

Mr. President, Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
January 29, 2012

Mr. President:

We Eritrean-Americans residing in the State of Texas, like all Americans who value human rights, fairness, justice, and freedom, cherish those universal core values of humanity. Hoping that we will make a difference, we voice our opinions and concerns to our elected representatives when we feel such values are violated. We hope that you will look into our concerns which we state in this letter. We believe strongly that you should look into this personally.

If the voice of reason is going to prevail and if the U.S.A.'s goal is achieving permanent peace and promoting the U.S.A.'s long-term national interest in the Horn region, then we believe that our State Department and our U.S. government have to deal with the root cause of conflicts in the Horn region, which is the Ethiopian nationalists' hegemonic dreams. Hence, we, the Eritrean- Americans of the State of Texas call on our U.S. government to take meaningful action to compel Ethiopia to accept the Eritrea- Ethiopia Boundary Commission's (EEBC) Decision fully without equivocations or qualifications, facilitate expeditious permanent ground demarcation between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and annul Resolution 1907 (2009), 2023 (2011).

The United Nations, at the behest of our adopted country, the United States, passed Resolution 390A (v) on December 2, 1950, which was the cause of the hefty price the Eritreans paid to regain their independence. On December 23, 2009, and on December 5, 2011 the UN, again in accordance with the request (push) of the U.S.A., passed Resolutions 1907 (2009), and 2023 (2011) with complete disregard for and disrespect toward the State of Eritrea and in violation of the basic human rights of the Eritrean people. There is no better testimony as to why we, Eritrean- Americans in Texas, state, "at the behest of our country, the U.S A.," than our former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Mr. John Bolton's statement: "*The United States makes the UN work when it wants it work, and that is exactly the way it should be, because the only question, the only question for the United States is what is in our national interest. And if you do not like that, I'm sorry, but that is the fact.*"(J. Bolton, *Speech at the Global Structures Convocation, Feb. 3, 1994*). Former Secretary of State, J. Foster Dulles, who engineered the passage of Resolution 390A (V), boldly attested to the betrayal of the Eritrean people on his push to achieve U.S. strategic interests as well. The Eritreans, who would rather suffer injustice than inflict it, were treated as unworthy victims.

The pretext for Resolution 1907 (2009) and 2023 (2011) is that the Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) extends political, logistical, and financial assistance to U.S.- Designated Foreign Terrorists in Somalia, specifically al-Shabaab.

This charge was championed by Dr. Susan Rice, Dr. Jendayi Frazer, and then by Dr. Susan Rice again, but it was discredited by the United Nations, as it should have been. The 2010 report by the U.N. Monitoring Group on Somalia says that Ethiopia is the main supplier of arms to Somali warlords. The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFGS) and the African Union Peacekeepers are also mentioned as key contributors to the arms swell in Somalia. Eritrea was not mentioned. The Ethiopian government and the TFGS receive political, financial, and diplomatic support from our country, the U.S.A.

The Government of the State of Eritrea did not create or cultivate the problems in Somalia. Eritrea does not have the will or any financial capital and logistical capabilities to support anyone in Somalia. Eritrea's position in Somali affairs is well known: Eritrea believes the Somali people should be left alone to solve their own national issues and if anyone is going to help in this regard it should be only to facilitate this goal. On numerous occasions high ranking Eritrean government officials have stated repeatedly that Eritrea does not believe in any foreign military intervention to solve Somalia's problems. In 2007 Eritrea provided a peaceful, neutral, and unifying environment in its city of Asmara so that all Somalis could iron out their differences and start to rebuild their nation and become a responsible player in the region. The terrorist Organization al-Shabaab, did not participate in the conference. Eritrea's efforts to promote a common understanding among the Somalis by providing facilities where they can discuss their national aspirations cannot be considered support for al Shabaab in any way. Therefore, representing Eritrea's good will attempt to be a facilitator to bring about peace to the region as assisting al Shabaab or any other terrorist organization is erroneous and politically deceptive.

