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البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا
لدى الأمم المتحدة - نيويورك

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

STATEMENT

BY

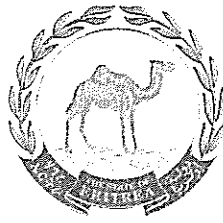
**H.E. AMBASSADOR GIRMA ASMEROM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

**THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH UN SECURITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED PURSUANT RESOLUTIONS 751 (1992)
AND 1907 (2009)**

10 October 2014

New York



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

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Distinguished representatives,

I would like to thank you, and the other esteemed members, for giving my delegation the opportunity to address the Committee. I would also like to thank the UN Secretariat for its cooperation throughout the process. Eritrea profoundly values its interaction and cooperation with the Sanctions Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Eritrea has on many occasions responded comprehensively, in writing and orally, to all politically motivated, groundless, and fabricated allegations contained in numerous reports presented by the Somali Eritrean Monitoring Group (SEMG). Therefore, my intervention today will focus primarily on four or six issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, on behalf of myself and the government of Eritrea, I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee the PR of the Republic of Korea H.E. Mr. Oh Joon for his role in promoting constructive interaction and dialogue between my government and the SEMG. Eritrea has fully cooperated and participated in the meetings organized under his auspices and chairmanship in Paris, Cairo and New York - all in good faith. I would like also to remind the Committee that Eritrea has allowed, on two separate occasions, for the monitoring group to visit Eritrea so that it can interact with all competent government officials and individuals. However my delegation finds it unfortunate that some members of the Security Council and the monitoring group are still insisting for the group to visit Eritrea before any discussion takes place on whether the sanctions should be lifted or not. It is also difficult to comprehend why the monitoring group has failed to clearly and comprehensively reflect, in its report, Eritrea's oral and written responses to its queries.



Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My second intervention is clear and simple. The government of Eritrea calls for the unjust sanctions imposed on the people of Eritrea to be unconditionally and immediately lifted. They should have been lifted yesterday. The justifications that were provided to sanction the people of Eritrea do not exist today. I would like to underline that there is no rationale or justification to maintain such unjust sanctions any further. In its own current report, the SEMG has confirmed that: **"the Monitoring Group has found no evidence of Eritrean support to Al-Shabaab during the course of its present mandate."** It has further declared, **"It's the overall assessment is that Eritrea is a marginal actor in Somalia."** In addition, as you all know, Eritrea is fully committed to the UN Security Council's endorsed the **06 June 2010 comprehensive agreement that was signed by the presidents of Eritrea and Djibouti under the mediation of the Amir of Qatar.** For those countries who are raising the issue of POWs, I would like to remind them that the agreement has to be seen in its totality. Duplication of initiatives and cherry-picking approaches must be rejected and avoided. They must understand that the Agreement is on-track. The Qatari army is already deployed at the disputed border of the two countries.

Given the fact that the justifications invoked to sanction Eritrea do not exist, once again, I appeal to the Security Council and its members to unconditionally and immediately lift the sanctions.

Such measures will contribute positively to the tireless efforts of the Eritrean people to eradicate poverty, build their nation, maintain peace, and consolidate harmony amongst its 9 ethnic groups composed of 50% Christian and 50% Muslim. Lifting these sanctions will also help the Eritrean people to consolidate the achievements they have made in regards to Millennium Development goals 3, 4, and 5. In this regard, on 26 September 2014 the Permanent Mission of Eritrea, jointly with the UN Country Team (UNCT), organized a High Level Side Event during the 69th session of the General Assembly- to share Eritrea's achievements, lessons learned, and best practices. **In Eritrea under-five child mortality rate has been reduced by two-thirds, and maternal mortality has been reduced by 75%. Malaria morbidity and mortality have also declined by 85% and 90% respectively. HIV/AIDS prevalence, which is 0.93%, is the lowest in Africa. Today, Eritrea is declared by WHO a polio free country, and its vaccination rate has almost reached 100%.**



Lifting the unjust sanctions will also help Eritrea to enhance its National Economic Development Agenda, which is based on principles and guidelines of self-reliance. It will definitely create employment and other opportunities for the youth and women.

