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Minister of Foreign Affairs

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H.E. Mr. Baso Sangqu  
President of the United Nations Security Council  
New York

Excellency,

In its letter of 18 January to the UN Security Council, the Government of Ethiopia misconstrues the tragic events of the deplorable killing of five foreign tourists in northern Ethiopia by armed gunmen to falsely accuse Eritrea of "direct involvement". Furthermore, the Ethiopian regime ratchets these trumped up charges to goad the UN Security Council to take punitive measures against Eritrea and warns that "it will, (otherwise), be obliged to take whatever action is necessary to stop the activities of the Eritrea regime once and for all".

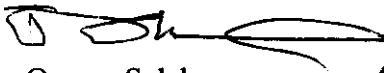
Eritrea will not dwell much, in this letter, on the utterly groundless accusations deliberately peddled by the Ethiopian regime to serve other ulterior motives and objectives as it has already pronounced its position through its press statement earlier last week. However, Eritrea wishes to underline that the cynical posturing of the Addis Abeba regime that it has every right to invoke Article 51 of the UN Charter "In self-defense" and launch another war of aggression against Eritrea is not only legally hollow but carries the potential seeds of grave regional destabilization and conflagration. In the event, Eritrea wishes to emphasize and bring to the attention of the UN Security Council the following cogent points:

1. The Ethiopian regime has flaunted international law, the UN Charter, and its treaty obligations to occupy sovereign Eritrean territories for the last ten years. The authorities in Addis Abeba continue to flagrantly violate the provisions of Article 33.1 of the UN Charter on peaceful and arbitral settlement of disputes among UN member States to effectively reject the final and binding delimitation and demarcation decisions of the Eritrean Ethiopia Boundary Commission to occupy by force the sovereign Eritrean town of Badme and other territories. It is patently clear that Ethiopia's dangerous acts constitute a grave violation of international law and impinge on regional peace and security. However, the excesses of the Ethiopian regime remain tolerated with impunity to-date for reasons that we shall revert to later.

2. As we underlined in our press statement of January 18, the ill-advised attempts of the Ethiopian regime to take the senseless and cowardly killing of innocent civilians as a blessing in disguise to vilify Eritrea is not only morally reprehensible but its threat to use force against another UN Member State on trumped up charges is a violation of Article 2.4 of the UN Charter. Eritrea maintains that this behavior is not acceptable and should not be tolerated any more.
3. As Eritrea had emphasized through its several communications to the Security Council before, the unfair and unfounded resolutions (1907 and 2023) that have imposed various sanctions against Eritrea, including an arms embargo, carry the risk of emboldening Ethiopia to contemplate reckless acts. Its current *sabre rattling* is indeed a vivid corroboration of what may be in stock unless the UN Security Council takes appropriate remedial action.
4. Ethiopia's hollow accusations should not and cannot be taken in isolation. In the past two months, Eritrea had spent a lot of time and energy to dispel the equally preposterous allegations emanating from Kenya accusing it of supplying three plane loads of arms to Al-Shebaab through the town of Baidoa. Those accusations were timed and synchronized with impending discussions of the UNSC on draft resolution 2023. The current accusations of Ethiopia have also occurred few weeks before the forthcoming AU Summit in Addis Abeba, where Eritrea's representation will not be through its highest authorities. One can thus easily see the concerted and subtle subterfuges that have been set in motion to entrap Eritrea.
5. As we intimated before, the UN Security Council's kid glove treatment of Ethiopia; the unfair punitive sanctions that have been imposed against Eritrea; and, the myriad accusations that are woven day-in and day-out to sully Eritrea's image are not all the workings and machinations of the Ethiopian regime alone. Although Eritrea does not prefer to go into greater details at this juncture, it nonetheless wishes to underline that the whole jigsaw cannot be understood in isolation without factoring the unprovoked hostility of the United States which has taken the position that it has to promote its perceived interests in the region.
6. The repeated harpings of the Ethiopian regime to implicate and portray Eritrea as the main culprit in the military activities of its multiple opposition movements; to repackage as "conceived, planned and executed by Eritrea" is risible and really difficult to fathom. The Ethiopian regime does not, in fact, mince its words in as far as its declared intentions and actions are concerned for creating and propping up armed insurgents to topple the Government of Eritrea in pursuit of its avowed objective of "forcible regime change" in Eritrea. As mentioned in our letter of January 4 to the UN SC, the advisor to Ethiopia's Prime Minister and a senior member of the ruling Political Bureau, openly announced in the Awasa Conference that "Ethiopia welcomes the timely convening of the conference to formulate new strategies to topple the Eritrean government ...and that Ethiopia will provide them with all the support they need to achieve the goals of (their) struggle".

Indeed, as the attached Reuters news dispatch from Addis Abeba elucidates, these subversive groups make forays into Eritrea from Ethiopia to launch terrorist activities from time to time. Eritrea has not chosen to dwell on these events because they will only eclipse and divert attention from the profound and critical issues at stake. But it has never been driven to take, and does not subscribe to, reciprocal action as a matter of *quid pro quo*.

In conclusion, Eritrea wishes to urge the UN Security Council to re-examine, in the interests of peace and justice, the multi-faceted situation that is prevailing in our area in its entirety and complexity. In this respect, Eritrea further urges the UN Security Council to ensure Ethiopia's prompt compliance with its treaty obligations and to respect international law.



Osman Saleh

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Asmara, 23 January 2012

