

Treasury Sanctions Four Entities and Two Individuals in Connection with the Crisis in Ethiopia

November 12, 2021

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four entities and two individuals pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14046 in response to the growing humanitarian and human rights crisis and expanding military conflict in Ethiopia. Today's action targets Eritrean actors that have contributed to the crisis and conflict, which have undermined the stability and integrity of the Ethiopian state. The United States is actively working with partners throughout the region and the world to support a negotiated cessation of hostilities in Ethiopia. The presence of Eritrean forces is an impediment to ending the ongoing fighting and increasing humanitarian access. Leaders from around the world have repeatedly called for Eritrea to withdraw its forces from Ethiopia. The E.O., which President Biden signed on September 17, 2021, authorizes targeting of actors contributing to the ongoing crisis in Ethiopia and is not directed at the people of Ethiopia or Eritrea.

"We condemn the continued role played by Eritrean actors who are contributing to the violence in northern Ethiopia, which has undermined the stability and integrity of the state and resulted in a humanitarian disaster," said Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control Andrea M. Gacki. "Treasury will continue to use all our tools and authorities to target and expose those whose actions prolong the crisis in the region, where hundreds of thousands are suffering. Parties to the conflict must come to the negotiating table without preconditions. The United States stands ready to pursue additional actions, including against the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, if there is not tangible progress toward a cessation of hostilities."

The individuals and entities designated today are the **Eritrean Defense Force**, the **People's Front for Democracy and Justice**, **Abraha Kassa Nemariam**, **Hidri Trust**, **Hagos Ghebrehwet W Kidan**, and **Red Sea Trading Corporation**.

SITUATION IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

Since the outbreak of the military conflict in 2020, fighting involving the Ethiopian military, Eritrean military, Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces, and other forces in northern Ethiopia has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, as well as a growing humanitarian crisis affecting millions of people. The ongoing conflict threatens the integrity of the Ethiopian state and risks undermining regional stability. Eritrean forces have operated throughout Ethiopia during the conflict and have been responsible for massacres, looting, and sexual assaults.

ACTORS INVOLVED IN CRISIS IN ETHIOPIA

The **Eritrean Defense Force (EDF)** is the Eritrean military. The **EDF** has been operating in northern Ethiopia amidst numerous reports of looting, sexual assault, killing civilians, and blocking humanitarian aid. **EDF** soldiers have been seen disguised in old Ethiopian military uniforms, manning checkpoints, obstructing and occupying critical aid routes, and threatening medical staff in one of northern Ethiopia's few operating hospitals. The **EDF** was designated today for being a government entity that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, activities that have contributed to the crisis in northern Ethiopia or have obstructed a ceasefire or peace process to resolve such crisis.

The **People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ)**, led by Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, is the sole legal political party in Eritrea. Isaias personally oversees the command and control of the **EDF**, issuing orders directly to **EDF** generals, making him ultimately responsible for the **EDF's** role in contributing to the crisis in northern Ethiopia. The **PFDJ** was designated today for being a political party that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, activities that have contributed to the crisis in northern Ethiopia or have obstructed a ceasefire or peace process to resolve such crisis.

Abraha Kassa Nemariam (Kassa) is the head of the Eritrean National Security Office. He was designated today for being or having been a leader, official, senior executive officer, or member of the board of directors of the Government of Eritrea or its ruling **PFDJ**, on or after November 1, 2020, where the leader, official, senior executive officer, or director is responsible for or complicit in, or who has directly or indirectly engaged or attempted to engage in, any activity contributing to the crisis in northern Ethiopia.


Hidri Trust (Hidri) is the holding company of all **PFDJ** business enterprises and was established by the **PFDJ** in 1994. **Hidri** was designated today for being a political subdivision,

agency, or instrumentality of the Government of Eritrea or its ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and for being owned or controlled by the **PFDJ**.

Hagos Ghebrehiwet W Kidan (Ghebrehiwet) is the economic advisor to the **PFDJ** and the chief executive officer of **Red Sea Trading Corporation (RSTC)**. **Ghebrehiwet** was designated today for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the **PFDJ**.

RSTC manages the property and financial interests of the **PFDJ**, acts as its funder, and provides it business assistance. **RSTC** was designated today for being owned or controlled by **Ghebrehiwet**.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND TRADE TO ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA

Treasury remains committed to ensuring that U.S. sanctions do not limit the ability of civilians located in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the region to receive humanitarian support from the international community. Treasury previously issued three general licenses (GLs), which authorize official activities of certain international organizations and other international entities, certain transactions in support of nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs) activities, and certain transactions related to the exportation or re-exportation of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, and medical items. Additionally, today OFAC issued Ethiopia [GL 4](#)  "Authorizing the Wind Down of Transactions Involving Hidri Trust or Red Sea Trading Corporation" and two new Ethiopia-related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). For more information, please see FAQs [935](#) and [936](#).

For more information regarding the scope of any sanctions programs' requirements, including the [Ethiopia-Related Sanctions Program](#), or the applicability or scope of any humanitarian-related authorizations, please contact OFAC's Sanction Compliance and Evaluation Division at (800) 540-6322 or (202) 622-2490, or by email at OFAC_Feedback@treasury.gov.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the persons named above that are in the United States, or in the possession or control of U.S. persons, are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. No entity shall be blocked pursuant to E.O. 14046 solely because it is owned in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, by one or more sanctioned persons, unless the entity is itself a sanctioned person.

[View more information on the individuals and entities designated today.](#)

[View more information on the E.O. here.](#)

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