

Abiy Ahmed says Ethiopia will soon reach the Red Sea

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ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said Monday that his country will “correct” the “mistake” made when it relinquished access to Eritrea’s Assab port, a move that has fueled tensions between the neighbouring countries.

In an interview broadcast on Ethiopia’s national television station ETV on September 1, Abiy addressed Ethiopia’s long-standing quest for access to the Red Sea through Eritrean ports, which has recently stirred diplomatic friction.

“For a thousand years, we have been unable to benefit from the Nile River and the services it should provide. Likewise, we had access to the Red Sea some 30 years ago. That presence was recent, just yesterday in historical terms,” Abiy said, speaking from a scenic location near the Nile dam. He added: “The mistake made yesterday will be corrected tomorrow, and it is not a difficult matter.”

Ethiopia’s push to regain a maritime outlet via the port of Assab has reignited tensions with Eritrea, whose leaders have previously labelled the initiative as a “poisonous agenda of territorial claims.”

The Ethiopian premier’s comments come amid ongoing regional disputes related to access to waterways, economic corridors, and border demarcations, which continue to complicate relations between the two countries that fought a bitter war from 1998 to 2000.

Access to Eritrean ports, including Assab and Massawa, has long been a strategic priority for landlocked Ethiopia, which currently relies heavily on Djibouti’s port facilities for most of its maritime trade.

No further details were provided on how Ethiopia plans to “correct” the situation, but the statement underscores the government’s intent to pursue its economic and strategic interests amid a complex and volatile regional environment.