during the Anglophone Cameroonians crisis, at least 2.2 million people required humanitarian aid, and 4,000 civilians were killed by both government forces and armed separatist fighters in the North-West and South-West regions between late 2016 and 2021 (Kouagheu, 2020), and the Ethiopian civil war has claimed much more lives than Colombia's five-decade civil conflict (Pilling and Schipani, 2023). On the other hand, the scenario and repercussions of the two-year civil war between the PP and the TPLF were not comparable with the above-mentioned issue, which was one of the most hazardous that had occurred. According to AFP (2023), the precise toll of the conflict is unknown, while the US has stated that up to 500,000 people have died, while AU ambassador Obasanjo told the Financial Times that up to 600,000 may have died (AFP, 2023).

Furthermore, in November 2022, some Ethiopian officials estimate the genuine fatality total is closer to 80,000 or 100,000, which is about the amount of people killed in the 1998-2000 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and this officials stated, the day the peace deal was signed in Pretoria, "We have halted 1,000 deaths per day" (AFP, 2023; and Pilling and Schipani, 2023). Additionally, the International Crisis Group think tank and Amnesty International have labeled the conflict as "one of the bloodiest in the world," with over two million people displaced and millions more in need of relief and President Isaias stated in February 2023, that the destruction was unprecedented anyplace in the globe (AFP, 2023 and Addis Standard, 2023).

In addition, cultural heritage sites, health-care facilities, industries, schools, airports, and other civilian infrastructure have been devastated and robbed. Pichon (2022) as a result of the attacks, key infrastructures such as hospitals and schools have been harmed (Pichon, 2022). Again, there is ethnic cleansing, horrific human rights violations, Tigray representatives are not sitting in the HoPR, Tigray students have not taken the Ethiopian higher education examination test in the previous consecutive years, Tigray sports teams are not participating in national sports competitions, and other problems have occurred as a result of this war. According to Al-Eyen (2023), Getachew Reda, a TPLF spokesman, millions of Tigrayan youngsters are out of school and unable to continue their education, he added that "We can't keep carrying weapons forever" (Al-Eyen, 2023), and the conflict affected, if not specifically targeted, a vast number of people (Pichon, 2022).

Furthermore, the researcher and others expected that both governments would take steps to cooperate because they had similar experiences prior to the Tigray war, but they were unwilling to learn from their mistakes because it would result in huge costs in various sectors, particularly military spending in Ethiopia. However, as mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, Meier (2018) claims that liberals are particularly worried by militaristic foreign policy since conflict forces states to create greater military strength, and this power may be used to oppress one's own people (Meiser, 2018). Although, the Tigray war has cost Ethiopian \$ 2.5 billion; again the Ethiopian government has prepared a total budget of 785 billion birr for 2022/2023 year and from this \$ 100 billion has been allocated to the Defense Forces. In the year 2022, 22 billion birr has been allocated to this institution. The previous expenditure and the increasing military expenditure have led to severe inflation (Mutambo and Tesfalem, 2022; and Addis, 2022).

Similarly, as presented in chapter two, liberals argue that individual well-being is critical as a fundamental building component of a democratic system (Meiser, 2018), but both leaders were focused on their enemy and military strength, which could be an impediment to their bilateral relationship, and it would be difficult to build a democratic system without individual well-being as liberals argued. Furthermore, the researcher blames the Ethiopian government for not giving too much attention to civilian difficulties in favor of focusing on military affairs, even if a peace accord is struck between the PP and the TPLF. According to USIP (2022), the Ethiopian internal

situation remains ambiguous, not resolving the dangers of escalation, facts are still present, and they are not being addressed correctly. The intrastate or interstate conflict would be disastrous, threatening the Ethio-Eritrean relationship, the HOA, and world peace and security (USIP, 2022). At the same time, Abiy's administration has done insufficient to combat the menace. Regional officials also stated that Ethiopia's conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms are insufficient, and Human Rights Watch claims that attempts to achieve justice and reconciliation have been insufficient (Blanchard, 2021).

As stated by the researcher, the fact that Abiy and his government presented this budget reveals how much the country faces a clear and present danger from internal and external forces, and that its diplomatic actions become weak and ineffective. Similarly, it signals willingness to go to war and respond to any danger militarily; yet, it was unable to halt the continued conflict with the internal militant fighter like OLA, Sudan government violations and South Sudanese rebels crossed the Ethiopian border. Military solutions are not the greatest answer; instead, strive to address political problems through political solutions based on discussion. When the military budget is increased, it has a negative impact on people's lives and the country as a whole, as it raises the general price level or inflation, reduces poorer development in all sectors of infrastructure, restricts civil liberties, and responds to political challenges by repressing dissent and limiting political space. Rather, it would be preferable to concentrate on the domestic concerns of human rights, the country's economy, and other areas, and to strive for harmonious relations and increased collaboration inside and beyond the country.

Moreover, Blanchard (2021), emphasized that U.S. officials saw Ethiopia's political transition in 2018 as an opportunity to improve and deepen bilateral ties, but the humanitarian crisis and reported atrocities in Tigray have raised concerns among U.S. policymakers and some Members of Congress, straining their relationship, and it has imposed sanctions on Ethiopia's economic and security assistance, as well as new defense trade controls, and pushed to use "all diplomatic means" to prevent further ethnic based violence and promote multi-party democracy in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the EU sanctioned Eritrea's intelligence agency for human rights crimes in March 2021, after withholding funding support for Ethiopia due to humanitarian access limitations in Tigray (Blanchard, 2021). Furthermore, the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which grants the Nobel Peace Prize, delivered a rare rebuke to a winner, stating Abiy had "a specific

obligation to end the fighting and contribute to peace" (Walsh and Dahir, 2022). Likewise, the researcher added that US authorities have produced draft bills 'HR 6600' and 'S3199' to put additional sanctions on Ethiopia. It would compound the situation and lose interest in the region's 'anti-terrorism' mission, which has been carried out by its long-standing strategic partner, Ethiopia.

Furthermore, even though the conditions upset the peoples, the sanction is not new for Eritrean; rather, it would dismay Ethiopians more to the people and country. Because it is bad to the country's economy and image in the world, it reduces its support and weakens economic activities, which will not attract investments, it alienates best allies, and it will have an impact on the Ethio-US and others bilateral relationship. If the US, UN, and others imposed another specific penalty on Ethiopia, it would bring and perpetuate further problems, stress, and harm to the country's economy. During the interview, a Key Informant from the MoFA stated that the US does not trust other opposition parties that could challenge the current government, even if some of them support the PP. It was thought that Balderas and EZEMA could be good opposition or challengers to the PP, but they do not have that kind of strength on their own. Even while EZEMA has grown close to the ruling administration, other opposition groups such as the National Movement of Amhara (NAMA or ABIN) and the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) are not national parties and cannot lead the country until they are united with other parties. As a result, the US wants to persuade the present Ethiopian government to accept and accede to its proposal to talk with the TPLF.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, the researcher suggested that, instead of increasing and strengthening its diplomatic missions abroad to advance its national interests, and to counterbalance Tigrayan activists and diaspora who work harder than Ethiopian activists and diaspora by lobbying US higher officials and international communities to support them in their efforts to exert influence and impose sanctions on Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Ethiopian government's action was counterproductive. According to Adebayo (2016), country foreign policies are frequently described and defined as extensions of domestic ones. Because interests in the pursuit and determination of aims and objectives at the international level are influenced by the internal idiosyncrasies of nation states,

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<sup>50</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

they are referred to as 'national interests' (Adebayo, 2016). But, Prime Minister Abiy has said that the nation would close roughly 30 embassies to cut expenditures, and that ambassadors should instead be based in Addis Ababa (Larnyoh, 2021). The consequence of the Prime Minister's aforementioned action has been disputed by his minister. According to ENA (2022), Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke stated in May 2022, "The diplomatic activities of the country will continue to face various challenges due to various factors including the unpredictable nature of the global system, the dynamism and interests" (ENA, 2022).

In continuation of the preceding, according to key informants from EZEMA and HoPR, the Ethiopian government and the weakness of its diplomatic personnel activities, which could not properly introduce or show in different places crime committed by the TPLF on Ethiopian defense forces in such as Tigray; Amhara in Maikadra and Wolkait; Afar in Galicoma, and also they could not justify the TPLF's misunderstanding and defamation of the truth,<sup>51</sup> it has been taken as a government position by the TPLF leaders and its supporters. The researcher suggested that as Ethiopia has resisted GERD influence in diplomatic activities, this foreign policy method may be utilized to cut expenses, but it would be one of the reasons that Ethiopia's foreign policy has suffered on the world stage. It has a detrimental influence on the economy and diplomatic operations; moreover, it demonstrates that diplomats are unable to defend their country's national interests.

Moreover, rather than encouraging and strengthening Ethio-Eritrean collaboration through full recognition of embassy responsibilities, the Eritrean administration wishes to restrict its diplomatic relationship with Ethiopia to less than Ambassador Status. According to Addis Standard (2022), the Eritrean government has appointed Biniam as Chargé d'affaires en pied, representing Eritrea in Ethiopia, to succeed outgoing Ambassador Semere. In diplomacy, the charge d'affaires en pied signifies that the office of Ambassador will remain empty indefinitely (Addis Standard, 2022). Besides, the appointed individuals were not acknowledged by the Ethiopian President as formal communication of diplomatic actions. Addis Standard (2022) added that Eritrea has not recognized Ethiopia's nominated envoy to Asmara, Ambassador Fikadu's letter of credence (Addis Standard, 2022), and the US State Department announced the

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<sup>51</sup>Interview with Chane Kebede (PhD), Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA), Deputy Chairman, 14 June 2021/Office and Interview with Mr. Taye Merga, The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), Education Affairs Senior Expert, 15 June 2021/Office.

nomination of Tracy Ann Jacobson as the interim charge d'affaires of the Embassy in Ethiopia (Haboush, 2022).