The positive impact that lifting the unjust sanctions will have for advancing regional engagement and economic integration should also not be over-looked. Today, just in Africa alone, countries such as Somalia, Libya, the Central African Republic, and Mali are in turmoil. Intra and Interstate conflicts are also raging in different parts of the world. The world cannot afford additional turmoil and crisis in the Horn of Africa. As you all are aware, sanctioning a Least Developing Country (LDC) or Developing Country will only perpetuate poverty and aggravate crisis. The existence of poverty and crisis are situations that extremists and terrorist tend to exploit. They use these moments of crisis as a means of recruitment and gaining power. We must prevent and avoid crisis before they happen. Creating crisis, and managing them, is not acceptable. In the volatile region of the Horn of Africa, Eritrea remains a peaceful and stable country. "Don't try to fix it when it is not broken", just lift the politically motivated sanctions.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The SEMG report concerning Eritrea could have been easily and clearly presented to the Committee in no more than 2-3 pages. It should have simply stated "**that Eritrea does not support Al-Shabaab and the sanctions should be lifted**". However, for reasons that are very clear to Eritrea, the SEMG has not only compiled more than 100 pages of a report but has also overstepped its mandate by **including several pages of fabricated and distorted material about the problem between Eritrea and Ethiopia. It has also incorporated speculative and unrealistic analysis concerning Eritrea's internal economic, political, and social dynamics.** These out of mandate presentations, that are based on information gathered from dubious and phantom sources, are also sugarcoated with sound bites such as "**credible and reliable sources**".

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all the monitoring group stepping out of its mandate attempt to blame Eritrea for the internal dynamics and situations in Ethiopia, which has nothing to do with Eritrea, is unwarranted and must cease immediately. Ethiopia's internal conflict and situation is



Ethiopia's problem. To implicate and blame Eritrea by anybody including SEMG must be unconditionally rejected. All of them should stop harping and spinning Ethiopian government's *modus operandi* of blaming the Eritrean government for any problem that is taking place inside and outside.

The SEMG has included the Eritrean-Ethiopian issue in its report for no other reason other than an attempt to move the goalpost from "**sanctioning Eritrea on the issue of Somalia**" to "**the Eritrean-Ethiopian issue**". This misguided approach and reporting methodology by the SEMG, is not only a transparent and travesty of justice, but completely outside its mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Concerning the Eritrean Ethiopian issue, if the Security Council is interested in discussing Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrean sovereign territory, Eritrea has no problem; but it must be done in another format and under a different agenda item. That is what Eritrea has been asking for during the last 12 years. Over the past decade, **Eritrea has been calling for the UNSC to shoulder its responsibility to urge Ethiopia to respect the UN charter and abide by its treaty obligations. It is therefore time for the UN Security Council to urge Ethiopia to withdraw from sovereign Eritrean territories including the town of Badme. The Eritrean-Ethiopian Boundary Commission has clearly deliberated its final and binding delimitation decision in 2002 and demarcation decision in 2007. The internationally recognized maps of the two countries, with all of its coordinates, is in the hands the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments and is also deposited in the United Nations and African Union Secretariats. No nation, big or small, should be allowed to occupy a sovereign territory of another country. Once again Ethiopia must be urged by the Security Council to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from sovereign Eritrean territory, including the town of Badme.**

- It is Ethiopia not Eritrea that is violating the UN charter.
- It is Ethiopia not Eritrea that is destabilizing the region by occupying sovereign territories of a neighboring country.
- It is Ethiopia not Eritrea which has openly and publicly stated that it is diligently working for regime change in Eritrea.
- It is Ethiopia not Eritrea which has publicly declared that it will take surgical and clinical military action inside the sovereign territory of Eritrea.



Sixty years ago the Eritrean people were victimized and betrayed by the UN security council when their right to self-determination was compromised for the geopolitical interests of the big powers. I hope history is not going to repeat itself. **The UN Security Council must urge Ethiopia to unconditionally and immediately withdraw from Sovereign Eritrean territories including the town of Badme. It must also give strict and clear instruction to the SEMG to stick to its mandate.**

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The SEMG has not only **overstepped its mandate** by dwelling on the “**Eritrean Ethiopian issue**”, it has also **overstepped its mandate** by including the internal dynamics of **the Eritrean situation**. Relying on disgruntled individuals, activists, NGO’s, and websites that have an axe to grind against the Eritrean people and its government; the SEMG has included in its report the economic, social, and political developments in Eritrea. All these so called “**credible sources**” mentioned in the SEMG report are openly declared activists, who are publicly advocating for regime change in Eritrea.