Eritrea has been accused of not recognizing the TFGS. As a sovereign nation, Eritrea has the right to recognize or not recognize any government. To sanction Eritrea because of the unfounded charge of support for al Shabaab and for not recognizing the TFGS is disrespectful of the State of Eritrea and violates the basic human rights of the Eritrean people. Hence, Eritrea is a victim of a despicable, reckless and short-sighted political ploy.

We, the Eritrean-Americans of Texas, are very disappointed to see our seasoned diplomats like Dr. Susan Rice work tenaciously to sanction the peace-loving people of Eritrea. We believe neither our State Department nor Dr. Susan Rice's office has come up with any shred of evidence to justify sanctioning the State of Eritrea. It is our collective opinion that Dr. Susan Rice has either misused or abused the good faith discretionary powers she had and has in her personal push to sanction Eritrea as early as May 25, 1999; and we hope that you, Mr. President, look into this issue and reverse the unjust sanctions on Eritrea.

Mr. Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, stated in his letter to us (Apr. 8 2010), *"with respect to Eritrea's border conflicts, the United States calls on all parties to avoid provocative acts and respect agreements and resolutions supported by the U.N."* It is public knowledge that the nation which is refusing to abide by the rule of Law is Ethiopia. Eritrea is waiting responsibly and patiently so that the rule of Law can prevail even though the expansionist Ethiopian regime is occupying Eritrean territories militarily. So who is the second party? The second party is certainly not

Eritrea. We ask you to call on Ethiopia's unconditional acceptance of the final and binding Decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) and agree to its expeditious implementation. Documents from the State Department have come to light since Mr. Carson's statement which state that the U.S.A. is acquiescing in the non-enforcement of the EEBC's decision.

It has been ten years since the Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) and Ethiopia signed the comprehensive Algiers Peace Agreement under the auspices of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and other key witnesses including the United States, the European Union, and Algeria. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia agreed to accept the EEBC's legal ruling as final and binding, without further recourse to a court of appeal or diplomatic mediation.

Article 14 of the Algiers Agreement stipulates that the guarantors (witnesses) of the agreement shall invoke chapter VII of the UN Charter to take punitive measures against any party that violates any provision of the agreement. On September 19, 2003, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Mr. Zenawi, rejected the EEBC's decision, branding it as irresponsible, illegal, and unjust. The hegemonic regime of Ethiopia is occupying Eritrean territories to this day. Eritrea has accepted the EEBC's ruling. Unfortunately, the international community, led by our country, the United States, prefers to look the other way and to accommodate Ethiopia's violations rather than to take credible action to ensure compliance. It is our honest belief that this Ethiopian intransigence and refusal to abide by the rule of law, and the inaction of the world community, especially our U.S. government, is the core reason that there is no peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Eritrean people had high expectations that the U.S.A., as one of the crafters, witnesses and guarantors of the Algiers Peace Agreement, would play a decisive role in implementing the EEBC's final and binding ruling, but the U.S. did not live up to this expectation. This has a significant effect on U.S.A.'s influence, credibility, integrity, and reputation in the Horn region. The U.S. is sidelining, isolating and sanctioning Eritrea. This will not promote U.S. long-term strategic and political interests in the region.

Mr. President, there is a golden opportunity for you to engage with the State of Eritrea's Government in a constructive and persistent dialogue to politically address the conflicts of the Horn region with civility, impartiality and in accordance with international law, for the good of the peoples of the Horn region. Sanctioning Eritrea is neither a solution nor a justifiable action.

We understand that you have a heavy work load but also we believe that you can make a difference and that is the reason which compelled us to bring this concern of ours to your attention so that you and the U.S. government would reconsider and facilitate the annulment of the unjustified sanctions on Eritrea. It is our sincere, heartfelt desire to see relations of equal partnership improve and flourish between both countries, the State of Eritrea and the U.S.A.

Respectfully,

Eritrean-Americans in the State of Texas
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