In light of the preceding, the researcher indicates that the Ethio-Eritrea relationship has been exceptional since 2018, but this circumstance demonstrates that there is misunderstanding between them, and it is not anticipated from friendly nations to reconcile after a few years. Even if the Eritrean government claims that it is routine procedure, it raises more questions than answers. It has no negative impact and causes no problems with Ethiopia, but it demonstrates that there are some misconceptions and their relationship is not what it was previously. For the researcher, the Eritrean government's conduct is not a surprise choice because prior history demonstrates that they would do anything they want at any moment, and this type of activity is expected. The Ethio-US relationship is likewise not in excellent shape, indicating that there are unresolved issues.

The researchers argue that the US influence and sanctions, particularly against the Ethiopian government, were not only intended in the midst of an intensifying war and a terrible humanitarian situation in Tigray, Tigrayan activists and diaspora working hard to persuade them to support the TPLF, Eritrean soldier involvement in Tigray war, but it could also be an accumulated retaliation of USA that wants to support and please its big alliance in its Middle East politics Egypt on the reaction to beginning filling the GERD without an agreement with the downstream nations, because the US was one of the mediators that attempted to mediate the GERD problem, which Ethiopia rejected. Blanchard (2021) argued that the Trump Administration has stopped bilateral aid assistance to Ethiopia in 2020 (Blanchard, 2021). Furthermore, MoFA Key Informant said that the US is encouraging the Ethiopian government to end the lengthy conflict and to hold a national conversation with all relevant groups, including the TPLF and OLF Shene, or to create a transitional national government for two years until the next election. Ethiopian leadership was dissatisfied with US participation and has somehow shifted its allegiance to China and Russia rather than the US.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, as the Tigray war has put pressure on Ethiopia, the Key Informant from IPSS argued that the Ethiopian government has been forced to pass this critical time to select and piking

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<sup>52</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

friends to deficit its problems on financial from UAE and China and diplomatic support from Russia, China, and India.<sup>53</sup>The researcher would not agree with the Ethiopian government's strategy proposed by Key Informant Fesseha (MoFA) and Yonas (IPSS), because this choice would provide temporary relief, but without the assistance of the US and EU Ethiopia's budget for its economy, military, and other activities could not be achieved and continued for a longer period of time. Similarly, the researcher ideas endorsed by Blanchard (2021) indicate that Ethiopia has been regarded as one of the world's largest yearly recipients of US humanitarian and development aid, with the US delivering over \$650 million in emergency help in 2020 and over \$893 million in 2021. Separately, bilateral development and other non-emergency aid reached more than \$640 million in 2019, with the majority going to health, development, and food security projects (Blanchard, 2021).

The researcher wonders why the US, EU, UN, and their allies exert such significant influence, condemn, and take action against the Ethiopian government while sympathizing with the TPLF. They promote and assist the TPLF in various ways rather than applying pressure and exerting control over its actions. When the TPLF used heavy vehicles that transport food to the Tigray people to transport its fighters and military weapons' to open civil war in Amhara and Afar people, to repeat a crime that the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments accused them of doing on Tigray people, to accommodate communication technology apparatus, exaggerate TPLF's activities through their media, and declare their citizens to leave Ethiopia. According to Misganaw (2021), in June 2021, the organizers of the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities march in the United Kingdom called on the G-7 nations and the international community to stand with the Ethiopian government and support the two countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. When it comes to Ethiopia and Eritrea, USA and EU appear to be pursuing a colonial strategy, as seen by their unwillingness to denounce the TPLF leadership for its conduct (Misganaw, 2021).

In addition, at the very least, it was expected that they would show their justice by exercising influence over TPLF actions. One of the Key Informants from ECSU reacted to the researcher's query by claiming that the US and its allies supported Egypt's President Al Sisi in establishing authority that was contrary to Egyptian interests, similar to what they did in Sudan, where they

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<sup>53</sup>Interview with Mr. Yonas Tariku, (PhD candidate), Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Lecturer and Academic Coordinator, 23 August 2021/Office.

reversed the Sudan reform. All of these steps were taken to safeguard their national interests in their various countries and regions, and they want to use the same technique in Ethiopia.<sup>54</sup>

Other developments that have put international pressure on the Ethiopian-Eritrean relationship include the suspension of French military aid to Ethiopia, according to AFP (2021), which reports that Paris has an agreement on military cooperation between France and Ethiopia. Because of the continued fighting in Tigray, the March 2019 agreement between Prime Minister Abiy and President Macron to lend France 85 million euros to fund Ethiopia's aim to construct a fleet was halted (AFP, 2021), and in December 2020, the EU suspended the transfer of €88 million in budget support (Pichon, 2022). Furthermore, it has an impact on the country's economy and has brought Ethiopia suspended from AGOA opportunity, Aljazeera (2022) underlined that the US decision to suspend Ethiopia's trade benefits has an impact on threatens the country's textile industries, which bring Ethiopia about \$100 million in 'hard cash' annually and directly generates employment for about 100,000 people, the country's nascent hopes of becoming a light manufacturing, Ethiopia's poverty fell by 42% within the same time period, prompting Ethiopia to cultivate markets outside (Aljazeera, 2022).

The civil war in Tigray, US sanctions, and other foreign influences, as well as Prime Minister Abiy's response to the Ethio-Eritrean relationship in the HoPR, have raised concerns about the longevity of the Ethio-Eritrean relationship. On the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation and Sheger Radio broadcasting channels on February 22, 2022, Prime Minister Abiy strengthened the uncertainty about the relationship with Eritrea when he responded to a question raised by one of the Representatives from the HoPR, about how the current Ethio-Eritrean relationship is going. He responds in a palliative manner, not providing detailed information on the present situation with Eritrea; he says that as brothers and neighbors, we must collaborate and work together to grow (EBC and Sheger, 2022). Abiy's response brought back memories of the previous event, as stated in the preceding chapter, both nations' authorities claimed unawareness of the causes of the 1998-2000 war and the situation, former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles said that he had no adequate explanation for why relations had deteriorated so dramatically, and Eritrean President Isaias stated that, "It's really tough to readily find an explanation" (Plaut, 2004: 2). At this

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<sup>54</sup>Interview with Mr. Endale Nigussie, Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer, 17 August 2021/Office.

moment, the researcher states can Abiy and Isaias tell us why their official relationship has diminished or not, especially after the Tigray conflict. Maybe they don't know the true reason and their answer may be what they told us previously, but they know the reason when they go to war.

The researcher also believes that it was required to provide detailed information about their relationship, present situations, and what their future collaboration would look like by him, because he is the major person who signed an agreement and brought peace to Eritrea. As the country's key person, the 'Prime Minister,' he should know everything about their relationship; if he cannot provide this information, who will? Which institutions will be accountable for this issue? One argument for criticism of the agreement is that it is based on leader's relationships rather than countries and is not based on laws, regulations, or institutions. In addition to this, as BTI (2022) asserts that the conflict has made it extremely difficult to implement choices such as demarcating the border, managing border crossings, and engaging in commercial operations, and has not given any tangible outcomes on their future collaboration (BTI, 2022), there border demarcating problems are not settle in a peaceful way. In this instance, Key Informants from ISA and IGAD, like others, believe that the Ethio-Eritrean relationship is unpredictable in the near future; their partnership may continue or conflict may occur; it is impossible to know and anticipate in this circumstance; let us wait and watch.<sup>55</sup>

As a result of the 1998-2000 war, the credibility of Ethiopia and Eritrea states has been eroded, affecting their vital economic and political support from their allies and the international community (Dimma, 2013), and the Tigray war and its other internal problems have also had an impact on both countries, Eritrea President Isaias has become more authoritarian and silent from the political arena, particularly the Horn; on Ethiopia, as personal Abiy image and Ethiopia's acceptance has decreased. On the other hand, Ethiopia has become a net exporter of insecurity in the area, because Walsh and Dahir (2022) suggested that surrounding nations are openly concerned that Ethiopia, long the anchor of a turbulent area, may become a cause of instability. Ethiopia's stability will have an impact on the future of the Horn nations (Walsh and Dahir, 2022). However, as international pressure mounts, particularly on Ethiopia, the country's relations with Eritrea and Somalia have deteriorated. The tripartite cooperation agreement

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Mr. Alemu Leta, Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA), Researcher, ISA, 08 June 2021/Office and Interview with Commander Abebe Muluneh, IGAD Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP), 02 June 2021/Office.

between the three leaders is likely to expire or be terminated, because former President Formajo's successor, Hassan Sheikh, is unlikely to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. Roble (2022) suggested that in May 2022, Somalia President Sheikh will immediately withdraw Somalia from the tripartite alliance and instead expand Somalia's involvement and recommit to IGAD in place of the present exclusive tripartite treaty created in 2020, which led to the Tigray conflict (Roble, 2022). This demonstrates how delicate the Horn states' connection is; it is dependent on the leader's interest, and the credibility of these leaders has once again been weakened, damaging their essential economic and political backing from their friends and the world community.

According to Morgenthau (1978 citing in Amstutz 1995), as mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, argues that politics as a struggle for power as the fundamental goal of a state-the national interest to maximize power. States rationally seek power to protect their national interest and national security in a war-prone world (Amstutz, 1995). According to this statement, the PP and PFDJ are competing for and maximizing power in order to safeguard their interests, while the TPLF is attempting to do the same, despite the fact that both were expected to prioritize citizen security. As Henderson (1998) noted, the 'what' of IR can range from constant action by nations to ensure the security of their citizens to the episodic activity (Henderson, 1998), but both governments, notably Ethiopians, are failing to ensure the protection of their nationals who have been abandoned in a fighting zone. They abandoned the peoples who lived within, along borders, and between neighboring countries while they fought for survival.

In addition to the TPLF, Abiy encountered greater opposition to its transition, reform, unity and Medemer ideas from the militant group and former insurgent movement that returned Eritreans exiled in Ethiopia, OLA. It is an OLF breakaway unit that did not disband in 2018 and then began its uprising, prompting worries of a larger battle, and that forged a tentative military alliance with the TPLF in August 2021 (Blanchard, 2021). As seen in the preceding chapter, a gloomy view of pessimistic liberalism based on local and international economic disparities and other factors will feed ethnic and religious nationalism, fostering political instability inside and between states (Amstutz, 1995). Based on this theory the researcher claims that, as Ethiopia is situated in the Horn areas and Medhane (2004) claims that the region is repeatedly characterized by the challenge of hard security concerns such as sovereignty, self-determination, and

unhappiness with patterns of administration, then, Ethiopia has face ethnic and religious nationalism, fostering political instability inside.

