



# Organization of Eritrean - Americans

For Immediate Release

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## Lifting Eritrea Sanctions: It is About Time

All indications and reports show that the long overdue, unwarranted and illegal sanctions imposed on Eritrea by the UN Security Council in 2009 and 2011 based on bogus charges—charges that were manufactured and orchestrated by the TPLF regime in Ethiopia at the time, its lobbyists and its enablers in the Obama administration—will be lifted on Wednesday, November 14, 2018. Well, it's about time and it's all due to the extraordinary level of steadfastness of the Eritrean people and their government who foiled one plot after another designed to undermine Eritrea's sovereignty under the cover of these sanctions. The Organization of Eritrean Americans (OEA) has been urging the Council to end this travesty left behind by the Obama administration since the imposition of the first sanctions package on Christmas Even in 2009. We are glad that the forces that orchestrated these lies against this young East African country are no longer wreaking havoc in and outside the region; but, we're certain that they will not escape the harsh judgment of history. It looks the time has come to put closure on this travesty.

Though the pretext for the unjust UN Security Council action was to “serve” peace and security in Somalia, as the past nine years have made it clear, punishing innocent Eritrea based on false premises has neither brought peace to Somalia nor security to the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, while the monitoring group had repeatedly admitted it found no evidence to link Eritrea to the bogus charges and all its earlier accusations were found to be fabricated, the UN Security Council, for political reasons, has been unwilling to right the wrongs by lifting the sanctions.

As leaked U.S. diplomatic cables clearly showed, the first set of sanctions: Resolution 1907(2009) was incubated in the U.S. and hatched in Ethiopia. Eritrea was supposedly punished in 2009 for helping Somalia insurgents with weapons, yet the UN's own report from 2008 had admitted that: *“Eighty percent of ammunition available at the Somali arms markets was supplied by TFG [the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia] and Ethiopian troops”*. The same was true with Resolution 2023 (2011), which Obama's vindictive former U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Susan Rice, rammed through the Security Council on behalf of its clients in Addis Ababa, based on yet another fabricated stories that the UN admitted were false barely a month after the adoption of the Resolution on December 5, 2011.

In response to the baseless charges that led to Resolution 2023, then Russian Ambassador the late Vitaly Churkin had said: ***“The Security Council was not presented with convincing proof”*** of the allegations against Eritrea. ***“We have not seen the results of any investigation of that incident, if indeed there was one”***, referring to the fabricated allegations that Eritrea supplied a Somali extremist group with arms and ammunition and had plans to bomb the African Union.

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As former Assistant Secretary for African Affairs and veteran Ambassador Herman Cohen put it, there was no “intelligence, real or fabricated,” that linked Eritrea to Al Shabab or any form of extremism in the region other than the falsified stories the then minority regime in Ethiopia fed the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group. Adding, ambassador Cohen, who has had many years of experience and intimate knowledge of the region, said: “Those of us who know Eritrea well, understand that the Eritrean leadership fears Islamic militancy as much as any other country in the Horn of Africa region.” In short, there was no rational justification to impose the sanctions in the first place, and there is even less rational explanation to maintain them for nine years. Even the SEMG (Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group), the very group that moved the goal post to perpetuate the injustice for a number of years has long since it came out in the open and admitted that it failed to find any evidence of support provided by Eritrea to Al Shabaab, that there was no credible evidence that linked Eritrea to Somalia before and since these sanctions were imposed.

The United Nations Security Council, as an organ established to maintain peace and security in the world, should never punish nations and people based on what it knows too well is based on fabrications. Eritrea, as a nation that has faced its fair share of destabilization attempts by foreign religious extremists, is the most reliable partner the UN can have for peace and security in the Horn of Africa. It deserves the Security Council’s encouragement and positive engagement, definitely not sanctions based on lies.

Thus, we are glad to see that the U.N. Security Council take immediate action to terminate these illegal sanctions against this young African nation and its hard working people so they can focus on their real enemies: poverty, disease and ignorance. Finally, we would like to express our profound gratitude to those members of the UN Security Council who recognized early and remained steadfast in their rejection of the bogus charges against Eritrea. Our thanks also goes to all friends of Eritrea here in the United States and other countries for their support and encouragement in our struggle to have these unjust sanctions lifted.

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