

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 25 June 2021 from the Permanent Representative of  
Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of  
the Security Council**

Upon instructions from my Government, I would like to convey to you a letter from Sameh Shokry, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, drawing the attention of the Security Council to recent developments related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (see annex). The situation poses an imminent threat to international peace and security and requires the immediate consideration of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamed **Edrees**  
Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations



## **Annex to the letter dated 25 June 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing further to my letters addressed to the President of the Security Council dated 13 April 2021 ([S/2021/354](#)) and 11 June 2021 ([S/2021/565](#)) on the question of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

After a decade of fruitless negotiations, the question of the GERD has, regrettably, evolved into a situation that is causing, as stipulated in Article 34 of the Charter of the United Nations, international friction, the continuation of which could endanger international peace and security. Accordingly, Egypt has elected to bring this matter to the attention of the Security Council pursuant to Article 35 of the Charter and is calling upon the Council, in the light of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to consider and take appropriate measures to ensure that the question of the GERD is settled amicably and equitably and in a manner that protects and preserves security and stability in an already fragile region.

Since Ethiopia unilaterally commenced the construction of the GERD in April 2011, in violation of its international legal obligations, including the duties to notify and consult with its downstream co-riparians, Egypt has explored every available avenue to reach a fair, balanced and mutually beneficial agreement on this dam. We have engaged in countless rounds of trilateral talks and endless negotiations, during which regional and international partners sought to facilitate the conclusion of an agreement between our three countries. Unfortunately, however, these efforts have failed due to Ethiopia's obstructionism and its persistent policy of seeking to engage Egypt and the Sudan in ineffectual negotiations while it completes the construction of the GERD and continues to unilaterally impound the waters of the Blue Nile to the detriment of the interests of downstream States.

Indeed, as a result of Ethiopia's prevarication, we have failed, after years of negotiations, to undertake joint studies on the socioeconomic effects of the GERD and to conduct a comprehensive assessment of its environmental impacts. Nor do Egypt and the Sudan have any independently verified guarantees regarding the safety and structural stability of this mega-dam, which is Africa's largest hydropower facility. As detailed in the letter to the President of the Security Council dated 22 June 2021 ([S/2021/593](#)), this is especially alarming for the Sudan, which operates several hydropower installations along the Blue Nile, the most important of which is the Roseires Dam, and is equally disconcerting for Egypt, for which ensuring the safety and preserving the resilience and functionality of the High Aswan Dam is a matter of paramount national importance.

Moreover, we have failed to agree on rules to govern the processes of the filling and operation of the GERD. Throughout these negotiations, which have extended for several years, Egypt showed limitless good faith and demonstrated its unswerving political will to reach an equitable agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD that would guarantee Ethiopia's ability to expeditiously, efficiently and sustainably generate hydropower, thereby achieving its developmental objectives, while mitigating the adverse effects of this dam and protecting downstream communities in Egypt and the Sudan from its harmful effects.

Ethiopia, however, adopted a policy of intransigence that undermined our collective endeavours to reach an agreement on the GERD. It stymied the efforts exerted by our partners during the negotiations that were facilitated by the United States of America and the World Bank Group and that led to the drafting of a fair, balanced and comprehensive agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD, which Egypt initialled on 28 February 2020 but which Ethiopia rejected. Ethiopia also

undermined the African Union-led process that was launched in June 2020. It repeatedly contravened the instructions of the Bureau of the African Union Assembly, which directed the three countries to finalize the text of a legally binding agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD by suggesting that negotiations should be limited to establishing data-sharing mechanisms or drafting non-binding guidelines on the filling of the GERD. Ethiopia also obstructed our attempts to enhance the African Union-led process by objecting to the proposals presented by Egypt and the Sudan to augment the negotiations by inviting our regional and international partners to assist the African Union Chairperson and the three countries in formulating solutions to the outstanding legal and technical issues.

As a result, despite the tireless and highly appreciated efforts of the current African Union Chairperson, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, the African Union-led negotiations on the GERD have not been relaunched since the latest ministerial meeting, which was held in Kinshasa on 4 and 5 April 2021. Nor did the meeting of the Bureau of the African Union Assembly that was held on 24 June 2021 consider or adopt any recommendations on reconvening negotiations on the GERD. Accordingly, it has unfortunately become abundantly clear that the African Union-led process does not have, in its current format, the potential to yield an agreement on the GERD.

The failure of our efforts throughout the past decade to reach an agreement on the GERD, including through the African Union-led negotiations that have exhausted a full year, makes it imperative that the international community, acting in concert through the Security Council, intercede in this matter. As I am sure the members of the Council are aware, the flood season of the Blue Nile is due to begin imminently, and Ethiopia has announced that it is determined to continue its unilateral filling of the GERD reservoir regardless of whether an agreement is reached with Egypt and the Sudan. In this regard, it is particularly disturbing that, in its letter addressed to the Security Council dated 23 June 2021, Ethiopia declared that “filling and operating the GERD without seeking agreement from Egypt and Sudan is the bare minimum of the exercise of this sovereign prerogative”. Once again, this makes it patently clear that Ethiopia lacks the political will to reach an agreement on the GERD and that it is determined to impose a *fait accompli* on its two downstream co-riparians.

This is a deeply troubling posture that could constitute a threat to international peace and security. The filling and operation of the GERD in the absence of an agreement that safeguards the rights and interests of Egypt and the Sudan is a situation that threatens to inflict significant, if not disastrous, harm on the two downstream States of the Blue Nile. As detailed in the aide-memoire annexed to my letter dated 11 June 2021, the very survival of Egypt, a nation of 100 million people, could be imperilled in the absence of an agreement that regulates the filling and operation of the GERD.

Accordingly, I am writing to inform you of Egypt’s support for the request made by the Republic of the Sudan in its letter addressed to the President of the Security Council dated 22 June 2021 and to call upon the Council to convene an urgent session on the question of the GERD under the agenda item titled “Peace and security in Africa” to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by considering the appropriate means to ensure the peaceful settlement of this matter. In this regard, Egypt is keen to be invited to participate in this session as stipulated in Article 31 of the Charter and pursuant to rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

(Signed) Sameh Shokry  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Arab Republic of Egypt