While, a nation state is the concept of a homogeneous nation controlled by its own sovereign state, containing one nation with a shared identity live within a country with hard borders and a single administration (Muscato, 2021 and Rock, 2020), Ethiopia's internal ethnic based group's militant fighters' acts have run counter to the aforementioned premise, and they wish to secede from their motherland Ethiopia. Because, Blanchard (2021) added that the mainly TPLF and OLA organizations assert that their collaboration is founded on "respect for self-determination and human rights." The government refers to the faction as OLF-Shene, or "Shene," and TPLF has labeled them as a terrorist organization in May 2021 (Blanchard, 2021). It is an additional concern for the country that threatens its sovereignty, peace, and security; it would also cast a shadow over the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea and beyond.

Furthermore, when Abiy took power, the situation was normal; however, after the Tigray war erupted, these normal conditions became questionable, as there are signs of closing political space, such as renewed restrictions, arbitrary arrests, harassment of opposition party members and journalists, and ethnic tensions are heightened during his tenure. According to Blanchard (2021), Borkena (2020), and Amnesty (2021), ethnic violence in Ethiopia has reached a "dangerous level," and stigmatization of some ethnic groups has "seriously contributed to ethnic intolerance." Furthermore, Abiy is attempting to consolidate authority and lead Ethiopia back toward authoritarian government. Among the most vocal detractors have been media mogul-turned-politician Jawar Mohammed, Eskindir Nega, Bekele Gerba, and other opposition politicians who were arrested in order to be eligible to run for parliament in 2020. Abiy also criticized and accused former Ethiopian Defense Minister Lemma Megersa "failure to discharge responsibility" and Dawud Ibsaa, leader of the Oromo Liberation Front, making him a home prisoner after the police conducted an illegal search of his home and seized electronic equipment and others from political space (Blanchard, 2021; Borkena, 2020 and Amnesty, 2021). These factors would amplify the challenges and contribute to the country's precarious situation.

One of the developments and impacts of the Tigray conflict suggests that the US foreign policy in the Horn area, particularly with regard to Ethiopia, has shifted, because it begins advising Kenya on the Ethiopian and HOA issue, rather than Ethiopia. According to DW (2021), US

Secretary of State Blinken discussed the situation in Ethiopia with former Kenyan President Kenyatta (DW, 2021). It demonstrates how weak Ethiopia has become, and they feel that the present Ethiopian government is unable to handle its internal issues, and Eritrea's participation in the conflict has disappointed its allies, including the US. The assumption is that the US has lost faith in Ethiopia and wants to modify its approach to form a new partnership with Kenya in the Horn. This situation was not accepted by one of the ECSU Key Informants, who argued that the US strategy and actions were only meant to exert influence rather than change its alliance, but if not corrected and continued in the same manner, the US could lose its strong alliance in the Horn, putting its national interests in jeopardy,<sup>56</sup> US administrations have described Ethiopia as an important development and regional security partner, and instability in Ethiopia has implications for US and Western interests in counter-terrorism in the HOA (Blanchard, 2021).

Meanwhile, the UNSC also discussed the Ethiopian issue more than eleven times following the result of the Tigray conflict. GRC and WPF (2021) advocated that the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia should be on the agenda of the UNSC meeting in March 2021. The Ethiopian battle in Tigray is the UN Security Council's first true test of whether it can take decisive and significant action early in a war to lessen the possibility of food or famine. However, the UNSC has taken no tangible action throughout its sessions (GRC and WPF, 2021). In this context, the relationship between Ethiopia and the UNSC has gotten increasingly strained since Ethiopia dismissed seven top UN officials who were involved in the Tigray conflict and supported the TPLF, much as Eritrea expelled Western monitors from UNMEE in 2005. According to Tewodros (2021), the MoFA disclosed substantial proof that foreign humanitarian organizations attempted to smuggle weapons into Tigray to arm the terrorist TPLF cell under the cover of humanitarian aid (Tewodros, 2021).

Furthermore, Blanchard (2021) claims that in July 2021, the government suspended the operations of MSF Holland and the Norwegian Refugee Council, accusing the organizations of disseminating false information, violating work permits, and delivering unauthorized satellite communications equipment to the TPLF (Blanchard, 2021). Similarly, UN (2021) underlined that Secretary-General Guterres accused Ethiopia of breaking international law by sending the

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<sup>56</sup>Interview with Mr. Endale Nigussie, Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer, 17 August 2021/Office.

decision to deport seven senior UN personnel, the majority of whom were humanitarian professionals conducting essential relief operations in Tigray, to the UNSC(UN, 2021). These types of communications are not a healthy culture for Ethiopia in political and economic relations. If Ethiopia continues to communicate in this manner, it should endeavor to address its issues rather than challenge its sovereignty.

One of the occurrences throughout the circumstances has been the deaths of Eritrean refugees who lived in Tigray region. As stated in the preceding chapter, one of the aims of diplomatic action is to safeguard its citizens living abroad, because diplomatic contacts between countries support the safety of nationals in foreign nations and the isolation of its opponents (Wardle, 2021; Roy, 1984 and Henderson, 1998). This kind of diplomatic relation was not visible and applicable between Ethiopia and Eritrea, on Eritrean refugee. Other victims, like as the Tigray, Amhara, and Afar peoples, have supporters and their regional administration or central government may speak out for their demands, but Eritrean refugees have practically been forgotten or ignored by the concerned organization. Blanchard (2021) contended that the UNHCR had regularly expressed concern about the safety of Eritrean refugees in Tigray, many of whom had fled compulsory military recruitment and other atrocities in Eritrea. When the crisis began, Tigray was home to about 95,000 refugees, the most of whom were living in camps and dependent on charity. Two refugee camps near the Eritrean border were reportedly "systematically demolished" in early 2021 (Blanchard, 2021).

In addition, the Eritrean government has failed to prevent the economy from deteriorating further, is unable to deliver basic consumer goods and reliable services to the people, and its human rights and civil freedoms are being violated. However, there has been no open unrest or calls for demilitarization since the peace treaty with Ethiopia in 2018, nor have there been internal protests against the country's continuing role in the Tigrayan conflict. Since the peace agreement, Eritrean authorities, working inside a defunct administrative framework, have failed to produce a development strategy. Despite its ruinous economic policies, the regime remains in power in part due to the influx of taxes paid by private remittances from Eritreans abroad, income from the mining industry, and undisclosed funds from Saudi Arabia and the UAE; additionally, Eritrean state television did not cover the Ethiopian conflict, even the missile strike

on Asmara, the capital, was not mentioned officially by Eritrean officials(BTI, 2022 and Country, 2021).

Moreover, the Eritrean government has persistently refused to repeal open-ended national service or pursue a program of economic liberalization and demobilization. The leadership no longer bothers to promise changes and has utilized refugees as a support basis for the state budget through a 2% diaspora tax, which is frequently acquired through pressure, and these refugees in Tigray are no longer secure. Besides, Eritrean ties with the EU have remained tepid. The main reason for European politicians engaging with Eritrea appears to be limiting refugee flows. These sorts of activities will only exacerbate rivalry between the two brother's nations in their bilateral relationship in the future. The prevailing narrative in Washington and European capitals is that Asmara remains a key spoiler in Ethiopia, and that this, combined with President Farmaajo's electoral defeat in Somalia, appears to have dampened the Eritrean President's broader regional ambitions (BTI, 2022; and Micheal and Chonka, 2022).

On the contrary, according to BTI (2022), Eritrean violent opposition organizations located in Ethiopia are no longer operational following the summer 2018 political deal between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Except for a military alliance formed by Isaias and Abiy, the peace deal did not result in bilateral collaboration. Furthermore, human trafficking and smuggling of products with the Eritrean military's complicity persisted. East Sudanese officials were involved in the majority of the smuggling activities. During Ethiopia's civil war, Eritrean soldiers were purportedly involved and supposedly placed the territory around Badme under their control by military methods, but no real actions to implement the EEBC judgment were made, it was once again implicated in major looting of health facilities, colleges, companies, and even private homes, and such commodities were sold in Eritrea, very definitely for the benefit of the military leadership (BTI, 2022).

The researcher suggested the new developments also illustrate that their relationship is not governed by laws, regulations, institutions, or a diplomatic approach, as it was previously; because, President Isaias and his entourage were not there when Prime Minister Abiy won in a national election ceremony attended by numerous African heads of state in June 2021. According to AP (2021),Six African heads of state from Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and neighbors Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and South Sudan swore Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in for a second

five-year term as head of state in October 2021. Nevertheless, Eritrea's President Isaias did not attend the events (AP, 2021). As they were exhibited in person when the 2018 peace accord was achieved and the border opening ceremony was held, expressing their feelings by displaying warm brotherly affection, invitation and pledge to collaborate as neighboring nations were not anticipated to be absent from this great triumph event. He, his delegation, should have attended to show and confirm that there are no problems between them and that the situations have been considered smooth, to assume that they are still working together and will continue their relationship in the future, but this did not occur. Furthermore, President Isaias and his team did not attend the 35<sup>th</sup> AU Summit, which was held in Addis Ababa, indicating again there is some conflict between Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders' relations and the old Eritrean leaders' stance toward the AU has not altered.

Furthermore, the researcher stated that Ethiopia's present internal challenges are at odds with Ethiopia's long-standing traditions, because Ethiopia has known by solving its problems in rich experience through traditional method, one of the countries in the world that is highly participate in UN peacekeeping missions, mostly in Africa, and that has Minister of Peace; but found in unstable, no peace and security, and incapable of solving its internal problems is no longer a possibility and it should be reversed as previously and the current condition should not be allowed to continue. Because it will face problems in the future not just in Ethiopia and Ethiopia-Eritrean relations, but also in Horn and international cooperation, peace, and security concerns. Peace building has emerged as a critical way for avoiding fear, violence, and war, all of which imperil Ethiopian and Ethiopia-Eritrea relations, the Region, and world civilization.

