



December 30, 2017

**OEA Sanctions Series #2:**

**Eritrea: End Sanctions Based on Pack of Lies**

In the first article of the OEA Sanctions Series released a week ago, we urged the UN Security Council to lift the long overdue and unjustified sanctions it imposed on the young African nation of Eritrea in 2009 and 2011. In this article, we'll show the body of lies on which the charges that led to these sanctions were based.

Again, it is time to annul Resolutions 1907 (2009) and 2033 (2011) imposed on Eritrea based on brazen fabrications choreographed by the Obama Administration's USUN Mission headed by Susan Rice and the minority regime of Ethiopia.

Susan Rice was on a vendetta mission. Ten years earlier Rice had bungled a US-led mediation effort during the Eritrea-Ethiopia war of 1998-2000. Eritrea had trusted the US, which was in good relations with at the time, to be a fair and neutral mediator. To the contrary Rice mediation was a total failure. A war that could have been contained in a matter of weeks continued for two years. By the end of the war more than 150,000 lives were lost (Ethiopia over 135,000 and Eritrea 19,000). Many say Rice blames Eritrea for her failure. Here is how Rosenblum characterizes Rice and Smith behavior:

*"Some of their detractors referred to them [Susan Rice and Gayle Smith] as 'Thelma and Louise,' recalling the characters from the 1990 film by the same name who liberate themselves from the world of male dominance and leave a trail of destruction before they drive off a cliff together ...Privately, much speculation remains about what actually happened to render the Rice-Smith intervention so politically disastrous. ... 'Susan had misread the situation completely,' according to one State Department insider who observed the conflict with Albright. 'She came in like a scoutmaster, lecturing them on how to behave and having a public tantrum when they didn't act the way she wanted.'"<sup>1</sup>*

Rice targeted Eritrea not only for revenge, but also to save the neck of her close confidant, the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Besides Rice and Meles' friendship, Meles had also managed to dupe the United States and the West alike that he can be taken as a "reliable" partner in fighting terrorism in the Horn of Africa. In reality, Meles & colleagues are the best diplomatic con artists that the Horn of Africa had ever witnessed. Not only did the minority regime in Ethiopia manage to deceive the West it can make "sincere" partner that it was not, it also managed to deceitfully misrepresent Eritrea with a falsified narrative completely incompatible with Eritrea's reality.

Not only these, the West was also itching to isolate Eritrea, because: first, as the youngest kid in the block, Eritrea had refused to subscribe to the West's reckless policies over Somalia; second, Eritrean leaders' nonconformist culture of independent thinking was taken as anathema to the West that was used to getting its way all over Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Rosenblum, Irrational Exuberance: The Clinton Administration in Africa, Current History, May 2002.

<sup>2</sup> USUN Mission Cable, 13 June 2009. [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK590\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK590_a.html)

As a result of all these Rice and Meles colluded to concoct a series of lies to present to a complaisant African Union and acquiescent UN Security Council. As US diplomatic cables from 2009 make it clear, this collusion was produced and directed from New York. Here are sample cables showing the USUN Mission directing the plan start to finish:

*“Amb. Rice advised the group ... that the initiative would be more viable in the Council, **if packaged as an African consensus proposal rather than one driven by Eritrea's estranged neighbors Ethiopia and Djibouti.** ... Rice replied that the U.S. had no problem being tough, but that it was important for the Council to make sure ‘we have real bullets in the gun if we fire.’<sup>2</sup>*

*Ambassador Rice emphasized that any new sanctions resolution should be an **Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initiative led by Uganda in the Security Council.**<sup>3</sup>”*

*“During a September 20 bilateral meeting ... Rice reminded Museveni that past experience suggested that **the UNSC would not block a resolution led by African members and supported by the African Union.** She shared the U.S. read that, **if Burkina Faso and Uganda co-sponsor this resolution, the British will support, the French will ‘keep their heads down’ and will not block.** ... FM Kutesa noted that Uganda had no substantive concerns over including Djibouti in the resolution. His concern, he said, was that because **the AU had never passed an actual resolution that included Djibouti,** the Russian and Chinese delegations would have to consult with their capitals before agreeing to it. Rice advised Kutesa not to be overly cautious, and reasserted that **a resolution perceived to be African-led would not fail.** She noted that, if it became clear during consultations that Russia and China had insurmountable concerns about including Djibouti, they could be dealt with before the issue came to vote.<sup>4</sup>”*

