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Minister of Foreign Affairs

Press Release

In the past few months, we have witnessed a flurry of hostile acts and vitriolic diplomatic campaigns against my country. These unwarranted acts, which continue relentlessly under different forms, are principally concocted and orchestrated by senior US Administration officials. As the list is long, only the major ones can be cited here before proceeding to elucidate the underlying motivations and objectives of US hostilities against Eritrea.

1. The current UN Human Rights Session in Geneva was virtually turned into a venue for intensive lobbying by US State Department officials in their dogged attempts to sully Eritrea's image and to ram through a "resolution" to condemn it for numerous, fabricated, allegations of "gross violation of human rights". This new ploy originates from the desire to open a "new front" so as to tighten, or at least maintain, the unwarranted UN Security Council Resolutions (1907 and 2023) that the US had managed to impose against Eritrea in the past three years. The timing is deliberately calibrated to coincide with the pending review of these resolutions by the UN Security Council in July or August.
2. Earlier in the preceding weeks, the US mission to New York employed heavy-handed means to compel the UN Secretary General's Office to withdraw the Report on Eritrea that was issued on 8 June last month. Operative Paragraph 19 of Resolution 2023 requests the Secretary General "to report within 180 days on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions" of these resolutions. The Report under consideration was issued formally on that date in accordance with this directive and after it went through the usual consultation processes. Yet the US Representative to the UN reportedly resorted to unorthodox tactics to pressurize the Secretary General's Office to remove the Report from the UN website and to meekly inform UNSC members that a "revised report" will be resubmitted in early July. Several

members of the Security Council questioned the “rationale and wisdom of the embarrassing act”, warned that the “unhelpful precedence would entail undesirable ramifications”, and urged for the case to be handled with “transparency, neutrality and objectivity”.

3. On June 26, the “Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group” submitted its report to the UN Sanctions Committee. As it will be recalled, Eritrea had requested for the replacement of this body as it was found wanting in the minimum standards of neutrality, objectivity, professionalism and credibility. But this is not the point here. As long as the “Monitoring Group” is authorized to submit its lopsided reports, Eritrea has the right and should at any time have unfettered access to these reports. This is a matter of principle and law. Established procedures and the principle of “equality of arms” indeed dictate that Eritrea receive, in real time, copies of any accusations leveled against it. However, pressure from the same US officials prevented the Chair of the UN Sanctions Committee from observing this rudimentary right and to ignore, with profuse regrets, Eritrea’s express requests.
4. In the same vein, US Secretary of State falsely blamed Eritrea on June 16th for “human trafficking” including it in its blacklist of 16 other countries. Leaving aside whether the United States has the moral or legal prerogatives to categorize sovereign countries for whatever “misdeeds” it chooses to pick out, its accusations of Eritrea for “human trafficking” is baffling at best. The fact is Washington has been openly pursuing, in the past years, a hostile policy of enticing Eritrean youth to seek asylum in the United States. The US Bureau for Refugee Affairs allocates, on an annual basis, around 10,000 slots for “Eritrean potential applicants who dodge military draft” for asylum in the United States. US Embassies in Khartoum and Nairobi routinely issue entry visas for Eritreans without verifying whether they have exit visas from their home country in contravention of normative consular practices. It is thus the United States which is culpable for an elaborate programme of “human trafficking” to advance its sinister objectives in Eritrea and the region.
5. On July 3, the UN Sanctions Committee included the personal details of two Eritrean military officials in its new list of persons allegedly “associated with terrorist activities” in Somalia. The circulated document does not indicate who the plaintiffs are. Nor does it establish the veracity of the allegations. It merely tries to ensure, through what is known as a “silent motion”, to validate the accusations “unless there is an objection from a

member State of the Sanctions Committee within 48 hours". Again, the game plan and sinister ploys are transparent. The Eritrean military officials are targeted not because there is a shred of truth or material evidence to the false accusations heaped upon them, but mainly because it evokes the message and impression, at least in outward appearances, of a "tightening" sanctions regime.

6. Furthermore, US spiraling hostilities have gone beyond defamatory media and diplomatic campaigns. In the past few months, Washington has incessantly encouraged the regime in Ethiopia to launch publicized and reckless military intrusions and assaults on sovereign Eritrean territories. The primary purpose behind these provocative acts of aggression is to create an environment of confrontation and instability, and thereby dilute in the fog of war, Ethiopia's legal culpability for its continued occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories in contravention of the UN Charter and international law. But in addition, the audacious publicity of these acts, which were often accompanied by subtle US diplomatic cover-ups, is aimed at legitimizing and depicting these blatant acts of aggression as "proportionate and lawful measures of self-defense".

The hostile acts enumerated above are part and parcel of the persistent policy of the United States to destabilize Eritrea and to undermine its sovereignty and territorial integrity in pursuit of its misguided regional objectives and strategies. As we have underlined in several of our previous communications, sovereign Eritrean territories, including the town of Badme, remain occupied by the Ethiopian regime in contravention of international law. The flagrant acts of occupation and aggression by the regime in Ethiopia would have long solicited appropriate punitive action by the Security Council in accordance with the provisions of applicable articles of the UN Charter and the Algiers Peace Agreement. This did not occur principally because in reality the main culprits were, and remain, successive US Administrations who have long decided to compromise and undermine international law and the fundamental rights of a UN member State in pursuit of their narrow regional interests and objectives.

As we have explained extensively by Eritrea in its previous communications, it is indeed a travesty of justice when the very victim of aggression and occupation is falsely framed for "acts of regional destabilization" to become a target of punitive sanctions that have no basis in law and fact. But that is precisely what has transpired in the last three years when the Security Council imposed

Resolutions 1907 and 2023 on Eritrea on account of overbearing US diplomatic and political clout.

The litany of these ongoing US-inspired accusations and vitriolic diplomatic campaigns against Eritrea constitute a continuation and escalation of these well-trodden ploys and patterns. They are singularly aimed at fabricating new cases and opening new platforms, such as the UN Human Rights Council, for entangling Eritrea in a web of unlawful sanctions and agonizing environments. If these ploys are tolerated with impunity, the ultimate casualty will be international justice and the rule of law

In the event, the Government of Eritrea urges all Governments to use their influences to:

1. Ensure the respect of international law and compel Ethiopia to withdraw from the occupied territories; respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Eritrea and desist from all provocative acts of aggression and military intrusion;
2. Lift the unfair sanctions that have been imposed against Eritrea as a result of the US-engineered Resolutions 1907 and 2023.
3. Ensure that the UN Security Council and other UN institutions are not inappropriately and unlawfully instrumentalised by the United States to advance its misguided policies against Eritrea.

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