Furthermore, Coy (2009) argued that peacebuilding is geared toward moving a society that has recently experienced violent conflict in the direction of "positive peace" rather than simply ending violent conflict (Coy, 2009: 6), as stated, several attempts to bring positive peace between antagonistic societies, parties, and groups have been made at various times. For instance, in 1949, the Federal Act drafted by the UN General Assembly Resolution 390-A (V) agreement was proposed to bring positive peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but it failed and became a starting point that led to the question of insurgent straggle of insurgent nationalist movements and secession to Eritrea; the Algiers agreement made after the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean conflict to establish genuine peace between them collapsed in 2000, resulting in a proxy war in Somalia

and a confrontation between Ethiopia and Eritrea; the 2018 Ethio-Eritrea accords came back in 2018 to bring constructive peace and to forget their hostile past history, but it has severe obstacles that led to civil war in Ethiopia between the PP and the TPLF.

In continuation of the preceding, why did not all of the aforementioned good initiatives fail and negative attempts occur on the ground in previous negotiations? According to Mohammed and Hirt (2018), Tronvoll states that formalized peace processes are elite driven, leaving no voice for the people affected in borderlands (Mohammed and Hirt, 2018), these kinds of activities should not be allowed to resume on the ground, and the researcher also believes that in all those negotiations, concerned bodies were not included or the interests of local people and stakeholders' of a country were not heard. If the agreement is simply preceded by the elite interest, not handled free of ethnic based affiliation and enmity; and the agreement is not managed and led by diplomatic manner, the rules, regulation, and strong institution, it is only a matter of time before the agreement fails.

Furthermore, neorealism emphasizes security concerns, obtaining power at the expense of others, and making sure they do not lose power, as was noted in the theoretical perspective section (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020; UKEssays, 2018). In order to confront several difficulties and to alleviate internal and external tensions, the Isaias administration has been exploring new regional and global alliances, including a visit to Kenya and meeting with Kenya's newly-elected president, William Ruto, in order to maintain the HOA's prominence. Moreover, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, visited Eritrea in January 2023 to strengthen prospective bilateral partnerships and enhance Russian investment in Eritrea, as well as security cooperation (Ethiopia Insight, 2023). Likewise, Eritrea is the only African country that voted against the UNGA resolution demanding that Russia withdraw its military forces from Ukraine, a strong statement of support for Russia. The intention behind this vote is that part and parcel of Eritrean President Isaias decades-long anti-American policy (Habtom and Tesfazion, 2022).

To build on what was said before, US Secretary of State Blinken traveled to Ethiopia in March 2023 to promote the peace process between the PP and the TPLF, as well as to meet and speak with Ethiopian higher officials. He expressed optimism for improved relations with Ethiopia, as China and Russia strive for influence in the country and on the continent as a whole (DW, 2023). The Ethiopian government must regulate and manage the changing scenario in Eritrea's leaders

and the superpower struggle in the region, so that it does not hurt Ethiopia's national interests, but rather focuses on how to exploit this chance to become more successful in transitioning to mutual cooperation.

Furthermore, as stated in chapter two, a positive bilateral partnership is the most prevalent sort of alliance, whereas a declaration of war is an example of a negative bilateral relationship (Ludwig, 2021 and Carrier, 2022). The researcher suggested that Sudan and South Sudan's diplomatic ties appears to be a negative bilateral relationship because, as described in the conceptual chapter; nationality, borders, currency, oil, commerce, assets, and Abyei Administration all these and others arose to become vital yet elaborately controversial issues. The key to stopping the never-ending diplomatic, security, and economic fights or showdowns between Sudan South and Sudan is to properly institutionalize bilateral ties. If Sudan and South Sudan fail to follow through on the deal, the larger regional configuration may revert to its prior state of insecurity, mutual distrust, and proxy violence (Okuk, 2021; Taylor and Copeland, 2016). Similar to the ties between Sudan and South Sudan, and given the circumstances, the researcher predicted that the Ethio-Eritrean alliance and cooperation would be centered on a negative bilateral relationship, because the root cause of the Ethio-Eritrean war was not addressed very well and resolved through proper conflict transformation mechanism approach in the Post-2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement, but they place more emphasis on military cooperation, and their connection should be oriented on developing into a positive bilateral partnership, since this is the most frequent sort of alliance to bring what they agreed and people's desires.

The researcher suggests that, if Abiy maintained the pace of change in 2018, the aforementioned difficulties and development would not have occurred or would not have worsened in this manner. Additionally, despite this, Ethiopian higher authorities stated that the Ethio-Eritrea bilateral relationship is in a favorable condition, according to ENA (2022), Deputy Prime Minister and MoFA, Demeke, stated in May 2022 that Eritrea and Ethiopia are working to further strengthen their relationship based on their common interests and to develop cooperation frameworks that facilitate the border and human trafficking, port use trade, customs, immigration and other areas of the two countries (ENA, 2022),butcontrary to that, Samuel (2021) argued that a few years ago, there was discussion of normalizing their relationship, of keeping their borders

open, allowing inhabitants of the two nations to travel freely, and of strengthening their collaboration on many topics, but this did not happen (Samuel, 2021).

Yet, in light of the foregoing, the researcher suggests that Ethiopia and Eritrea should learn from their previous antagonism and not take the agreement granted to them. Besides, not only the researcher others also advocate for the implementation of what the above minister stated, because it is expected to focus on their bilateral relationships, but this is not perceived as successful on the ground and looks to be only political propaganda. Then, even if there has been a challenge after the 2018 agreements, the peace agreement between the PP and the TPLF would let them use their prospects to maximize cooperation not only for them but also for the Horn states and be realistic about what Ethiopian authorities indicated.

### **5.3. The Prospects of Ethio-Eritrea Cooperation**

As realists view, that mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, the world as a dangerous and insecure place where violence is regrettable but endemic, rather, an optimist realist is someone who is hopeful about the future success of something and strives to find a positive viewpoint or outcome in a given situation (Burchill et al. 2001 and Simple, 2019). Moreover, the realist view was acknowledged by one of the Key Informants from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung claims that the signature of an agreement might not only provide the hope of collaboration, peace, and security between countries. It needs protection, and a number of steps need be taken to bring the peace deal to fruition.<sup>57</sup> According to the realist and Key Informant Belete Belachew (PhD), from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the world is a dangerous and unsafe place, and peace requires protection, but the researcher prefers to remain optimistic about the future development of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Because both have a lot in common, and if they work together to protect their relationship, the chances of peace between them and the Horn would be much better as they have enormous potential to contribute to peace, economic development, and stability in the entire region, which was tested prior to the 1998-2000 war. They have demonstrated that they have enhanced the interaction of nations in the HOA when they worked together and they attempted to bring peace to Somalia and Sudan before 1998, as well as to restructure and strengthen IGAD.

Likewise, cooperation, according to Paulo (2014), is a process in which "actors modify their conduct to the existing or predicted preferences of others" and exchanges to accomplish common

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<sup>57</sup>Interview with Belete Belachew (PhD), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Senior Researcher, 28 June 2021/Office.

goals when actors' choices are neither identical (harmony) nor irreconcilable (conflict) (Paulo, 2014: 3), Prime Minister Abiy, President Isaias, and their administration have virtually adjusted their conduct to reach joint goals in April 2018, and the same adjustment should begin from them now. Simple (2019), as demonstrated in the prior chapter, an optimist realist tends to be hopeful, confident about the future success of something, try to find a positive outlook and they tend to focus their energy on what they can do to change situation and liberals believe that human nature is good and capable of holding back aggression (Simple, 2019 and Clackson, 2011). According to an optimist realist, the researcher claims, both leaders should have to control the situation around them, give more attention on what they can do to improve, and they should learn from their prior mistakes to not repeat again.

Besides, as liberals argue that relationships and responsibility begin with individuals and can evolve into institutions and any other form that wants to improve and smooth the situation better than their personal ego. Moreover, as stated in the conceptual chapter, the commitment to integration made by Africa's leader seems to have been more rhetorical than actual. They must go beyond grand gestures and ideals to succeed in regional integration (Qobo, 2007). Considering the circumstances, both concerned leaders put aside their own egos and elite-driven motivations in order for their collaboration to be meaningful, robust, and long-lasting, again as "war is not inescapable," and they should work on minimizing the possibility of a war scenario as well as encouraging their "potential for collaboration" amongst them. Responsibility must be shared by all parties, because genuine promise and readiness should not be expected from one side alone, for just as one hand cannot clap alone, so can collaboration. In this case, not only Abiy and Isaias should have to adapt their conduct, but the TPLF and other militant fighters should also be actively involved in adjusting their behavior to accomplish a shared goal and a brighter tomorrow, because the other route has shown well what has brought for all of them.

When Abiy traveled to the US, he was promised to transit the country from the previous problem to a better position, and also when the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement was signed, one of the promises was to transit from the previous problem to strengthen their cooperation and bring for their countries what the liberals emphasize, as stated in chapter two, for improving the human condition and provides a rationale for building cooperative institutions that can facilitate better lives for human beings (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016). According to the

liberal viewpoint and their 2018 agreement Article two presents, *'the two countries will promote comprehensive cooperation in the political, security, defense, economic, trade, investment, cultural and social fields on the basis of complementarity and synergy'*. Based on this, the researcher proposed that both leaders and the government be committed to their promises and two issues: bringing true peace between them and focusing on implementing their agreement on the foundation of institutions. Among many solutions, this could be one of the best, and it would also help the leaders avoid saying 'compensate for lost time' over and over again. Because one of the major goals of agreements is to encourage collaboration and improve people's lives, if they follow through on their signed agreements and deliver on their promises, their future relationship will be successful, practicable, and durable.

