

Joint Crisis Committee

NERMAL 2022

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Nile Water Conflict

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Joint Crisis Committee at this year's Northeastern Regional Model Arab League Conference. While your fellow delegates will spend the weekend cooperating on a common problem, your committee will find itself in joint conflict with another, both attempting to come to an agreement over the crisis at hand. Over the weekend you will find yourself working with government officials, military leaders, state ambassadors and more, to solve the needs of your committee.

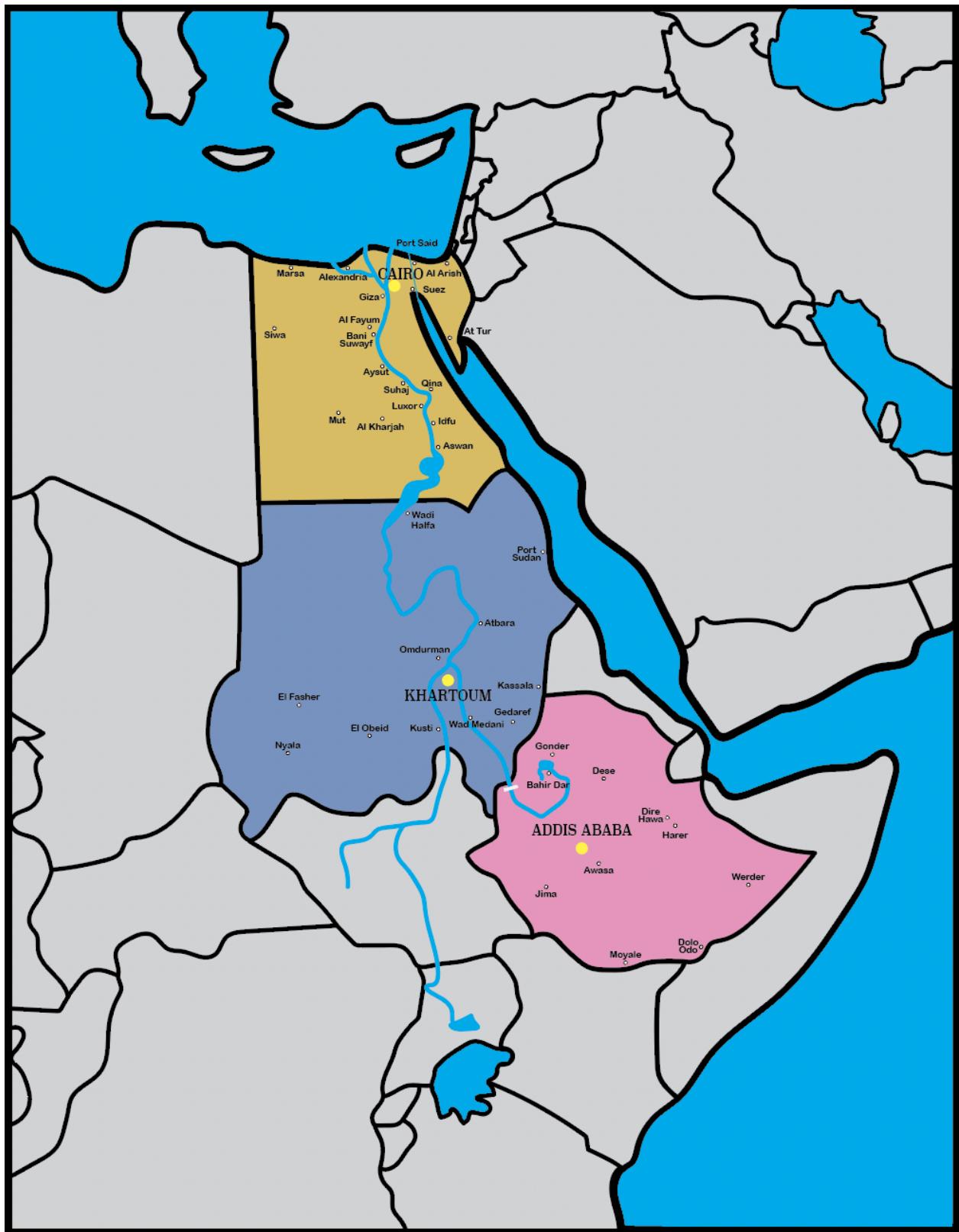
The officials of your Committee will consist of your chair (frontroom) and the backroom. Your chair will act as an effective head of government who will govern the committee as a neutral entity and as an intermediary for the crisis itself. The backroom will act as the primary intermediate for this crisis, determining how your efforts will affect both yours and the other committee.

