



# Security Council

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6362<sup>nd</sup> Meeting (AM)\*

### **UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL, BRIEFING SECURITY COUNCIL, COMMENDS RECENT STEPS BY ERITREA, DJIBOUTI TO NEGOTIATE SETTLEMENT OF 2008 BORDER DISPUTE**

#### **Qatar Wins Praise for Mediating Role between Horn of Africa Neighbours**

Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe today commended recent steps by the Governments of Eritrea and Djibouti to negotiate a settlement, with Qatar acting as mediator, to the border dispute between them, which erupted into conflict in March 2008.

“The Government of Qatar has confirmed to us that cooperation between both countries and the Qatari forces is good, and that the Qatari forces will remain deployed in both countries until the dispute between them has been settled,” Mr. Pascoe said in a briefing to the Security Council. The two Horn of Africa countries had signed an agreement on 6 June, allowing Qatar to create a mechanism to facilitate boundary demarcation by an international company, monitor the border and address the issue of prisoners of war and missing persons.

He said the Secretary-General had received notification from the Prime Minister of Qatar that, by 5 June, Eritrean troops had withdrawn from Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island and the de-facto border area, and that Qatari troops had deployed military observers — including a company unit in Eritrea and a platoon unit in Djibouti — pending a final settlement.

Mr. Pascoe said that the Secretary-General, responding to a 24 June letter from President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea, had reaffirmed his commitment to discuss with him regional challenges, notably the border dispute’s negative effect on regional stability and the lack of implementation of the ruling by the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission.

All States in the region, in addition to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations, must work together in tackling regional conflict, the Under-Secretary-General stressed. He further urged all States and other involved parties to facilitate the work of the newly established Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, charged with reporting on Eritrea’s compliance with resolution 1907 (2009) and other relevant Council texts.

Eritrea's representative commended the Secretary-General for pointing out the need to resolve the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which, he stressed, had been peacefully, legally and technically concluded by the Boundary Commission but not yet implemented, impeding resolution of the region's problems. He maintained that, for the past eight years, the Council had not addressed Ethiopia's defiance of the Boundary Commission's decision or that country's arming, training, hosting and financing of armed Eritrean elements with the objective of destabilizing his country. He urged the Council to assume its Charter responsibilities and ensure the withdrawal of Ethiopia's troops from sovereign Eritrean territories.

On Somalia, he noted his country's recent participation in the Istanbul Conference as part of its efforts to seek a sustainable peace in the strife-torn neighbouring State. There could be no military solution to the conflict there and an inclusive, Somali-driven political process could be the only real prospect for a lasting resolution. Eritrea would continue to be part of a sustained and constructive effort to achieve peace and stability in Somalia, he pledged.

Turning to Djibouti, he said the agreement signed under the leadership of Qatar was a "significant development". Ever since the matter had been brought to the Council's attention, Eritrea had exercised restraint and opted to address the issue in a calm manner, preferably at the bilateral level or through a third party, in a manner acceptable to the two "sister countries".

He went on to state that resolution 1907 (2009) had been "unjustly and selectively" imposed on his country, adding that it lumped unrelated issues together. However, Eritrea would remain committed to regional peace and security, which it took as a priority. In light of recent developments, he appealed to the Council to lift the sanctions imposed on his country. Finally, he expressed grief over the recent bombings in Kampala, Uganda, which had taken the lives of Eritreans, among many others.

Djibouti's representative said firm Council action had clearly contributed to progress in the situation between her own country and Eritrea following the latter's aggression and denials of the existence of a conflict. While expressing hope that the Qatar mediation would lead to a peaceful and lasting resolution of the problem, she stressed that the road ahead was still difficult and would require the commitment of all stakeholders. The issues of prisoners, missing persons and border demarcation were among the important issues to be resolved.

She expressed further hope that the next report of the Secretary-General would show progress in all those areas as well as adequate movement towards a lasting resolution. Djibouti remained committed to peace in the region and the world at large, she pledged, also expressing condolences to those affected by the Kampala bombings.

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. and ended at 10:35 a.m.

### Background

The Security Council had before it the Report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea (document S/2010/327), covering developments in the country since the Council's adoption of resolution 1907 (2009), which imposed a regime of targeted sanctions on the country for failing to comply with resolution 1862 (2009), on its border dispute between Djibouti, and for its destabilizing role in the Somalia conflict.

According to the report, Eritrea has maintained that the sanctions were based on unfounded allegations, and has denied the existence of a border dispute with Djibouti. However, the Eritrean Government's recent steps towards constructive engagement with its neighbours and the international community — its reception of the Sanctions Committee in Asmara, its participation in the Istanbul Conference on Somalia, endorsement of the Istanbul Declaration and engagement in Qatar-led regional mediation efforts — are “encouraging developments”, the report says.

“While recent developments represent a move in the right direction, I urge the Government of Eritrea to do more to provide evidence of its compliance with resolution 1907 (2009) and the practical measures set out in it,” the Secretary-General says. He recalls that on 8 June 2010, he received a letter from Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, transmitting a copy of an agreement (contained in document A/64/806-S/2010/291) signed by the Presidents of Eritrea and Djibouti with the aim of resolving the border dispute, and with Qatar serving as mediator.

The report goes on to state that on the same day, Djibouti's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation confirmed the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Djiboutian territory thanks to Qatar's mediation efforts and its deployment of an observation force to monitor the Eritrea-Djibouti border until a final agreement is reached. The following day, the Government of Eritrea submitted a letter in response to the note verbale on resolution 1907 (2009), which refers to the agreement.

However, the Secretary-General notes the “very limited” ability of the United Nations to verify Eritrea's compliance with resolution 1907 (2009), and expresses hope that the new Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea will provide independent monitoring and reporting on its implementation. The text requires Member States to report to the Council within 120 days on steps taken to implement its provisions. As of 10 June 2010, 26 Member States had provided that information, which was circulated to the Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

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\* The 6361<sup>st</sup> Meeting was closed.