Moreover, as presented in chapter two, liberals pointed out that states require a 'purpose' and a perceived underlying stake in the matter at hand in order to propose cooperation, or take any other significant foreign policy action (Moravcsik, 1997). In this claim, Abiy's and Isaias's purpose and goal is to bring peace and promote collaboration within and beyond their countries to change the status quo, and they have received unexpected backing from both internal and external sources. Moreover, in the IR approach, the practice encompasses the decision-making and execution activities that take place inside the structures and institutions of politics and administration (Adebayo, 2016). Then as long as they are the main decision-maker and executer, they should have to take responsibility for their ideas, thus more work than previously is anticipated to establish peace and cooperation. They should also prioritize power and leadership via their institutions, because the researcher believes that individuals may play big roles in various areas, as liberals urge. Because, Moravcsik (1997) as noted in chapter two, liberals posit that the relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational societies critically shapes state behavior by influencing the social purposes are done by individuals and private groups, who are on the average (Moravcsik, 1997).

As discussed in the theoretical perspective section, liberalism is a paradigm of economic organization that asserts that market capitalism best advances the welfare of all by distributing scarce resources most effectively throughout society (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016). The liberals proposed that finite resources be distributed most efficiently throughout society, but the potential prospects of Ethio-Eritrean collaboration on several economic sectors

are tremendous, including investment activity. If they are actively involved, Eritrea would gain a larger market for its manufactured products in Ethiopia, and Ethiopia will be able to utilize the Port of Assab, it was meant to connect them but was never built; just look at what Ethiopia and Kenya accomplished, as presented in chapter two, in December 2020, they reaffirmed the implementation of cross-border infrastructure projects of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor, which is being developed to complement the Mombasa-Nairobi-Addis Ababa Road Corridor, with the goal of providing multiple Eastern African nations with access to a large scale economic trade system, thereby promoting socio-economic development (ENA, 2020), it is the same thing from the Ethio-Eritrean relation would be expected to bring such kinds of action and diplomatic activity between them and the region, because in their agreement signed in Jeddah on Article three stated that: *'the two countries will develop Joint Investment projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones'*. Then they may replicate the project from Addis Ababa to the Port of Asseb, as well as other comparable initiatives that help to improve collaboration on many issues and reduce hostilities and conflicts.

Continuing from the previous sentence, there is tremendous economic potential for partnership between Kenya and Eritrea in February 2023, which calls for formal interaction. Since then, Nairobi and Asmara have abolished visa requirements, mirroring a long-standing bilateral agreement on people mobility that Kenya and Ethiopia have (Mutambo and Kitimo, 2023), giving Ethiopia and Eritrea the opportunity to fulfill expectations that have been placed on them to carry out these kinds of tasks. Because, since the Tigray conflict, there is no considerable cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea as was anticipated, as stressed in the conceptual chapter; bilateral relations are cross-border political and non-political interactions between two autonomous sovereign states (Ludwig, 2021; Carrier, 2022).

Another possibility for collaboration is that Ethiopia is working on the GERD project to be a power generator in the area, and the remainder may be Eritrean as well. Because it is already utilized by Djibouti and Sudan, and it has the potential to be used by other Horn nations, it might serve as a primary source of cooperation among them rather than serving as a source of energy for each of them and an income for Ethiopia. Ethiopia should have learned by now how to manage the shared resource with its neighbors. According to the South Sudanese government,

GERD will not have a detrimental impact on downstream nations and will be beneficial to regional energy integration (Mumbere, 2018; Sudan, 2022 and Adimasu, 2022). Agreeing to a Key Informant from ECSU, GERD could be a source of both cooperation and conflict; if used as a source of cooperation, it is important to bring integration and the opportunity to develop together not only for Ethiopia but also for other Horn nations; on the other hand, if the problem of how to use the resource could lead to conflict. Ethiopia has attempted and will continue to try to counterbalance the influence that comes from Egypt, Sudan, and Western nations,<sup>58</sup> and the researcher suggests Ethiopia must demonstrate to downstream water users that the GERD project is not detrimental to their national interests. Because Ethiopia is considered a hub state in the region, GERD could be viewed as a hub project that collaborates and connects the states in the renewable electric power sector, with the potential to bring peace and security, reduce and protect the possibility of disagreement, and aid in increasing trust, alliance, and development among them.

Their prospects for meaningful and feasible cooperation between them and in the region are unlikely unless they refrain from interfering in other countries' internal affairs and sovereignty, particularly Eritrea, which is advising Somalia to reverse federalism, which would contradict the liberalist view of international cooperation. As Ethiopia and Eritrea have asked the US, Western countries, and others not to interfere in their domestic matters, they have done so in Somalia, which is contrary to Somalia's interests, and they should not apply double standards. This might jeopardize their future aspirations and be detrimental to their mutual collaboration. During the conversation, one of the MoFA Key Informants indicates that Eritrea has been doing unusual things on the HOA for the previous three decades, one of the reasons being that a nation without a constitution and law is like a ship without a compass.<sup>59</sup> On this issue, Ethiopia should strive hard to persuade IGAD member nations that its relationship with Eritrea must not undermine or jeopardize their interests.

As previously noted, the nature of politics in the IR obviously involves both conflict and cooperation. Since failure to cooperate can result in warfare or economic depression, more

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<sup>58</sup>Interview with Mr. Endale Nigussie, Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer, 17 August 2021/Office.

<sup>59</sup>Interview with Ambassador Fesseha Shawel, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs, 13 August 2021 /Office.

cooperation rather than less is the preferred outcome (Henderson, 1998), moreover, ideology is describes as a two-edged blade that might endanger one's own security (Roy, 1984). In these assertions, if a person or country becomes estranged from the usual system of international relations or friendship, it may experience political, social, and economic depression; so, the researcher contends that the same thing has occurred in Eritrean peoples and administration. They require collaboration, friends, and support since it is impossible to survive for an extended period of time without the assistance of others or being forced to live in the harshest conditions that they are familiar with. Among the Key Informant, one from AAU suggested that President Isaias and the Eritrean people have suffered too much as a result of the sanction and have been alienated from international relations for a long time, and they are aware of the consequences of the result; these types of situations would force them to cooperate rather than continue in a conflict situation.<sup>60</sup> Even if there are problems in the Ethio-Eritrean agreement, they must be prepared to change their old move and confront the challenge in order to maintain their collaboration to relieve and pass from the previous worst situation. Moreover, the current Ethio-Eritrean relationship has been found to be in a negative peace in the absence of organized direct violence or war, it should be encouraging to move into a positive peace, and as Henderson suggests above, rather than failing to cooperate and being found in conflict, a little cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea is the most advantageous.

In addition to the above, "any meaningful bilateral cooperation has to be seen within the broader context of regional integration," President Isaias told journalists at State House, Nairobi in February 2023, he also stated that "we cannot achieve bilateral cooperation without integration, which we have been working on for decades. It is not an invention. This is an obligation on behalf of the residents of the HOA, and we are responsible for reviving IGAD. Moreover, he stated that his nation had "no doubt" about returning to IGAD, but that "we must construct an organization that is functional and results-oriented" so we may claim we've transformed the face of the region (Mutambo and Kitimo, 2023). The researcher suggested that it is welcome news that has been expected in the region and beyond for some time. President Isaias's announcement to return to IGAD would be ideal if it was with Prime Minister Abiy, as friendly nations made an agreement in 2018, and to show this would be one evidence that their bilateral ties are still

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<sup>60</sup>Interview with Sisay Mengiste, (PhD), AAU Center for Federalism and Governance Studies, 27 May 2021/Office.

strong, possible, durable, and long-lasting, but it could not be. Even if Isaias was heated, challenged, weakened, unwelcome, worthless, and undermined IGAD rather than supporting and strengthening it, he now wants to return to IGAD, it has the potential to improved confidence, deepen and expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the region's governments, notably Ethiopia, which will have a good opportunity to continue their bilateral cooperation as expected.

The researcher emphasized that in order to achieve long-term collaboration, peace, and security, it is necessary to implement transitional justice and accountability in Ethiopia, which would enhance people's lives and heal the wounds. Pichon (2022) claimed to accomplish responsibility, reparation, and reconciliation, a transitional justice policy framework would be constructed (Pichon, 2022). As a result, there has been considerable worry about building national discourse in Ethiopia, and it was a question and concern of both domestic and overseas supporters. If it proceeds properly, it is expected to be one of the solutions to bring long-term peace and reconciliation to heal the country's old and new problems. DW (2021) reported that Ethiopian parliamentarians opted to form a panel for national debate in this regard. The statute establishing the commission declares that it would pave the path for national consensus and preserve the country's integrity, and it is intended to build common ground on sensitive matters, as promised by Prime Minister Abiy's government (DW, 2021).

Also, FBC (2023) in recent years, Deputy Prime Minister and MoFA Demeke declared in March 2023 that there was strife in several sections of the nation and violations of human rights. The perpetrators of the crime will thereafter be held accountable; it is the government's job to carry this out and ensure that similar situations do not occur again. To put a halt to these types of actions and provide a solution, transitional justice is being implemented, which is supposed to create national consensus, harmony, peace, and love among nations (FBC, 2023). Abiy declared in August 2018 that "I call on us all to forgive each other from our hearts, to close the chapters from yesterday, and to forge ahead to the next bright future through national consensus" (VOA, 2018) as stated in 4.2.2 internal political disagreement part.

Furthermore, as Nguyen (2008) suggested that if the commission expectations are not typically realized owing to a variety of causes, people get irritated and disillusioned with the effectiveness of commissions, and they may lose faith in the broader reconciliation process. It would be

preferable to combine the commission's findings with an apology, forgiveness, and reparation (Nguyen, 2008). According to Nguyen, the researcher proposes that if the commission does not involve all interested participants and debate all topics in detail in order to reach a national consensus to keep the national interest, its effort will be overly delighted, react to the world community, and save time. The country's and its people's futures of unity, peace, and security may be jeopardized, and the same old moves of opposition parties, militant groups battling against the Ethiopian government, and foreign community influence will continue. These would result in a danger to the country's sovereignty and collapse, loss of human capital and resources, misplacement of people, greater unemployment, decreased tourism and investment, large protests, and a government compelled to reform. On the other hand, if the commission provides peace and reconciliation to Ethiopia as promised, it will help to bring long-term peace and heal the country's old and new problems, the Ethio-Eritrea, and HOA relationship will have a far better possibility of cooperating than before.