Nowhere in the UN Security Council resolution is the SEMG mandated to analyze, assess, comment, and investigate the economic, social, and political situations of Eritrea. However by doing so, it has not only overstepped its mandate but it has definitely compromised the national security of Eritrea. It has even gone to the extent of including in its report satellite imagery of sensitive sites inside Eritrea. No nation would accept such behavior by an internationally constituted body, and in particular when it is not mandated to do so. The UN Security Council must clearly instruct the SEMG to respect the letter and spirit of the UN Charter and the Security Council resolutions that reaffirm the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Eritrea.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentleman,

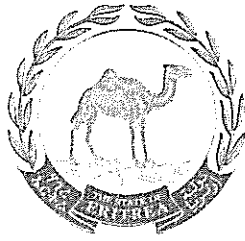
When reporting about Eritrea **the SEMG has not only overstepped its mandate, but it has also gotten its facts wrong and distorted**. For example, in spite of Eritrea’s repeated, consistent, and clear oral and written explanations the SEMG in its current report concerning the 2% Rehabilitation and Recovery Tax (RRT) has stated that, “**Eritrean officials continue to resort to coercive measures to extract payment from**



Eritreans living abroad". This is utterly baseless and pure fabrication. It is a deliberate misinformation campaign aimed at creating misperceptions about the active and voluntary participation of Eritreans in the diaspora in the affairs and economic development of their country. The government of Eritrea has neither the means nor the desire to enforce the RRT proclamation through extravagant means. The Eritrean government has never used and will never use coercive measures to collect the 2% (RRT). It is implemented in a transparent and respectable way. All **"oral, written, and transcribed"** information that the SEMG attempts to present as evidence that Eritrea is using **"extortion, intimidation, and coercion"** must be dismissed outright. There is no need for the SEMG or anybody to secretly record or transcribe the so called recorded material. It is indeed a waste of time and resources. All Consular and Diplomatic Missions of Eritrea, including the Eritrea Mission to the UN, will give freely and candidly a detailed report to anybody who wants to know how the 2% RRT is collected; and who the beneficiaries are and what administrative measures are taken for those who don't pay their financial dues. The taxation and other forms that the SEMG annexed to its reports, **"as evidence of extortion or coercion"**, are public documents that have been posted on most of the Eritrean Consulate and Diplomatic Missions websites for the last 20 years.

As is the case in all countries, Eritrea has specific legal mechanisms on the rights and obligations of its citizens concerning taxation. Regarding the 2% RRT, there are explicit legal administrative enforcement measures, such as the **"denial of a business license, land entitlement, and other services"** for those Eritreans who fail to meet their legally required financial obligations. These **administrative measures** are not and cannot be considered **"extraterritorial, extortion, coercion, etc."**

All citizens of the United States are taxed under the same personal tax system whether they live in the country or abroad, and no matter where and how they earned their income. If these American citizens refuse to pay or avoid doing so the U.S. government does not only take **administrative measures** but will take additional necessary legal actions. This, again, cannot be called **"coercion or intimidation"**. Furthermore, in order to restrict tax evasion, the U.S. government requires that all Banks across the world supply it with the names and the amounts of money American citizens and Companies have deposited in those Banks. If these Banks refuse to comply with the American Government's requests or demands, their licenses would be revoked and they would not be allowed to open branches in America. These **administrative measures and legal actions** by the American government cannot be considered as **"intimidation, coercion, etc. etc."**



