



ERITREA

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Introduction

Eritrea

Background: Eritrea was awarded to Ethiopia in 1952 as part of a federation. Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea as a province 10 years later sparked a 30-year struggle for independence that ended in 1991 with Eritrean rebels defeating governmental forces; independence was overwhelmingly approved in a 1993 referendum. A two-and-a-half-year border war with Ethiopia that erupted in 1998 ended under UN auspices in December 2000. Eritrea currently hosts a UN peacekeeping operation that is monitoring a 25 km-wide Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) on the border with Ethiopia. An international commission, organized to resolve the border dispute, posted its findings in 2002. However, both parties have been unable to reach agreement on implementing the decision. On 30 November 2007, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission remotely demarcated the border by coordinates and dissolved itself, leaving Ethiopia still occupying several tracts of disputed territory, including the town of Badme. Eritrea accepted the EEBC's "virtual demarcation" decision and called on Ethiopia to remove its troops from the TSZ which it states is Eritrean territory. Ethiopia has not accepted the virtual demarcation decision.

Geography

Eritrea

Location: Eastern Africa, bordering the Red Sea, between Djibouti and Sudan

Geographic coordinates: 15 00 N, 39 00 E

Map references: Africa

Area: *total:* 121,320 sq km
land: 121,320 sq km
water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly larger than Pennsylvania

Land boundaries: *total:* 1,626 km
border countries: Djibouti 109 km, Ethiopia 912 km, Sudan 605 km

Coastline: 2,234 km (mainland on Red Sea 1,151 km, islands in Red Sea 1,083 km)

Maritime claims: *territorial sea:* 12 nm

Climate: hot, dry desert strip along Red Sea coast; cooler and wetter in the central highlands (up to 61 cm of rainfall annually, heaviest June to September); semiarid in western hills and lowlands

Terrain: dominated by extension of Ethiopian north-south trending highlands, descending on the east to a coastal desert plain, on the northwest to hilly terrain and on the southwest to flat-to-rolling plains

Elevation extremes: *lowest point*: near Kulul within the Denakil depression -75 m
highest point: Soira 3,018 m

Natural resources: gold, potash, zinc, copper, salt, possibly oil and natural gas, fish

Land use: *arable land*: 4.78%
permanent crops: 0.03%
other: 95.19% (2005)

Irrigated land: 210 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources: 6.3 cu km (2001)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural): *total*: 0.3 cu km/yr (3%/0%/97%)
per capita: 68 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards: frequent droughts; locust swarms

Environment - current issues: deforestation; desertification; soil erosion; overgrazing; loss of infrastructure from civil warfare

Environment - international *party to*: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-agreements: Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Ozone Layer Protection
signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note: strategic geopolitical position along world's busiest shipping lanes; Eritrea retained the entire coastline of Ethiopia along the Red Sea upon de jure independence from Ethiopia on 24 May 1993

People	Eritrea
Population:	5,028,475 (July 2008 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years</i> : 42.9% (male 1,085,116/female 1,072,262) <i>15-64 years</i> : 53.5% (male 1,332,349/female 1,355,494) <i>65 years and over</i> : 3.6% (male 88,068/female 95,186) (2008 est.)
Median age:	<i>total</i> : 18.1 years <i>male</i> : 17.9 years <i>female</i> : 18.3 years (2008 est.)
Population growth rate:	2.447% (2008 est.)

Birth rate: 33.62 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)

Death rate: 9.15 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)

Net migration rate: NA

Sex ratio: *at birth*: 1.03 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.98 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.93 male(s)/female
total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2008 est.)

Infant mortality rate: *total*: 44.22 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 49.93 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 38.35 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: *total population*: 60.05 years
male: 58.29 years
female: 61.87 years (2008 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.84 children born/woman (2008 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 2.7% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 60,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 6,300 (2003 est.)