Above all else, it would be impossible to estimate the possibilities of Ethio-Eritrean relations in the near future since the new dynamic and security advancements or obstacles in Tigray and other regions are predicted to alter over time. Even if these facts are true, the present agreement by the PP and TPLF help to reduce their confrontational, defamatory rhetoric and demonstrate their willingness to engage would provide a great deal of optimism for the country and the region. Additionally, Ethiopia and Eritrea may benefit from extending their partnership in order to fulfill their commitments and better meet neo liberal recommendations, according to neo liberals, as stated in chapter two, if governments seek profits, they may cooperate with one another and prevent war by adhering to the international ideal of a "positive game" (UKEssays, 2018). Furthermore, if they are successful in their collaboration, an ECSU Key Informant believes that in the long term, there is a possibility of forging some sort of economic and even political union (confederation mode).<sup>61</sup> However, until they resolve their disagreement, the facts on the ground will not be revealed or confirmed.

Furthermore, as stated in the preceding chapter, South Africa is the largest economy in the Southern African Development Community and is frequently involved in efforts to resolve

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<sup>61</sup>Interview with Mr. Endale Nigussie, Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer, 17 August 2021/Office.

political issues in neighboring countries through mediation; additionally, it attempts to solidify strategic bilateral partnerships. Strategic partners have the potential to increase South Africa's engagement on the continent in areas such as diplomacy and conflict resolution, as well as increase Foreign Direct Investment into South Africa and Africa, improve South Africa's access to foreign markets, and contribute to increased tourism arrivals from countries other than Africa. The country is a relatively stable democracy with a sophisticated financial services industry that attracts international investment, establishing it as a regional and continental economic powerhouse (Mpako and Moosa, 2022; Government, 2022 and Adebajo, 2008). The researcher argued that South Africa's route would be a good lesson to Ethiopia, and because Ethiopia is considered as the Horn hub and maintains peace and stability in the area, this model would benefit not only the Ethio-Eritrea bilateral relationship but also the Horn nations.

### **5.3.1. How May it Affect the Prospects of Ethiopian-Eritrean Cooperation?**

The researcher has anxiety that the prospects of Ethio-Eritrea relationship would affect in different reasons, even if there are new constructive developments. Following the peace agreement between the PP and the TPLF, in January 2023, Obasanjo stated in this matter, the next stage would be for Ethiopia's parliament to declassify the TPLF as a terrorist group (Pilling and Schipani, 2023). The researcher suggests that the situation continues without changing the TPLF's designation as a terrorist organization, demonstrating once more that HoPR violates its obligations and the country's legislation, asserting that it has completed and follows instructions from the executive body of government that has not given the certification, and PP has already proceeded with the process and peace deal without following normal procedure, while also revealing its weakness and demonstrating how the country administers without regard for the law, despite the fact that the TPLF did not request it. But, Reuters (2023) stated in March 2023, the Ethiopian parliament withdrew the TPLF off an official list of terrorist organizations, which was a critical step in the peace process and the establishment of an interim local administration (Reuters, 2023), however, it also removes the TPLF's designation as a terrorist group, causing a rift between the populace, the Ethiopian National Election Board, and political parties.

Furthermore, in January 2023, US Secretary of State Blinken hailed the advancement of the peace pact and talked about Eritrean "ongoing pullout" in a phone call with Abiy, calling the withdrawal "significant progress" in the peace agreement (AFP, 2023). Also the UN's deputy

human rights head, Al-Nashif, stated in March 2023 that the agreed-upon evacuation of the Eritrean Defense Force from Ethiopia “remains very slow and largely incomplete” (UN, 2023). The possibility of Eritrean troops remaining in Tigray has thus been identified as a major impediment to the deal's effective implementation. Nevertheless, President Isaias declared in February 2023, "It is fine that they signed; let it be done; we cannot say this and that unless we see its implementations". But, the Ethiopian official denied about the Eritrean soldier, Major General Teshome Gemechu said that "there is no other security force in the Tigray region except the FDRE Defense Forces". According to Getachew Reda, a former TPLF spokesman, "Eritrean soldiers are still in Tigray." The departure of Eritrean forces has yet to be confirmed (Addis Standard, 2023; VOA, 2023 and Al-Eyen, 2023). In response to the US request that Eritrean forces leave Tigray, Eritrea's envoy to Russia, Petros Tsegai, claimed in January 2023 that "Ethiopia's victory is our victory" and that only the Ethiopian government can order the Eritrean army to leave Tigray (BBC, 2023).

Furthermore, the nations' senior commanders signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Nairobi in November, 2022. The ToR states that an AU expert team would be sent to Tigray to monitor the withdrawal of foreign and non-ENDF forces to their respective borders and also envisaged the 'overall disarmament of TPLF Combatants' within 30 days of its signing (Ashenafi, 2022 and Pichon, 2022). Moreover, Obasanjo, the mediator, declared in November 2022 that the agreement would go into effect "immediately," and that it was the best way to restore peace and stability. Similarly, "we will completely devote ourselves to fulfilling the Pretoria agreement and declaration," Birhanu Jula, a top Ethiopian military official, declared in the same month and year (Ayenat, 2022). Even if Isaias endorses the peace agreement, he expresses concern over Prime Minister Abiy's pact with the TPLF. According to Ethiopia Insight (2023), in March 2023, despite the fact that the joint Ethiopian and Eritrean military operation has alliance on the TPLF, there is fear among some in Eritrea that an alliance is forming that could be hostile to Isaias' regime, and Isaias displeasure with the arrangement, portraying it as a ploy by the West to save his enemy, the TPLF (Ethiopia Insight, 2023).

Before, as noted in the preceding chapter, the Eritrean administration has never shied away from explicitly stating that an agreement with the TPLF/EPRDF-led Ethiopian government was inconceivable under any circumstances (Kidanu and Endalcatchew, 2015), it is well known that

they are adversaries of the TPLF. Therefore, how could Abiy reconcile this truth until the TPLF and PFDJ resolve their differences and Abiy focuses on resolving their rivalry? Because, according to Addis Standard (2023) President Isaias declared in February 2023, "It is fine that they signed; let it be done; we cannot say this and that unless we see its implementations." He stated that it is impossible to say the war is over "TPLF is a war-monger and it cannot quit from its habits" (Addis Standard, 2023). The researcher suggests that this would also pose a new challenge to their bilateral relationship. In this context, it has been said that the 2018 Ethiopia-Eritrea agreement is not strategic for a long time based on national interest.

Apart from the aforementioned, the researcher concurs with the blow academicians proposed that, the implementation of the agreement is challenging, since it makes no clear mention of the steps forward (Pichon, 2022), likewise, Houreld (2022) says that in November 2022, Dessalegn Chanie, a member of Parliament for the opposition National Movement of Amhara, praised the statement but was disappointed that it "lacks clarity on justice and accountability" (Houreld, 2022). Notwithstanding what the researcher indicated, the 2018 agreement between PP and PFDJ was unclear and the 2022 peace deal between PP and TPLF is also unclear, making it difficult to predict what it will bring. However, the situation shows that the action plan and deal have yet to be implemented on the ground, and it takes time, confirming the expert's team's failure. Yet, with the exception of a few heavy weapons given up to the Ethiopian government, the Eritrean leader's proclamation and according to Sheger FM (2023), the fear and anxiety of some HoPR members in March 22, 2023, when the debates between them to remove or not TPLF from terrorist group, they raise concern that it is not time, from TPLF side is not respected the Pretoria deal and others, then in these situation, how could we enable the TPLF to enter Ethiopian politics (Sheger FM, 2023).

In accordance with the preceding, according to Ethiopia Insight (2023), Getachew, the leader of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration, emphasized that Amhara-occupied regions (Wolkait and Raya) are vital portions of Tigray and committed to prioritize their return in his inauguration speech in March 2023. "In the Pretoria Accord, it was explicitly stated that Tigray's territorial integrity should be handled in accordance with the constitution," he noted (Ethiopia Insight, 2023). These unclear fates feed continuous hatred between Tigrayans and Amharas, furthermore, if the alliance between the TPLF and the OLA is not officially canceled, if they try to find a

military solution to the situation, another crisis will develop, threatening cooperation, peace, and security in Ethiopia, between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and beyond, thus repeating the Horn's old pattern.

However, the researcher advocated that in the post-2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement, most of the changes and situations impacted Ethiopia more than Eritrea, particularly in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions. Then the peoples must also say no to conflict, antagonism, confrontation and the like, since the social fabric of the society would soften, deteriorate, and damage or get out of control, posing a challenge to the re-union of Ethiopian and Ethio-Eritrean relations. This will result in ongoing antagonism between them. Additionally, if peace is achieved, accountability would come from many directions, particularly from the people and there should not be a struggle in power sharing between PP and TPLF. To prevent such hesitancy, it would be preferable to use the below strategy of repentance and forgiveness to concentrate their possibilities and provide lasting collaboration, peace, and security between them and beyond.

The researcher suggested that the 2018 peace accord between Ethiopia and Eritrea may not result in long-term collaboration, peace, and security unless a peaceful solution strategy is used to address the impacts of previous and present wars. There should be a mechanism to open doors for dialogue and discover long-term solutions to challenges. The technique of conflict transformation is the most viable option for resolving unwanted disputes inside Ethiopia and between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Furthermore, it urges participants to directly participate in the settlement process and should not allow other parties to meddle in the problem since they would have an influence and propose their solution in the name of international law. As in the instance of the 2000 Ethio-Eritrean Algiers Agreement, which led to many years of confrontation between the nations, the researcher suggested that the prospects of Ethio-Eritrean relations have been based on this strategy.

