



Organization of Eritrean-Americans

An OEA Statement:

(May 12, 2009)

Eleven Years of Aggression, Deceit and Lawlessness

This week marks the 11th year of TPLF's declaration of war on Eritrea and the Eritrean people.

Eleven years ago this week, Eritrea and the Eritrean people were busy charting what they thought was going to be a peaceful second decade following independence in 1991, after years of war and destruction perpetuated by previous Ethiopian rulers. The Eritrean people were willing to forgive and forget and looked forward for the sake of the two peoples and were working hard to that end.

However, that was not going to be because on May 13, 1998, the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), which the Eritrean people saw as a strategic ally, suddenly, in what many saw as a historic betrayal of trust, turned its guns on them under the guise of being invaded. Apparently, the Tigrayan minority regime, which has virtually no support of the Ethiopian people, had concluded that it couldn't survive in peace, and thus decided to drag the whole region into war, with the prime target of its aggression being Eritrea, the Eritrean people as well as Ethiopians of Eritrean origin.

After a two-year war that claimed more than 135,000 Ethiopian soldiers, and 19, 000 Eritreans, after close to 100,000 Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were ethnically cleansed ala what the Serbs did in Bosnia, reason prevailed and the delimitation and demarcation of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border was submitted to a neutral body of international jurists. In April 2002, this body gave its final and binding delimitation decision and a final and binding virtual demarcation at the end of November 2007. However, the Ethiopian regime, encouraged by the indifference of the international community, is in breach of its treaty obligation, and flouting international law, continues to occupy sovereign Eritrean territory.

No one can hope for peace in the Horn of Africa unless this Ethiopian intransigence is addressed decisively. The international community should say enough is enough to this aggression. The world community should realize that every problem in the region, from instability in Somalia, to piracy in the Indian Ocean, has its roots in Addis Ababa and the minority regime that rules the country. This regime should be held accountable. All those that are providing it with billions of dollars of budget assistance every year should know that they are sponsoring war and aggression.

OEA calls for an unequivocal condemnation of this regime and for an immediate action to make the regime vacate sovereign Eritrean territory. If peace is to come to this peace-starved strategic Horn of Africa, the Obama administration must learn from the disastrous lessons of the Bush years and let common sense guide U.S. foreign policy for this region and the rest of the continent.