



GERD Support Group in Belgium

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October 25, 2020.

PRESS RELEASE

President Trump's statement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

We express our collective indignation at the statement by President Trump of the United States on 23 October 2020 regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). While the negotiations on the construction, filling and management of the dam are currently on-going between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, under the auspices of the African Union (AU), President Trump publicly declared, " ...they (Egypt) will end up blowing up that dam". We feel that the president's statement is tantamount to a declaration of war on Ethiopia trying to negotiate a peaceful co-existence with its neighbors and a fair share of its natural resources.

We strongly condemn Mr. Trump's call to arms by Egypt against Ethiopia. This blatantly partisan position of Mr. Trump yet again confirms the long-standing suspicion of Ethiopians that the Trump administration cannot be trusted as an honest broker on the GERD issue.

The Nile basin countries are following developments in the negotiations with a realistic expectation that it will pave the way for a basin-wide international treaty that will replace the unfair colonial-era agreements that allocate 100% of the Nile waters only to Egypt and the Sudan.

Obviously, President Trump is not in touch with any of the facts on the matter, including that the GERD does not stop the Nile water flow. It does not even significantly reduce the amount of water that flows downstream since the filling stage lasts 4 to 7 years. While the main sticking point at this stage of the negotiations is the issue of prolonged

drought mitigation measures, the countries hope to reach an amicable solution that will benefit all.

Ethiopia withdrew from the negotiations in Washington because the US, which was participating in the negotiations with the status of an observer, suddenly arrogated to itself the role of a mediator. This became evident when the US, unsolicited, came up with a draft agreement before even the negotiations were concluded. There was essentially no deal or agreement that Ethiopia failed to abide by.

The last thing our country, our region and, indeed, the whole world needs is another regional war. Our part of the world has had more than its share of these troubles for decades and it is still suffering from on-going conflicts. Therefore, as the High Representative of the European Commission Josep Borrell stated in a press release on 24 October 2020, “An Agreement on the filling of the GERD is within the reach of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. Now is the time for action and not for increasing tensions”.

Given the imminent danger posed to the peace and security of Ethiopia by President Trump’s statement we call upon:

- the Ethiopian Government to immediately take up the matter with the UN Security Council and the African Union.
- the Ethiopian government to demand the withdrawal of the observer status accorded to the US at the GERD negotiations.
- the Ethiopian peoples to stand united in defending Ethiopia’s sovereign right to build and manage GERD.
- the American people and all peace-loving citizens of the world to join us in condemning this dangerous and reckless statement by President Trump.

Co-ordinating Committee

GERD Support Group in Belgium

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The GERD support group is composed of Belgians of Ethiopian origin and Ethiopians residing in Belgium