Furthermore, the purpose of conflict transformation is to eliminate unwanted disputes and solve them in a short period of time through creating trust. It should be an open-ended, long-term, multi-track, and dynamic process that involves a diverse range of participants in the transition. Officials, military and political figures, informal conflict resolution specialists, INGOs and NGOs, grassroots indigenous NGOs offering development and humanitarian support are among those included. It also focuses on the peaceful resolution of long-standing violent conflicts

(Reimann, 2004; Paffenholz et al. 2009, and Nguyen, 2008). It was also utilized to repair the fighters' broken relationships. This strategy would allow all parties involved to work together to achieve a consensual solution via discussion, resulting in true peace and long-term collaboration. In this circumstance, not only the Ethio-Eritrean relationship, but also the Ethiopian internal situation, should be moving in these directions, and repentance and forgiveness also aid in the resolution of previous grievances.

Moreover, according to Nguyen (2008), apology and forgiveness may help to restore the relationship between perpetrators and victims that was severed as a result of the conflict's injustices and injuries, as well as help to define the past in a mutually agreed-upon manner and attempt to address the 'root causes' of conflict (Nguyen, 2008). Moreover, Wu and Yang (2016) suggested that Brandt's kneeling in front of the monument to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in December 1970 (Phillips 2001 quoted in Wu and Yang, 2016) stunned the Polish people and the rest of the world. The majority of West Germans thought his actions were exaggerated, and his decision to accept the Western Polish boundary was strongly condemned, indicating that reconciliation would take years to develop and consolidate. However, despite improved bilateral relations, neither Poland nor West Germany could ignore the Cold Conflict framework and the danger of war between them (Wu and Yang, 2016).

Based on Nguyen's suggestions and Brandt's actions, such reconciliation processes might serve to heal the wound and promote long-term sustainable peace between people and nations that have suffered through conflict, while also attempting to address the core causes of the issues. The researcher then proposed that Ethiopian internal difficulties and Ethio-Eritrean relations be handled and resolved using the aforesaid technique and experience. The second option will result in another disaster in Ethiopia, between Ethio-Eritrea and the rest. In this case, Brandt's move may be interpreted as an encouragement for them to become friends rather than adversaries, since the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean deal was a lesson to African governments. As the end result of war is damage, and any theory can be criticized, liberal perspectives are the best to meet the objectives of Ethio-Eritrean relations that developing cooperation and interdependence not only enhances economic benefits but also withstands security problems originating from external sources and could be the best solutions to ensure their future long-term.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.1. Conclusion

In today's globalized world, it is just too difficult for a country to live and survive alone, and collaboration with other countries is required in some form or another to attain and maintain national interests. When countries agree to collaborate, they each have their own set of aims, values, and priorities, such as preserving state autonomy, sustaining regional and international peace and security, combating human trafficking, protecting opponents, and battling terrorism; promoting and smoothing friendly relationships among nations, and utilizing natural and human resources; cooperating to develop their investment, technology transfer, and the like in order to bring a better tomorrow for themselves, the world society, and it should not be for parties or personal ego in the global community. Then, the Ethiopia-Eritrea relationship, particularly after 2018, is expected to offer such triumphs to their nations and peoples, and should remain a top agenda item.

The researcher suggests, while there are certain sorts of bilateral relations in Africa and the Horn area, particularly between adjacent nations, the Horn nation's technique of conflict transformation and cooperation tactic has been inadequate in comparison to other parts of Africa. In this situation, the South African model may be the best that tries to meet the liberalist political concept than Sudan and South Sudan, and it may also serve as a useful example for Ethiopia and Eritrea to reach a peace deal and cooperation that would help them to form a long-term partnership.

Furthermore, the researcher proposes that, the historical bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been described in terms of pleasure and melancholy, or ups and downs, based on government and leader approaches at various eras. As liberalism explains, when they are cordial, their relationship becomes seamless, as mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy, limits the state's capabilities, political involvement, peace and security, for establishing cooperative institutions, and distributing scarce resources most effectively throughout society (Burchill et al. 2001; Walker and Rousseau, 2016). As a friendly country, they attempt to follow these liberal political ideologies, but in comparison to Ethiopia, most of these issues have not been implemented in Eritrea, because the constitution,

individual and group rights, political participation, and other issues are in contradiction with theory and practice on the ground. When their relationship gets strained, they focus on what the realist recommended, as mentioned in the preceding chapter; emphasize the importance of the nation-state as the world's top political power and the primary purpose of a state-the national desire to increase power-is politics as a battle for power (Amstutz, 1995 and Burchill et al. 2001). According to realist assertions, both leaders emphasize and concentrate on power above all else.

Additionally, as described in the preceding chapter, neorealism emphasize power maximization, security concerns, the balance of power, and rivalry among themselves, either to obtain power at the expense of others or, at the very least, to ensure that they do not lose power (Gadfly, 2018; Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018). Furthermore, there was expectation that they would reconcile past grievances and become more focused on cooperation in many issues when they signed the 2018 agreement, as neoliberalism presented how to achieve cooperation among states and other actors in the international system, and institutions can play an important role in resolving disputes and encouraging governments to collaborate as a means of surviving and prospering (Joseph, 2020 and UKEssays, 2018). Nevertheless, while the theories state in this manner, the reality on the ground was not as predicted as neoliberalism presented, because their connection has been shown neorealism emphasizes that increased military coordination was required in order to protect their authority at the expense of their opponent TPLF and its followers.

Furthermore, committed visionary leadership is required to tackle difficulties. Each participant in the war scenario, as well as the involved bodies, should strive hard to attain the best interests of the country and people, rather than their own. In order for Abiy and his government to demonstrate their true commitment, Eritrean soldiers must leave Ethiopian territory, reclaim what has been labeled "terrorism" on the TPLF, and begin dealing with other militant parties within the country. Moreover, both leaders must be willing to take the initiative to empower society, encourage and build the next generation of young people, and to rely on truth in contributing to peace and security, as Terefe (2019) M. Ghandi stated, "peace begins internally within the self" (Terefe, 2019), advocating for better and more sustainable cooperation, peace, and development in the future between Ethio-Eritreans and the rest of society. Furthermore, both

leaders and their administration should have been dedicated to solving issues via institutions rather than just individuals; they prioritize and focus on their future generation to become more cooperative rather than antagonistic; and focus on strengthening their society's social fabrication to cohesiveness because it is one of the primary solutions to maintaining the society culture, helping them respect each other to live together, creating a stable and united society in a country, and continuing their brotherhoods states and cooperation for a longer period of time. After the society's social fiction has been deconstructed, it will be difficult to get back to the former location and continue in the same manner.

The researcher claims that Ethiopia's new political arrangement should include all participants in order to consolidate and accommodate its diverse population and interests in order to enhance prosperous economic development, justice, peace, and security within itself, as well as to bring more cooperation with its neighboring countries and the rest of the world. Moreover, if Ethiopia's internal lengthy difficulties are not resolved within a short period of time, its sovereignty will be jeopardized, and the country's continued existence would be called into doubt, perhaps leading to the breakup of several regional states. Because there is fear that Ethiopia's new 'reform' is being viewed as retrograde, much as the previous administration of the TPLF/EPRDF has been doing. This would exacerbate the country's instability and might serve as a catalyst for the country and its peoples to resume mass mobilization. Furthermore, if this chance is missed, the effects will not be readily rectified in a short period of time, and it may be difficult to rejoin as a country again.

During this critical time, Ethiopia should exercise caution and refrain from favoring certain countries over others in order to advance its national interests. Instead of ignoring and clashing with Western countries, particularly the US, Prime Minister Abiy and his administration should try to strengthen their strategic alliance with them, calm their diplomatic relations, and discuss with them to maximize their interests, even if they are dissatisfied with the overall situation, according to DW (2023), Molly Phee, the US envoy for Africa, claimed that Blinken's travel to Ethiopia in March 2023 would attempt to solidify peace, but that the US-Ethiopian relationship was not yet ready to return to "normal" (DW, 2023). Most of the time, the Western adopt a 'carrot and stick' method; thus, Ethiopia should aim to use the carrot and avoid or limit the stick in order to maximize national interest. So Ethiopia requires the strategic cooperation of these

Western nations not just for this issue, but also to meet its internal deficit budget. Ethiopia has historically and now been unable to fulfill its annual budget on its own and the US and donor countries have been the key supporters and donors in order to cover the gap. Similarly, to confront these types of situations Ethiopia must be strong and promote its diplomatic operations and communities to play an active role in the region and beyond affairs. To fill this valid, the allocated employees should be well educated, experienced, and motivated, and they should endeavor to protect their country's interests.

As Eritrea demonstrates its desire to return to and participate in IGAD in the coming year, it is also expected and committed that Eritrea will try to adjust its political system to make reform and allow the suspended draft constitution of 1997 to become effective and respectful; introduce democratization, economic liberalization, and focus on cooperation with neighboring countries to bring sustainable peace and security within itself and beyond, because the people, country, and leaders have made sacrifices in the past. It should also be highlighted that Eritreans and their leaders should not be allowed to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries. Besides, the IGAD, AU, UN, USA, Western nations, and international community have a responsibility to redouble diplomatic efforts in the Horn area to promote and assist in the resolution of problems via discussions rather than intervention.

Even if there are challenges, it is the responsibility of wise leaders and administrations to try to gain and maximize profit from different governmental systems by committing to working hard to achieve its better interest in using diplomatic relations for the country and people, rather than focusing on differences. To summarize, the 2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement is general in that benchmarks and step when and what types of activities to implement on the ground were not considered, which led to personal criticism because it was expected to be economic, diplomatic, social, and other cooperation through institutions, but their military alliance is continuing to combat their common enemy 'TPLF'. For the peace agreement between the two nations to continue and preserve its agreement, it must be clear, binding, ratified by their respectable government authorities on both sides, and abide by the laws and regulations, but the Ethio-Eritrean agreement failed to achieve these requirements. At the same time, based on Article seven of their agreement signed in Jeddah, which states that *'the two countries will establish a High Level Joint Committee, as well as Subcommittees as required, to guide and oversee the*

*implementation of this Agreement,*' this should be established to perform other duties and ensure accountability.