By the way, contrary to the SEMG allegations, no Eritrean citizen living abroad is required to pay the 2% RRT to enter or exit Eritrea. All that is needed by these individuals is a valid Eritrean identification card or Passport; nothing more.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The SEMG report has also distorted and misrepresented the services that the Eritrean consulate and diplomatic missions provide. The services of the Eritrean consular and diplomatic missions provide to Eritreans and foreigners are clearly covered by the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations of 1961 and 1963 respectively. The Diplomatic Mission and the Consular Section of any country is a representative of the sending state and its governments and therefore represents all of its Ministries and Institutions. In addition to its other types of services it is also required to give information to Eritreans and non-Eritreans concerning the political, social, and economic dynamics and situations of Eritrea. This includes giving information about the 2% RRT and other taxation regimes and **How, When, Where and Why** these taxes are paid. This cannot be considered an act of “**coercion, solicitation, or intimidation**” by the diplomats. These diplomats are just performing their duties in accordance to the Vienna Conventions. Moreover no provision is stated in the UN Security Council resolution that prevents Eritrean Missions from levying 2% RRT from Eritreans residing abroad.

It is therefore incumbent for the Security Council as well as the SEMG to alert some member countries to stop demanding Eritrean Consular and Diplomatic Missions to refrain from collecting taxes from Eritrean diaspora. Their action goes against the letter and spirit of the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With no other motive other than to create confusion, perpetuate negative perception about Eritrea, and **scare potential investors several factually erroneous allegations and insinuating statements** are also included in the SEMG report. For example, concerning the Mining Sector, statement such as “**companies conducting mining business in Eritrea are subject to high costs that are typically associated with operations in other parts of the world...according to industry experts the overall cost for foreign mining countries, operating in Eritrea, tends to be expensive as a result of the fixed**



exchange rate... local price inflation has forced mining companies to cover basic expenses such as food and electricity at a very high cost...there appears to be a close relationship between the Eritrean Ministry of Mines and Energy and exploration companies operating in Eritrea” are included in the recent SEMG report. This statement by the SEMG will not only scare potential investors it also tries to insinuate something about the relationship between the Ministry of Mining and the Exploration Companies.

Furthermore in order to discredit Eritrea’s commitment to peace, development, and regional integration as well as its commendable contribution to the peace agreement between the people of Eastern Sudan and the central government, the SEMG have gone to an extent of questioning and distorting Eritrea’s relationship with Sudan. It has in fact gone to an extent of insulting certain high level Government Officials of the Sudanese Government. It has presented them as “Agents of Eritrea”.

Concerning the arms embargo the SEMG states that, “Eritrea has imported or smuggled weapons and ammunitions from Eastern Sudan”. In order to substantiate its baseless and fabricated allegations it states that “reliable sources have informed the group that Eritrea has imported 12 Kalashnikov, 10 RPG’s and 3 mortars through East Sudan”. This is pure fabrication. Eritrea did not and is not importing or smuggling arms and ammunition through East Sudan. SEMG’s allegation is a calculated and deliberate distortion that is meant to uphold the sanctions.

Last but not least for those members of the committee who are invoking procedural issues and insisting for the monitoring group to visit Eritrea for the sanctions to be lifted, I would simply like to remind them once again, that the monitoring group has already visited Eritrea on two separate occasions. Since they are also raising procedural issues I would also ask them whether the SEMG’s report that was prepared with the full and active participation of Mr. Dinesh Mahtani -who is on record openly advocating for regime change in Eritrea-should have been entertained as a credible report? Although Mr. Mahtani has resigned (sacked) from the monitoring group for his inappropriate and out of mandate action, is it not procedurally and legally proper for the report that has been tainted by Mr. Dinesh Mahtani’s bias stance and opinion, to have been completely dismissed and the entire SEMG be dissolved?



Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of the uncontroversial fact that the sanction is unjust and SEMG's report is full of distortion and politically motivated fabricated allegations, Eritrea has been fully engaged and cooperating with the Committee, in good faith. It must be commended and reciprocated.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It has been asserted beyond any reasonable doubt that Eritrea does not support Al-Shaabab, and there is no credible evidence that Eritrea is violating any of the UN Security Council Resolutions. I therefore once again call on the members of the Committee to request the UN Security Council to lift the unjust sanctions against Eritrea immediately and unconditionally.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present Eritrea's views and the way forward in regards to how peace and security can be achieved, and poverty eradicated, in Eritrea and the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Chairman I am ready to answer any questions that this committee may have.

Thank You!