Major infectious diseases: *degree of risk*: high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne disease: malaria (2008)

Nationality: *noun*: Eritrean(s)
adjective: Eritrean

Ethnic groups: Tigrinya 50%, Tigre and Kunama 40%, Afar 4%, Saho (Red Sea coast dwellers) 3%, other 3%

Religions: Muslim, Coptic Christian, Roman Catholic, Protestant

Languages: Afar, Arabic, Tigre and Kunama, Tigrinya, other Cushitic languages

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 58.6%
male: 69.9%
female: 47.6% (2003 est.)

Government**Eritrea**

Country name: *conventional long form:* State of Eritrea
conventional short form: Eritrea
local long form: Hagere Ertra
local short form: Ertra
former: Eritrea Autonomous Region in Ethiopia

Government type: transitional government
note: following a successful referendum on independence for the Autonomous Region of Eritrea on 23-25 April 1993, a National Assembly, composed entirely of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice or PFDJ, was established as a transitional legislature; a Constitutional Commission was also established to draft a constitution; ISAIAS Afworki was elected president by the transitional legislature; the constitution, ratified in May 1997, did not enter into effect, pending parliamentary and presidential elections; parliamentary elections were scheduled in December 2001, but were postponed indefinitely; currently the sole legal party is the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ)

Capital: *name:* Asmara (Asmera)
geographic coordinates: 15 20 N, 38 56 E
time difference: UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions: 6 regions (zobatat, singular - zoba); Anseba, Debub (Southern), Debubawi K'eyih Bahri (Southern Red Sea), Gash Barka, Ma'akel (Central), Semenawi Keyih Bahri (Northern Red Sea)

Independence: 24 May 1993 (from Ethiopia)

National holiday: Independence Day, 24 May (1993)

Constitution: a transitional constitution, decreed on 19 May 1993, was replaced by a new constitution adopted on 23 May 1997, but not yet implemented

Legal system: primary basis is the Ethiopian legal code of 1957, with revisions; new civil, commercial, and penal codes have not yet been promulgated; government also issues unilateral proclamations setting laws and policies; also relies on customary and post-independence-enacted laws and, for civil cases involving Muslims, Islamic law; does not accept compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

- Executive branch: *chief of state*: President ISAIAS Afworki (since 8 June 1993); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government and is head of the State Council and National Assembly
head of government: President ISAIAS Afworki (since 8 June 1993)
cabinet: State Council is the collective executive authority; members appointed by the president
elections: president elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); the most recent and only election held 8 June 1993 (next election date uncertain as the National Assembly did not hold a presidential election in December 2001 as anticipated)
election results: ISAIAS Afworki elected president; percent of National Assembly vote - ISAIAS Afworki 95%, other 5%
- Legislative unicameral National Assembly (150 seats; members elected by direct branch: popular vote to serve five-year terms)
elections: in May 1997, following the adoption of the new constitution, 75 members of the PFDJ Central Committee (the old Central Committee of the EPLF), 60 members of the 527-member Constituent Assembly, which had been established in 1997 to discuss and ratify the new constitution, and 15 representatives of Eritreans living abroad were formed into a Transitional National Assembly to serve as the country's legislative body until countrywide elections to a National Assembly were held; although only 75 of 150 members of the Transitional National Assembly were elected, the constitution stipulates that once past the transition stage, all members of the National Assembly will be elected by secret ballot of all eligible voters; National Assembly elections scheduled for December 2001 were postponed indefinitely
- Judicial branch: High Court - regional, subregional, and village courts; also have military and special courts
- Political parties and leaders: People's Front for Democracy and Justice or PFDJ [ISAIAS Afworki] (the only party recognized by the government); note - a National Assembly committee drafted a law on political parties in January 2001, but the full National Assembly has yet to debate or vote on it
- Political pressure groups and leaders: Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP) [HAGOS, Mesfin]; Eritrean Islamic Jihad or EIJ (includes Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement or EIJM also known as the Abu Sihel Movement); Eritrean Islamic Salvation or EIS (also known as the Arafa Movement); Eritrean Liberation Front or ELF [ABDULLAH Muhammed]; Eritrean National Alliance or ENA (a coalition including EIJ, EIS, ELF, and a number of ELF factions) [HERUY Tedla Biru]; Eritrean Public Forum or EPF [ARADOM Iyob]