As if Rice didn't conceive, incubate, and hatch the plan herself, the morning the sanctions on Eritrea were adopted on 23 December 2009, she told a bold lie stating that the sanctions were “an African initiative”. Rice knew well if her sanctions were packaged as “African” the Chinese with all their economic interests in Africa were not going to oppose it; the same was true with the Russians. As a result Uganda and Burkina Faso kowtowed and agreed to sponsor Resolution 1907 (2009) and were used as Rice's “African faces”.

## Desperate Regime with a Desperate Means

The UN sanctions against Eritrea were the result of a desperate agenda through desperate means and as the record below will show were based on utterly false premises and naked deceit. They are part and parcel of a 16-year long colluding with the minority regime in Ethiopia that was in the brink of collapse after it failed to get its way in the 1998-2000 US-backed bloody war of expansion, and a sound legal defeat in The Hague in its border claim against Eritrea. The unjustified sanctions against Eritrea should only be seen in this context.

<sup>2</sup> USUN Mission Cable, 13 June 2009. [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK590\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK590_a.html)

<sup>3</sup> USUN Mission Cable, 17 August 2009. [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK772\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK772_a.html)

<sup>4</sup> USUN Mission cable, 29 September 2009. [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK861\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09USUNNEWYORK861_a.html)

There is an open secret in the Horn of Africa: the minority regime of Ethiopia is a patented liar. The Ethiopian regime lives a lie, and lies to live. In short telling lies to the current Ethiopian leaders is as natural as breathing. The regime in Ethiopia has been deceiving the international community since its very beginning. This is a group that pocketed 95% of money that poured for drought victims in the mid 1980s by pretending to sell relief agents “sacks of grain” when in reality they were showing them warehouses full of “sacks filled with sand”<sup>5</sup> and exhibiting the same batch of grain shipment at different locations. This is also a group that had openly boasted of intentionally misled the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) to support its border claim. The regime has also been deceiving the international community with its development figures. This very fact was recently openly and nonchalantly admitted by Ethiopia’s Deputy Prime Minister, and newly promoted as TPLF’s chair, Debretsion Gebremichael.

Ambassador Avi Granot of Israel had put the culture of lie that exists in Ethiopia today in these words: "*I served 17 years ago as ambassador to Ethiopia. One of the things I learned in the region is that lying is a justified means to achieve greater opportunities.*" It looks all the lies the regime has been telling is about to catch up with it. Ethiopia is in a quagmire it cannot get out easily, no matter the wishes of all those that have been propping it up at the expense of Eritrea and Somalia.

The pack of lies used to unjustly sanction Eritrea are numerous, however, here are few fake stories that didn’t take long to unravel.

## **1. Phantom 2000 Eritrean Soldiers in Somalia**

This was the first big lie in a series of lies that were told about Eritrea’s alleged involvement in Somalia. The Somalia Monitoring Group reported in 2006 that there were “2000 fully equipped combat troops from Eritrea” fighting alongside the Union of Islamic Courts in Somalia. To make it look authentic the report added lots of details:

*“On 26 August 2006 three dhows transporting 2,000 fully equipped combat troops from Eritrea arrived at Warsheikh, located north of Mogadishu, along the coast. On arrival at Warsheikh, the troops were relocated to an area in north Mogadishu for ultimate redeployment to different ICU-held areas. They were redeployed as follows: 500 of the Eritrean troops went to Baledogle, 500 to Hilweyne training camp and 500 to Lower Shabelle, and 500 remained in Mogadishu and were stationed at Villa Baidoa and the former Police Academy, Bolisiya”*

When finally Ethiopia invaded Somalia with US logistical support on Christmas of 2006, let alone 2000 Eritrean soldiers, no one was able to find even two Eritreans fighters in Somalia.