If you are new to Crisis in Model Arab League you will find that the committee will flow slightly more informally than you might be used to. You will partake in both Frontroom and Backroom motions. These motions should all be in service to your country and committee, maintaining the spirit of cooperation that Model Arab League Encourages. In addition, you will also receive several crisis updates throughout the conference. These updates will include changes in the situation, either actively made by one of the committees or simply as an update in the situation.

We look forward to working with all of you and am excited to see what solutions you come up with.

Sahiti Tholeti and Mark Smith

Crisis Directors



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The waters of the Nile River have been a source of conflict since the first civilizations. Egypt has historically used a considerable amount of diplomatic connections to successfully prevent any major infrastructure projects on the Nile both before and after its independence. For the millions of people living downstream in Sudan and Egypt, the Nile is relied upon heavily for household and agricultural uses. Upstream state Ethiopia has long wanted to take advantage of its natural highland formation called the Blue Nile, which supplies approximately 85% of the water that flows downstream into Egypt and Sudan.

In 2011, Ethiopia began construction upon the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a project which would produce much-needed hydroelectric power for Ethiopia. However, Ethiopia did not consult Egypt or Sudan when making this decision, arguing that it was a matter of Ethiopian sovereignty and well-within their state power. Consequently, the GERD poses a dangerous threat to the water security of downstream states. Ethiopia maintains that the hydroelectric project will not significantly affect the flow of the Nile, though both Egypt and Sudan worry about the damages the dam could cause in a drought.

In the past Egypt and Sudan have relied upon agreements going back to 1959 and 1929 to assert their control over the Nile River with little concern to Ethiopia or the other up-stream states. In 1929 Great Britain gave Egypt the authority to veto any construction projects on the river whether within or outside of their borders, an agreement Ethiopia no longer recognizes. The other agreement in 1959 allocated all the Nile River's waters to Egypt and Sudan and further granted Egypt veto power on any future projects on the Nile. Ethiopia and other upstream states reject this argument as the agreement was made without consulting any of the other states that share the Nile River.

CURRENT SITUATION

This committee begins in July 2020, as the dam has recently finished construction.

Ethiopia has now begun filling the reservoir of the dam to a planned 540 meters, 40 meters above the river. Both the construction of the dam and the filling began without any agreements made with either Sudan or Egypt, despite many negotiation attempts since construction began. As filling began Egypt and Sudan have called for further negotiations as their water supply slows further down the Nile. The three states have tried to resolve the situation since construction began in 2011 to no avail, with negotiations falling through every time. Now that construction is finished and the reservoir is being filled, additional pressure is mounting on Egypt and Sudan, the two downstream states, to come to an agreement with Ethiopia. Reports are already showing that the dam's water level has been increasing at a faster pace. Should water be held upstream, the water security of the entire region may be at risk. Additionally, agriculture specialists have been warning of a quickly approaching drought that may affect Nile-dependent states. Ethiopia gathered its Ministers and officials to discuss next steps while Egypt and Sudan have assembled their own GERD Negotiations team to protect their water source. Tensions are rising as these committees convene.

CHARACTER DOSSIERS

ETHIOPIA: Council of Ministers

Ambachew Mekonnen (Chief Administrator of Amhara Regional State)

Amhara National Regional State hosts Lake Tana, the largest inland body of water in Ethiopia and the source of water for the Blue Nile. The region borders Sudan as well as Tigray and the Benishangul-Gumuz region. Mekonnen was previously the Infrastructure and Urban Development Advisor to the Prime Minister.