International organization participation: ACP, AfDB, AU, COMESA, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCt (signatory), IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs (observer), ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO (correspondent), ITU, ITUC, LAS (observer), MIGA, NAM, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador GHIRMAI Ghebremariam
chancery: 1708 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009
telephone: [1] (202) 319-1991
FAX: [1] (202) 319-1304
consulate(s) general: Oakland (California)

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Ronald MCMULLEN
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Flag description: red isosceles triangle (based on the hoist side) dividing the flag into two right triangles; the upper triangle is green, the lower one is blue; a gold wreath encircling a gold olive branch is centered on the hoist side of the red triangle

Economy	Eritrea
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Economy - overview: Since independence from Ethiopia in 1993, Eritrea has faced the economic problems of a small, desperately poor country, accentuated by the recent implementation of restrictive economic policies. Eritrea has a command economy under the control of the sole political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). Like the economies of many African nations, the economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with 80% of the population involved in farming and herding. The Ethiopian-Eritrea war in 1998-2000 severely hurt Eritrea's economy. GDP growth fell to zero in 1999 and to -12.1% in 2000. The May 2000 Ethiopian offensive into northern Eritrea caused some \$600 million in property damage and loss, including losses of \$225 million in livestock and 55,000 homes. The attack prevented planting of crops in Eritrea's most productive region, causing food production to drop by 62%. Even during the war, Eritrea developed its transportation infrastructure, asphaltting new roads, improving its ports, and repairing war-damaged roads and bridges. Since the war ended, the government has maintained a firm grip on the economy, expanding the use of the military and party-owned businesses to complete Eritrea's development agenda. The government strictly controls the use of foreign

currency, limiting access and availability. Few private enterprises remain in Eritrea. Eritrea's economy is heavily dependent on taxes paid by members of the diaspora. Erratic rainfall and the delayed demobilization of agriculturalists from the military continue to interfere with agricultural production, and Eritrea's recent harvests have not been able to meet the food needs of the country. The government continues to place its hope for additional revenue on the development of several international mining projects. Despite difficulties for international companies in working with the Eritrean government, a Canadian mining company signed a contract with the GSE in 2007 and plans to begin mineral extraction in 2010. Eritrea also anticipates opening a free trade zone at the port of Massawa in 2008. Eritrea's economic future depends upon its ability to master social problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, and low skills, and more importantly, on the government's willingness to support a true market economy.

GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$3.619 billion (2007 est.)
GDP (official exchange rate):	\$1.316 billion (2007 est.)
GDP - real growth rate:	1.3% (2007 est.)
GDP - per capita (PPP):	\$800 (2007 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:	<i>agriculture</i> : 21.7% <i>industry</i> : 22.6% <i>services</i> : 55.7% (2007 est.)
Labor force:	NA
Labor force - by occupation:	<i>agriculture</i> : 80% <i>industry and services</i> : 20% (2004 est.)
Unemployment rate:	NA%
Population below poverty line:	50% (2004 est.)
Household income or consumption by percentage share:	<i>lowest 10%</i> : NA% <i>highest 10%</i> : NA%
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	9.3% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 21.1% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: *revenues*: \$234.6 million
expenditures: \$471.4 million (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: sorghum, lentils, vegetables, corn, cotton, tobacco, sisal; livestock, goats; fish

Industries: food processing, beverages, clothing and textiles, light manufacturing, salt, cement

Industrial production growth rate: 2% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 274 million kWh (2005)

Electricity - consumption: 228 million kWh (2005)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (2005)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (2005)

Oil - production: 0 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - consumption: 5,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - exports: 54.59 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 4,924 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved reserves: 0 bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - imports: 0 cu m (2005)