## **2. Phantom MANPADS and Forged Serial Numbers**

The conspiracy of forged serial number MANPADS (Man-portable air-defense systems) to link Ethiopian MANPADS with a batch sold to Eritrea by Russia in 1995 is an excellent proof of the depth of US–Ethiopia

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<sup>5</sup> BBC, 3 March 2010. Ethiopia famine aid 'spent on weapons'. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8535189.stm>

collusion to frame Eritrea. As part of USA-Russia cooperation to crackdown the “proliferation” of MANPADS after the end of the cold war, the Americans had a database of serial numbers of MANPADS the Russians had sold to Eritrea. This database was passed to Ethiopia so as to paint it on some missiles the regime had in its arsenal, it will claim it had captured them in Somalia, and present it through the Monitoring Group to the UN as evidence that Eritrea had supplied these missiles to Somalia. It was an exercise of naked forgery. Here is how the story unfolded:

*“The Monitoring Group succeeded in obtaining the serial numbers of two SA-7/SA-18 surface-to-air missiles and the serial number. ... With regard to the second missile, the Russian Federation informed the Monitoring Group, ... that ‘Judging by the indicated marking, missile 9M39 from party 03-95 with number 03268 was produced in Russia in 1995’. It furthermore stated that ‘This missile was shipped to Eritrea in the same year through the state company ‘Rosvooruzhenie’”.*<sup>6</sup>

However, the 27 March 2008 Russian letter, continues to say:

*“At the same time, since the marking of the missile were executed in paint...’ and therefore ‘... a remarking is possible. For a definitive identification of the missile it is necessary to perform its visual examination by our specialists as the missile bears the marking executed differently, which will allow for the identification of the real number of the missile.”*<sup>7</sup>

Of course those who thought will get away with forgery were not willing to turn the claimed weapon to Russian expert inspection. Again the Monitoring Group was used to give another spin of this 2008 lie to push for the 2011 sanctions as well:

*“The Monitoring Group inspected three SA-18s that the Ethiopians had confiscated from Al-Shabaab in 2007 and 2008. One of the SA-18s bearing the marks ‘9M39-1, 03-95, 03267’ is in sequence with an SA-18 with marks ‘9M39-1, 03-95, 03268’ recovered by AMISOM in 2008.”*<sup>8</sup>

### **3. Phantom Eritrean Planes Landing in Baidoa**

In November 2011 Kenya, a nation not known for straight-face lies like that of Ethiopia before, allowed its reputation to wallow in the mud when it blindly decided to parrot an Ethiopian-generated fake story claiming: *“three planes from Eritrea landed in the Somalia town of Baidoa supplying arms to the Al Shabaab”*. This story was repeated as is by Western media like the New York Times, BBC and the Voice of America without any basic journalistic scrutiny. Some self-declared experts also started pointing their fingers at Eritrea.

Eritrea’s Ambassador to Kenya, Beyene Russom, confidently dismissed these “wild accusations” using these words:

*“All these are bogus propaganda fabricated by Ethiopia. It is a continuation of a series of previous lies about our government. ... These are wild accusations. They could have brought the plane down if indeed it was seen delivering arms in Baidoa. It is not possible that Eritrea*

<sup>6</sup> SEMG, Report of the M. Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1766 (2007), S/2008/274, p. 25

<sup>7</sup> SEMG, Report of the M. Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1766 (2007), S/2008/274, p. 59

<sup>8</sup> SEMG, Report of the M. Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1916 (2010), S/2011/433, p. 243

*can fly arms to Somalia. Not at all; ... Again these are the lies they [Ethiopia] have been propagating.”<sup>9</sup>*

After Resolution 2023 (2011) was adopted the Monitoring Group admitted that this lie supposedly started with one “Somali MP” over a radio broadcast, that “an intelligence report from a military source” had echoed it and later “a security-related organisation” repeated the fake story. By then Kenya was coaxed by Rice and Meles to run to New York with the story.

