



**Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea
To the United Nations, New York**

28 March 2013

Excellency,

The Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the UN is aware that the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) has submitted its February monthly report to the Sanctions Committee sometime early this month. In spite of our repeated requests to receive, in time, a copy of the report, we have not yet formally obtained the document. This awkward state of affairs has no plausible explanation or logic. We also understand that almost all Member States are not comfortable with this untenable conduct. The Mission of Eritrea thus wishes to avail of the occasion to request, once more, rectification of this procedural anomaly in order to respect Eritrea's inalienable rights to have full and timely access to the reports as the accused party.

In as far as the contents of the SEMG's February Report are concerned, Eritrea's views are the following:

1. In our view, the SEMG has again exceeded its mandate to probe into sensitive matters that impinge on Eritrea's national security. Among other things, the report states: "...The SEMG travelled to Switzerland, Sweden and Italy to ...(collect) information about the state of the Eritrean Air Force and various military facilities". As far as Eritrea understands, UNSC Resolutions 1907 (2009) and 2023 (2011) do not envision, and contain no specific clauses aimed at, degrading Eritrea's defensive capabilities and inalienable rights. But the SEMG apparently believes otherwise and has gone out of its way in the past to stealthily collect inventory of the EAF as well as assess its "technical readiness". We had strongly protested against this unwarranted action. Yet, the SEMG continues to engage in activities that are not clearly compatible with its mandate. The Eritrean Mission to the UN strongly calls for prompt stoppage of these unlawful activities.

H.E. Mr. Kim Sook
Chairman
Security Council Committee pursuant to
Resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009)
Concerning Somalia and Eritrea

c.c. Mr. Kelvin Ong
Secretary, UN Security Council Committee



2. The report indicates that “from 18 to 19 February 2013, the SEMG met with representatives of International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague, Netherlands, regarding specific aspects of the SEMG’s mandate”. If this is in reference to Eritrea, the Mission requests clarification on how the SEMG mandate relates to this rather opaque activity.
3. As was indeed the case in the past, the SEMG’s methodology of information collection and standards of verifying allegations remain shoddy. The reports thus states: “...During its European visits, the SEMG met with Eritrean sources with considerable knowledge of the military apparatus in Eritrea, including the air force.... Information obtained indicate that there may have been a recent flight by the Eritrean jetfighter, despite aircraft of Eritrean Air Forces remaining grounded due to lack of maintenance and spare parts. In addition, the SEMG obtained information that an Italian company temporarily exported to Eritrea, between October 2010 and April 2012, a rotary-wing aircraft”.

In the first place, the allegation on supply by Italy of a rotary-wing aircraft is utterly false. More importantly, one wonders why the SEMG must be obsessed to monitor internal flights of Eritrean air force “fighter jets”. However, incorrect, its gratuitous report on “the grounding of Eritrean fighter aircrafts” cannot be compatible with its mandate. The worst part is the identity and credibility of “the knowledgeable Eritrean sources” that the SEMG has met in various European capitals. We know there are individuals under the payroll of Ethiopia and/or involved in terrorist and subversive acts against Eritrea. The SEMG is apparently oblivious to the nefarious agenda of these groups and gives full credence to their allegations. This cannot be acceptable by any standards. Previous outrageous reports that the SEMG circulated implicating senior Eritrean government officials in “human trafficking” on the basis of interviews with, in its own word, fugitives from the law “involved in illegal human smuggling” continue to be regurgitated by so-called human rights groups to sally the image of Eritrea. The Eritrean Mission to the UN expresses its concern in the strongest possible terms these irresponsible practices and urges the Sanctions Committee to delineate clearly the mandate and practices of the SEMG. Adjustments in the SEMG’s methodology of information collection and basic attitudinal changes towards Eritrea are indeed prerequisites if its reports are going to be factual, objective, impartial and non-political. The SEMG’s working modalities have been lacking in these critical qualities and, in our view, the deficit is not diminishing with time and albeit changes in its composition.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Araya Desta
Ambassador/Permanent Representative