Natural gas - 0 cu m (1 January 2006 est.)
 proved reserves:

Current account -\$62 million (2007 est.)
 balance:

Exports: \$16.95 million f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - livestock, sorghum, textiles, food, small manufactures
 commodities:

Exports - partners: Italy 19%, Austria 11.6%, France 11.5%, US 5.6%, Ethiopia 4.7%, Taiwan
 4.6%, China 4.4% (2006)

Imports: \$577 million f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - machinery, petroleum products, food, manufactured goods
 commodities:

Imports - partners: Italy 16.8%, China 16.7%, Netherlands 6.9%, Saudi Arabia 6.8%, Turkey
 6.6%, Sudan 6.3%, Germany 5.7% (2006)

Economic aid - \$355.2 million (2005)
 recipient:

Reserves of \$22.66 million (31 December 2007 est.)
 foreign exchange
 and gold:

Debt - external: \$311 million (2000 est.)

Currency (code): nakfa (ERN)

Exchange rates: nakfa (ERN) per US dollar - 15.5 (2007), 15.4 (2006), 14.5 (2005), 13.788
 (2004), 13.878 (2003)
note: the official exchange rate is 15 nakfa to the dollar

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications	Eritrea
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Telephones - main lines in use:	37,700 (2006)
Telephones - mobile cellular:	70,000 (2007)
Telephone system:	<i>general assessment:</i> inadequate <i>domestic:</i> inadequate; most telephones are in Asmara; government is seeking international tenders to improve the system (2002) <i>international:</i> country code - 291; note - international connections exist

Radio broadcast stations: AM 2, FM NA, shortwave 2 (2000)

Television broadcast stations: 2 (2006)

Internet country code: .er

Internet hosts: 1,446 (2007)

Internet users: 100,000 (2006)

Transportation	Eritrea
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Airports: 18 (2007)

Airports - with paved runways: *total: 4*
over 3,047 m: 2
2,438 to 3,047 m: 2 (2007)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total: 14*
over 3,047 m: 1
2,438 to 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 6
914 to 1,523 m: 4
under 914 m: 2 (2007)

Heliports: 1 (2007)

Railways: *total: 306 km*
narrow gauge: 306 km 0.950-m gauge (2006)

Roadways: *total: 4,010 km*
paved: 874 km
unpaved: 3,136 km (2000)

Merchant marine: *total: 5 ships (1000 GRT or over) 12,529 GRT/15,023 DWT*
by type: cargo 2, liquefied gas 1, petroleum tanker 1, roll on/roll off 1 (2008)

Ports and terminals: Assab, Massawa

Military	Eritrea
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Military branches: Eritrean Armed Forces: Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force (2008)

Military service age and obligation: 18-40 years of age for male and female voluntary and compulsory military service; 16-month conscript service obligation (2006)

Manpower *males age 16-49*: 1,108,836
available for *females age 16-49*: 1,096,120 (2008 est.)
military service:

Manpower fit for *males age 16-49*: 715,531
military service: *females age 16-49*: 731,511 (2008 est.)

Manpower *males age 16-49*: 62,504
reaching militarily *females age 16-49*: 62,153 (2008 est.)
significant age
annually:

Military 6.3% (2006 est.)
expenditures -
percent of GDP:

Transnational Issues

Eritrea

Disputes - international: Eritrea and Ethiopia agreed to abide by 2002 Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission's (EEBC) delimitation decision but, neither party responded to the revised line detailed in the November 2006 EEBC Demarcation Statement; UN Peacekeeping Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which has monitored the 25-km-wide Temporary Security Zone in Eritrea since 2000, is extended for six months in 2007 despite Eritrean restrictions on its operations and reduced force of 17,000; Sudan accuses Eritrea of supporting eastern Sudanese rebel groups

Refugees and internally displaced persons: *IDPs*: 32,000 (border war with Ethiopia from 1998-2000; most IDPs are near the central border region) (2007)

Information current as of 7 August, 2008

SOURCES: The CIA World Factbook

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