*“On 8 November 2011, the Government of Kenya wrote a letter to the Chair of the Security Council Committee on Somalia and Eritrea, drawing upon these reports, and asserting: ‘Available information indicates that the arms emanated from Eritrea.’”<sup>10</sup>*

This shameful accusation was repeated by Kenya’s Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula testimony before the UN Security Council the morning of 5 December 2011.

*“Since Kenya launched Operation Protect the Nation, on 16 October, in conjunction with forces from the Transitional Federal Government, to try to clean up the Al-Shabaab menace in the region, we have evidence that Eritrea has supplied arms, ammunition and other logistics to Al-Shabaab. This is truly a hostile and enemy act by a country that ought to be an active member of IGAD.”<sup>11</sup>*

The absurdity of this allegation was better exposed by Kenya’s Deputy Speaker of Parliament Farah Maalim the impossibility of Eritrea undetected flying cargo planes to Baidoa when the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean was full of American and European battle ships stationed there to prevent piracy. The Americans and French were also positioned, a stone-throw away from Eritrea in the straits of Bab-el-Mandab in Djibouti.

*“Our foreign policy is always hijacked by another state -- whether a superpower or another country in the region. ... It’s like our foreign policy, as far as the region is concerned, has been hijacked by Ethiopia. There’s no IGAD; IGAD is Ethiopia. . . . We went out there and said that Eritreans have delivered two or three planeloads of arms to Al-Shabaab in Baidoa. Very simple logic, very simple logic, would tell you that how impossible it is for a transport plane, by the way a transport plane is not a jet liner, it is not a fighter plane. It is a slow moving ship, an airship. For it to move all the way from Asmara, move through the Gulf of Eden, go into the Indian Ocean where there is this forty-ship strong armada of NATO and the EU, and then cross to Somalia and go to Baidoa, deliver its cargo and then fly back safely. There are these state of the art radars there of the superpowers, the Americans and Europeans; all of them are there. They cannot hide it. The Ethiopians of course have their own reasons for that. It is a mistake. Then the UN, through its Monitoring Group, says that information is not true. Even after the UN says that, we still persist and we are still saying ‘Eritrea is still the bad boy of the region’. Why? The only assumption is that we’re doing it for Ethiopia. We are dancing to their tunes.”<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> CapitalNews, 10 November 2011. <https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2011/11/prove-we-are-arming-shabaab-eritrea-retorts/>

<sup>10</sup> SEMG, Report of the M. Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 2002 (2011), S/2012/545, p. 10

<sup>11</sup> Moses Wetangula, Security Council 6674th Meeting Minutes, S/PV.6674, 5 December 2011, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Farah Maalim, March 15, 2012. Interview with Capital Talk’s Jeff Koinange

This utter fabrication was orchestrated to serve USUN and Ethiopia's campaign of pushing for more sanctions against Eritrea. Shortly after the passage of Resolution 2023(2011) the SEMG admitted that the Kenyans were handed a package of lies. Everything was choreographed.

*"the Monitoring Group **has found no evidence** to substantiate the allegations that one or more aircraft landed at Baidoa International Airport between 29 October and 3 November 2011, or that Eritrea supplied by air Al-Shabaab in Baidoa with arms and ammunition during the same period."*<sup>13</sup>

The West and the Monitoring Group knew well that the arms that was wrecking havoc in Somalia was not supplied by Eritrea, but Western supplied arms passed through Ethiopia. Here is the Monitoring Group's admission on the source of the overwhelming majority of arms in the Somali arms market as early as its 2008 report. This a year before Eritrea was made the scapegoat on trumped up falsification on supplying arms to Somalia.

*"According to arms traders operating at the Somali Arms Markets, **the largest suppliers of ammunition to the Somali Arms Markets are Ethiopian and Transitional Federal Government commanders.** Persons closely associated with arms transactions estimate that **up to 80 per cent of ammunition supplies to the Somali Arms Market originate from Transitional Federal Government and Ethiopian stockpiles.**"*<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the Monitoring Group had admits that it had *"Ethiopian troops who sell the arms they brought into Somalia in violation of the embargo."* Not only that AMISOM soldiers and officers are also deeply involved in the supply of weapons to Somalia. The West supplies deadly weapons to AMISOM troop contributing countries and in return these troops and their officers were and are still supplying Al-Shabaab.

