

ERITREA

Party Portrait

Eritrea is a highly authoritarian country, widely considered to be among the most repressive on the African continent. This has generated an exodus of refugees and asylum seekers, settling not only in neighboring countries but also in Europe. Eritrea has long-standing positive ties with Israel, providing early and enthusiastic recognition of the Jewish State. It has hostile relations with neighboring Djibouti and Somalia, and at various points in recent decades has engaged in armed conflict with both parties. Eritrea has allegedly provided material and financial support to Al Shabab in Somalia.

Key Interests

- Seek new military equipment, expertise and funding to strengthen the government's domestic hold on power
- Leverage military support from foreign powers with greater technical expertise
- Foment insecurity in Somalia through al-Shabab
- Neutralize the small but dogged militias that contest its authority domestically, including the RSADO
- Develop its economy, prioritizing the agricultural sector
- Lift or ease sanctions that the UN Security Council has imposed on the country

Sources of Leverage

Political - Eritrea has frequently agreed to resettle Eritrean migrants in Israel in exchange for military aid, technological and agricultural assistance from Jerusalem. By tightening and loosening migrant controls, it can exert pressure on Israel and on the European Union.

Regional Strategy

Eritrea's limited strategy is composed of fomenting instability in neighboring countries, maintaining the government's ironclad grip on power domestically, and leveraging its partnership with Israel to strengthen its own military and security apparatus.

Powerful Individuals

President Isaias Afewerki rules a highly personalized authoritarian regime where power is centralized.

Potential Negotiation Moves

Adjust Migrant Controls - Tighten - or alternatively loosen - migrant controls to extract concessions from Israel and/or the EU.
Somalia Instability - Continue fomenting instability in Somalia by funding proxy group, al-Shabab

Internal Conflicts

Long-standing but small-scale rebellion of the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RSADO)

Memberships

AU, IAEA, UN

Allies

ISRAEL

Partners

SUDAN, UAE

Rivals

N/A

Adversaries

DJIBOUTI, SOMALIA Government

Active Armed Opponents

N/A

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

CHINA, EUROPEAN UNION, JAPAN, UAE

Aid Donor

N/A