As mentioned in the theoretical perspective section, neo realists argue that anarchy reduces the need for governments to collaborate, saying that it is far more difficult to accomplish than neoliberals, but neoliberalism contends that states may still cooperate with the help of institutions (Pfefferle, 2014; Joseph, 2020 and Gadfly, 2018). According to this theory, there is still a chance for cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but their actions and situation among them, the challenge mentioned in the previous section, Ethiopia's internal and international situations will challenge to expect what liberals and neo liberals advocate, that bilateral relations become what neo realists advocate, that anarchy reduces the need for governments to collaborate. Then, as long as the Ethiopian-Eritrean relationship is not institutionalized, internal political differences in Ethiopia are not resolved, and the two governments' problems remain unresolved, the post-2018 Ethio-Eritrean agreement will be a concord of the leaders rather than the two states, and their cooperation will be ineffective as expected.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

Despite various triumphs and failures, Ethiopia and Eritrea's relationship is mostly based on the interests of its leaders to resolve and generate problems between them. In this case, one of the demonstrations of leaders' interest would be that, as stated in Article four of the agreement reached in September 2018 in Jeddah, "*the two countries will implement the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission decision*" attempting to resolve the territorial dispute of 'Badme' without the consent of the peoples, particularly those who live in both countries' border areas, may be impossible, and it may be the catalyst for another war between them. Furthermore, there are other comparable issues in Ethiopia; for example, attempting to resolve the administration border area of Wolkaite and other areas without the consent of the local people may result in a long-term civil conflict between the Amhara and Tigray peoples; additionally, militant fighters such as the OLA and others have posed an internal challenge. These would aggravate their relationship, not to mention the other major challenges of their previous problems. If these concerns are not addressed calmly, the impact on unstable Ethiopia would be larger, as it may prevent Ethiopia from collaborating properly with Eritrea and other nations.

When Abiy came to power in 2018, one of his promises was that all government activities would be open to the public. If we accept this, where is the promise, and why is most government operations not made public? These conditions would create a challenge to the government itself, as well as hesitation and misleading public perception towards the government. Then, leaders on both sides should have been committed to resolving problems via institutions rather than individuals. Additionally, they emphasize and focus on their future generation to become more cooperative rather than adversarial, by opening and launching cultural heritages, museums, and similar activities in their countries to reinforce the social fabric. On the other hand, in order for Abiy and his government to demonstrate their true commitment, Eritrean soldiers must leave Ethiopian territory, and begin negotiating with other militant combatants within the nation in order to promote collaboration, peace, and security within the country and abroad; because, Ethiopia, in comparison to Eritrea, has never been in more danger than it is now.

Prime Minister Abiy and his government should work harder to achieve his vision since its reform plan has not satisfied everyone in the country, particularly in Tigray. A comprehensive reform process with defined benchmarks should be implemented throughout the country. Similarly, when responding to people's questions, it is better to be based on the country's rules and regulations, seriously, and sincerely, but negligence, reacting to problems in an easy way, using extra force, and providing disorganized answers are not the right way of responding to and communicating with its people. This might be one of the impediments to escalating internal difficulties and preventing Ethiopia from transforming itself in the face of these clear and present challenges, thereby disrupting the Ethio-Eritrean relationship. The government should respect and answer inquiries based on norms and regulations regarding the legitimate use of force, and it should be responsible and accountable for its acts.

Furthermore, while speaking about forgiveness, love, and unity is important, it is not enough to reconcile fighters and antagonistic people; actual and responsible action on the ground is required. To accomplish this, the commission has formed, which is excellent, and it is anticipated to perform more; nevertheless, the same error that was terminated, such as the Peace and Reconciliation Commissions, should not be repeated. In this experience, it should be work based on the society culture that is expected to lay the foundation of a permanent solution to the people and country by reconciling grievances, meeting public demand, and keeping things safe,

otherwise things will deteriorate. The commission, on the other hand, has the opportunity to contribute and generate stable peace, amicable atmosphere, and smooth unhappy past experiences by transforming from foes to friends, as it was the most appropriate mechanism to reconcile people in South Africa that transformed the country into specific political and social circumstances. If the commission succeeds in bringing peace and reconciliation to Ethiopia, it has impact that will open up new opportunities for cooperation between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Furthermore, in order for both states and societies to properly democratize, civil societies in Ethiopia and Eritrea must be capable and powerful enough to play a role in improving the quality of political society and community leadership. They may contribute in risk reduction and the development of collaboration and regional solidarity among themselves and in the region.

There is a well-known saying that the Ethiopian people are one of the people in the world who believe in God, respect their religious leaders and elders, and have lived together in diversity for many years, but the current situation magnifies the fact that they are unable to solve their country's problems, and it contradicts accepting this suggestion. Since Ethiopians, like any other people, prefer peace over conflict, and the same desire is anticipated of them, but because they believe in God and respect each other, long-term war and current types of situations are not expected of them. Conversely, the researcher contended that the people's and governments political culture may be one of the reasons for a lack of expertise in dealing with difficulties. Ethiopian political culture is not as civilized as that of Western and certain African nations, such as the USA and Ghana, in terms of resolving disputes at a round table through dialogue. Instead of dialogues and debates, its political class prefers to use military measures to handle political problems. So Ethiopians living at home and abroad must deepen their unity and togetherness in order to contribute their efforts, review their past experiences, and devote greater attention to solving their core problems and attempting to introduce a new political culture. Moreover, they should have tried to prevent undue demands from foreign powers that would weaken the territorial integrity, unity, and firmness of the state, and instead focused on realizing and delivering a better Ethiopia for future generations.

Furthermore, the Horn is aware of various issues in the world, one of which is an approach of making alliance for a short period of time, shifting its support one another in the name of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend,' or 'I scratch your back and you scratch mine,' and being an

agent of their colonial master is one of the dangerous tactics and common practice in the region. Let alone their different social, economic, and political concerns, which might invite danger, cause distrust, and lead to long-term strife. This experience should be brought to a halt and removed from their political arenas. To avoid situations like these, it would be better for them and the area to revitalize IGAD again in a new way to become more powerful, competitive, effective, and functional. These kinds of measures might help to improve their strained collaboration, peace, and security, which would benefit the Horn states as well.

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**Appendix-I**  
**List of Key Informants**

No	Name	Organization	Position	Date
1	Sisay Mengiste, (PhD)	AAU	Center for Federalism and Governance Studies	27 May 2021
2	Commander Abebe Muluneh	IGAD	Director, Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP)	02 June 2021
3	Mr. Alemu Leta	Institute of Strategic Affairs (ISA)	Researcher, ISA	08 June 2021
4	Chane Kebede (PhD)	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (EZEMA)	Deputy Chairman	14 June 2021
5	Mr. Taye Merga	The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR)	Education Affairs Senior Expert	15 June 2021
6	Belete Belachew (PhD)	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung	Senior Researcher	28 June 2021
7	Ambassador Fesseha Shawel	Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)	Director General of Neighboring Countries and IGAD Affairs	13 August 2021
8	Mr. Endale Nigussie	Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU)	Head, School of Diplomacy and International Relation (SDIR) and Lecturer	17 August 2021
9	Yonas Tariku (PhD candidate)	Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)	Lecturer and Academic Coordinator	23 August 2021

## **Appendix-II: In-depth Interview Guide Line for Key Informants**

The purpose of this interview guide is to gather information to conduct research for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy. Thus, this instrument is designed for the purpose of gathering information concerning the Post-2018 Ethio-Eritrea Relation: from Confrontation to Cooperation. Information that you have provided is intended to serve for research and to find out challenges that the agreement could face and its prospects expected from the new diplomatic relations of the two countries. Therefore, you are kindly requested to provide accurate information as much as possible. I confirm to you that all data given by you will be treated confidentially.

Could we start our discussion by introducing each other? (by introducing your name, age, current work place and position).

1. Name: -----

2. Age: -----

3. Work place and Position: -----

### **Interview Guide Questions**

1. Why did Ethiopia and Eritrea make an agreement in 2018? What are the importance of the new Ethio-Eritrea relation to peace, stability and cooperation between the two countries and the wider region?

2. Do you think that their differences in political ideology or political divergence of the two countries could have an impact on their diplomatic thaw?

3. Why don't they focus and cooperate on economy, social, diplomacy and the like, instead of military cooperation?

4. Does the Eritrean government violate the Ethiopian sovereignty to be involved in the Tigray war? If so, why does the House of Peoples' Representative or the Executive government body condemn the action and order to leave the country?

5. What do you think about the US sanction on Ethiopia and Eritrea, after the Tigray war? Why does USA and the alliance support the TPLF? Does it affect their relationship? Could they continue their relationship?

6. Why do some pundits question the effective implementation of the relation while others believe that this can be realized; because, it questioned that leader to leader not peoples to peoples and countries to countries relations?

7. What would be the potential prospects and challenges surrounding the newly emerging peace relations between Ethiopia, Eritrea and the wider HOA including the Middle East?

8. If you have any additional comments or observations it is appreciable.

**Appendix III: The Ethio-Eritrea agreement signed in Jeddah**

**Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive  
Cooperation between the Federal Democratic Republic of  
Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea**

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea hereinafter referred to as the Two Parties; agreed as follows:-

**Article one**

The state of war between the two countries has ended and new era of peace, friendship and comprehensive cooperation has started.

**Article two**

The two countries will promote comprehensive cooperation in the political, security, defense, economic, trade, investment, cultural and social fields on the basis of complementarity and synergy.

**Article three**

The two countries will develop Joint Investment projects, including the establishment of Joint Special Economic Zones.

**Article four**

The two countries will implement the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission decision.

**Article five**

The two countries will promote regional peace, security and cooperation.

**Article six**

The two countries will combat terrorism as well as trafficking in people, arms and drugs in accordance with international covenants and conventions.

## **Article seven**

The two countries will establish a High Level Joint Committee, as well as Subcommittees as required, to guide and oversee the implementation of this Agreement.

This Agreement is made at Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this day of September 16, 2018 in two original copies in Amharic, Tigrinya, Arabic and English languages; in case of discrepancy in interpretation, the English version shall prevail.

For

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Abiy Ahmed Ali

Prime Minister

For

The State of Eritrea

Isaias Afwerki

President