

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 9 September 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from Badr Abdelatty, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council in connection with the item entitled “Peace and Security in Africa”.

(Signed) Osama **Abdelkhalek**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 9 September 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing once again with regard to the so-called Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a blatant case of unilateral Ethiopian action that constitutes a continuing violation of international law.

Ethiopia's purported inauguration of GERD constitutes yet another breach of Ethiopia's obligations under both customary and conventional international law, including the 2015 Agreement on Declaration of Principles, which obliges Ethiopia to conclude a legally binding agreement on the rules that govern the filling and operation of the GERD before the commencement of such filling and operation. It also contravenes the collective will of the Council, expressed in the statement by the President of the Security Council ([S/PRST/2021/18](#)), which encouraged Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan to finalize expeditiously a mutually acceptable and binding agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD.

Egypt's position on this matter has been consistently expressed in our correspondence with the Security Council (see [S/2020/355](#), [S/2020/566](#), [S/2020/617](#), [S/2021/354](#), [S/2021/565](#), [S/2021/607](#), [S/2021/627](#), [S/2022/134](#), [S/2022/586](#), [S/2022/587](#), [S/2023/664](#) and [S/2024/646](#)). In this context, I reiterate Egypt's categorical rejection of Ethiopia's unilateralism and its above-mentioned violations, which pose an existential threat to the rights and interests of the 150 million citizens of the downstream countries, Egypt and the Sudan, and consequently jeopardize regional and international peace and security.

It is to be recalled that Egypt is among the most arid countries in the world, with one of the lowest levels of annual rainfall. The country is entirely dependent on the Nile River for its survival, at a time when its per capita share of water is rapidly declining and approaching the absolute water scarcity threshold of 500 cubic metres per person annually. Against this backdrop, Ethiopia has unilaterally decided to impose a colossal obstacle on the Blue Nile – the principle source of Egypt's fresh water – in flagrant disregard of its legal obligations under international law. Meanwhile, Egypt is already compelled to recycle its limited fresh water multiple times in order to meet the vital needs of its people.

Since the unilateral initiation of the GERD project in 2011, Egypt has exercised maximum restraint and opted to resort to diplomacy and raising the matter in international organizations, including the United Nations. This choice was not borne of any lack of capability to defend our existential rights, but rather from Egypt's firm commitment to fostering cooperation and mutual benefit among the peoples of the great Nile River in accordance with international law.

By contrast, Ethiopia has consistently adopted obstinate positions, dragging negotiations into futility while imposing a *fait accompli* on the ground. It advances unfounded legal arguments and refuses to subject them to the scrutiny of any judicial, arbitral or binding dispute resolution mechanism. Ethiopia's approach has been driven by ulterior political motives rather than genuine developmental needs. It has deliberately mobilized its people against a fictitious external adversary through its unlawful narrative of absolute sovereignty over the Nile – an approach consistent with Addis Ababa's track record of unilateral exploitation of shared water resources in the Omo, Jubba and Shebelle basins, resulting in significant harm to other riparian countries, as well as exposing them to the constant risk of future significant harm.

In this context, it is important to note that the International Court of Justice has recently confirmed that the duty to prevent significant harm applies fully where the

risk of future significant harm exists, an assessment which depends on “both the probability or foreseeability of the occurrence of harm and its severity or magnitude”.¹ It is therefore necessary to consider not only the actual harm that has taken place, but equally the risks which Ethiopia’s unilateral activities might pose in the future, including in the long term. Egypt has already established in its above-mentioned previous correspondence to the Council the existing harm associated with managing highly variable and uncertain downstream flow conditions resulting from the uncoordinated filling and operation of a project with the size and scale of the GERD, as well as the risks and perils associated with such a lack of coordination, particularly during prolonged drought periods. These risks are of an existential nature to the downstream States, Egypt and the Sudan.

In light of the above, Egypt reaffirms that the unlawful GERD has no bearing on the legal framework governing the Nile basin under customary and conventional international law. The purported completion of this unlawful project, through unilateral actions and fait accompli, in no way renders it lawful, nor legitimizes any future unilateral action by Ethiopia on the Blue Nile.

Any false assumptions that Egypt might turn a blind eye to its existential interests in the Nile River are mere delusion. We will continue to uphold and demand the full implementation of international law in the Nile basin. Having exhausted all amicable means, Egypt will continue to closely monitor any developments in the Blue Nile and shall exercise its right to take all the appropriate measures to defend and protect the existential interests of the Egyptian people – who are entirely dependent on the Nile River – in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Egypt urges the Security Council to assume its responsibilities by ensuring that Ethiopia cease its unlawful unilateral practices in the Nile basin.

(Signed) **Badr Abdelatty**
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates
Arab Republic of Egypt

¹ Advisory opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change, International Court of Justice, 23 July 2025, paras. 274 and 275; “Request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law”, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea Reports 2024, p. 91, para. 239, and p. 137, para. 397.