Hassan Ibrahim (Ambassador to Egypt, Ethiopia)

Ethiopia's ambassador to Egypt who pledged to boost the bilateral relationship between the two countries. As Egypt has been vocal about their opposition, he is here to help suggest how to manage Ethiopia's relationship with Egypt as it has been affected all these years by the GERD project.

Kifle Horo (Chief Engineer of GERD Dam, Ethiopia)

After the sudden death of the last manager Simegnewu Bekele, Kifle was appointed by the project's owner Ethiopian Electric Power, as chief project manager in 2018. He is responsible for leading the construction of the dam and has over 35 years of experience in the power industry.

Seleshi Bekele (Minister of Water and Energy, Ethiopia)

Seleshi is a politician and an academic known for being an active participant in GERD negotiations. As the Minister of Water he is responsible for energy production and regulation and natural resources conservation among other things.

Ashadli Hassan (Chief Administrator of the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, Ethiopia)

The Benishangul-Gumuz Region is a regional state in western Ethiopia that borders Sudan. The region is split by the Blue Nile and lacks proper transportation and communications infrastructure. Chinese investors have taken interest in building roads and bridges in the region.

Gedu Andargachew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia)

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gedu oversees the foreign and diplomatic relations of Ethiopia. He also ensures the enforcement of rights and obligations from agreements signed by the Ethiopian Governments. He's served as president of the Amhara region and head of the agricultural bureau in the past.

Abraham Belay (CEO of Ethiopian Electric Power, Ethiopia)

Belay acts as the CEO of the primary company constructing the GERD Dam. Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) has almost a complete monopoly over power generation in Ethiopia, holding control over most of the power plants and electrical grid throughout the country.

Negash Kebret Botora (Ambassador to the United Nations, Ethiopia)

The ambassador to the United Nations serves as a liaison between Ethiopia and the global community. Negash has been responsible for several negotiations across the African continent regarding migration and refugees, economic development and climate change over his career. He is also the former Director General for International Organizations, previously having connections in states such as Greece, Israel, and the Holy See.

Adem Mohammed (Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Force)

The Ethiopian National Defense force is the military force of Ethiopia. The Deputy Chief of General Staff is responsible for the administration and the operational control of the Ethiopian military. General Adem Mohammed formerly served as the head of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), the intelligence agency of Ethiopia.

JiaYi Zou (Ministry Appointed Director of the EXIM Bank of China, Ethiopia)

EXIM is an institutional bank in China that provides policy financial support to developing countries to promote the export of Chinese products and services. It is a significant source of funds for turbines and electrical equipment in the GERD project. Zou represents the Board of Directors for EXIM Bank in these negotiation talks.

Lemma Megersa (Minister of Defense, Ethiopia)

The Minister of Defense of Ethiopia is a cabinet position responsible for overseeing the Ethiopian National Defense Force and Ethiopian Defense Industry. Lemma is a politician and in the past focused on preventing the interference of the federal police in state affairs of the Oromia region. He is popular among the people but his open critiques of the government have landed him in hot water with the state.

Ahmed Shide (Minister of Finance, Ethiopia)

The Minister of Finance of Ethiopia is a cabinet position responsible for general financial management and economic policy of Ethiopia. Ahmed Shinde has overseen the privatization of Ethiopian telecoms providers and has helped to receive and facilitate 2.9 billion dollars of funding from the United States for state development.

SUDAN-EGYPT: GERD Negotiations Team

Omer Ismail (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sudan)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs acts as the primary liaison between Ethiopia and the rest of the world. Omer Ismail took the position during a cabinet reshuffle in early 2020, previously having worked as a humanitarian worker in Darfur and co-founding the Darfur Peace and Development Organization in 2002.

Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Ambassador to the United Nations, Sudan)

The Ambassador to the United Nations is the primary form of communication between the government of Sudan and the United Nations in Geneva. Talib formerly worked within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working in embassies in both Qatar and Pakistan before beginning his work in the United Nations and eventually being announced as the new Permanent ambassador of Sudan to the United Nations.

Ibrahim Elbadawi (Minister of Finance & Economic Planning, Sudan)

The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning holds control over the construction of public industry, including the GERD Dam. Ibrahim Elbadawi currently holds this position and previously served as the Managing Director of the Economic Research Forum (ERF), having recently expressed interest in returning to this role in addition to his current position. Elbadawi has many connections with Economists from the United States to Japan, being a well renowned Economist in the Arab world.

Yasser Abbas Mohamed Ali (Minister of Water & Irrigation, Sudan)

As the Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, Yasser is in charge of managing the water resources of Sudan and oversees the development of the nation's water resources and irrigation infrastructure. As such Yasser has played a large part in the construction of the GERD Dam, assuring that the dam would not affect water and irrigation in a significantly negative way.

Yassin Ibrahim Yassin Abdel-Hadi (Minister of Defense, Sudan)

The Minister of Defense oversees the majority of military action in Sudan, acting as the government minister of the Sudanese Armed forces. Yassin is a former general who retired in 2012, being reinstated as the Minister of Defense after the previous Minister died in South Sudan of a heart attack. Yassin was appointed to his position after an attack in the al-Qadarif region, which many believe Ethiopia held some role in.

Ahmed Abdul-Rahim Shukratall (Governor of Blue Nile Region, Sudan)

The Blue Nile region borders Ethiopia and South Sudan and its economy is based on agricultural production and livestock. The Blue Nile river flows into the region directly from Ethiopia and stands to face any effects of the GERD project.

Yasmine Fouad (Minister of Environment, Egypt)

The Ministry of Environmental affairs outlines environmental policies in Egypt that are then executed by the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. Dr. Fouad is an Egyptian politician and expert in Environment and International cooperation. She has extensive experience in climate change issues through her work with NGO, government, and International organizations.

Rania Al-Mashat (Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, Egypt)

This is the ministry in charge of economic cooperation and development between Egypt and the Arab States, foreign countries, and international and regional organizations. It also aids in economic and social development within Egypt. Al-Mashat is an Egyptian economist and politician who previously worked as Minister of Tourism and as an economist at the IMF.

Sameh Shoukry (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Egypt)

Shoukry has been Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt since 2014, previously serving as the Ambassador of Egypt to the United States from 2008 to 2012. He oversees the foreign relations of Egypt and maintains relationships with other Arab and African states.

Mohamed Ahmed Zaki (Minister of Defense, Egypt)

The Ministry is responsible for the Egyptian Armed Forces organization as well as the recruitment and mobilization. Zaki is an Egyptian colonel general who has been minister of defense of Egypt since 2018. He previously held the command for the Egyptian Paratroopers.

Muhammad Abdul Ati (Minister of Irrigation & Water Resources, Egypt)

Atil has a background in civil engineering and as the current Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources he is in charge of managing the water resources of Egypt, mainly the Nile. He also manages other irrigation projects in Egypt, such as the Aswan Dam and Al-Salam Canal.

Eng. Ameen Abdel Monem (Deputy Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Egypt)

The Egyptian Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MOHUUC) is responsible for the construction, and infrastructure of urban communities and utilities. In addition to preparing plans for public utilities like drinking water and sanitation, MOHUUC works in cooperation with Arab country investors, foreign investors, and other stakeholders.

Sources and Additional Reading:

- [The controversy over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam](#) (Brookings)
- [Nile dam row: Egypt fumes as Ethiopia celebrates](#) (BBC)
- [Egypt sees Ethiopian dam as risk to water supply](#) (The Guardian)
- [The Dam That Broke Open an Ethiopia-Egypt Dispute](#) (Carnegie Middle East Center)
- [The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Limited Options for a Resolution](#) (Arab Center Washington DC)