#### 4. Phantom Attempts to Bomb an African Union Summits

First in 2007 and then in 2010, Ethiopia lied about Eritrea's attempt to bomb African Union sessions in Addis Ababa: *"Ethiopia has accused Eritrea of planning a bomb attack during this week's summit of African leaders in Addis Ababa. ...A government spokesman claimed the bombs were planted by senior Eritrean officials but refused to give further details."* This fabrication was designed to sully the image of Eritrea in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Monitoring Group claimed that the senior Eritrean official in charge of this mission to bomb the African Union in 2010 was a certain Gemechu Ayana. Except, from the name alone, this "senior Eritrean official" could not be an Eritrean. Both his given name and family name are common southern Ethiopian names never used in Eritrean; the languages do not match. The real Gemechu Ayana is an Ethiopian of Oromo decent and was commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> mechanized force.

UN Security Council members, who asked for evidence on this serious charge, were told the evidence was in the hands of the Ethiopians and if they wanted to see it, they have to travel to Ethiopia and verify for themselves. In response to the baseless charges that was presented to pass Resolution 2023 (2011), the late Vitaly Churkin, Russian Permanent Representative to the UN, had this to say:

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVOdYdWSKg&feature=BFa&list=UUt3SE-Mvs3WwP7UW-PiFdqQ&lf=plcp>

<sup>13</sup> UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 2002 (2011), S/2012/545, p. 11

<sup>14</sup> SEMG, Report of the M. Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1766 (2007), S/2008/274, p. 27

*“The text of the resolution contains a range of provisions that lack adequate foundation, and the role of the group of experts has been expanded beyond measure. In that respect we refer in particular to the “planned terrorist attack” in Addis Ababa during the African Union summit there. ... However, in this case, the Security Council was not presented with convincing proof of Eritrea’s involvement in that incident. We have not seen the results of any investigation of that incident, if indeed there was one.”<sup>15</sup>*

The Ethiopian regime is used to planting bombs and blaming others for it. Here is a US cable testifying to this effect.

*“On September 16, three bomb explosions were reported in the Kara Kore area of Addis Ababa. ... The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), together with the Federal Police Anti-terror Task Force later reported that the bombs were ‘part of a coordinated terror attack by the OLF and Sha’abiya (Eritrea) aimed at disrupting democratic development.’... They also said that the bombs used contained parts sourced from Eritrea and were consistent with bombs used in previous terrorist attacks. On September 20, Dr. Merera Gudina (strictly protect), the former leader of the ONC (and a typically reliable information source), contacted Post to report that the deceased had not died not while constructing a bomb, but rather at the hands of GoE cadres. Dr. Merera said that the men had been picked up by police a week prior, kept in detention and tortured. He said police then left the men in a house and detonated explosives nearby, killing 3 of them. He did not indicate whether the men were ONC or OLF affiliated. Clandestine reporting indicates that the bombs did not explode inside the structure, but rather appear to have been placed outside and detonated.”<sup>16</sup>*

## Continuous Admission of “No Evidence” Linking Eritrea w

Let’s finish by quoting how the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) has been admitting that there is no evidence to corroborate that Eritrea has any hand in Somalia starting the morning Resolutions 2023 (2011) was adopted.

- **2012**—*“The Monitoring Group **has found no evidence to support allegations of direct Eritrean support to Al-Shabaab** during the course of its present mandate. ... The Monitoring Group received no credible reports or evidence of assistance from Eritrea to armed opposition groups in Somalia during the course of the mandate.”*
- **2014**—*“The Monitoring Group **has found no evidence of Eritrean support to Al-Shabaab** during the course of its present mandate. ... it is the overall assessment of the Monitoring Group that Eritrea is a marginal actor in Somalia.”*
- **2015**— *“The Monitoring Group **found no evidence that Eritrea was supporting Al-Shabaab.**”*
- **2016**— *“For its third concurrent mandate, the Monitoring Group **has found no firm evidence***

<sup>15</sup> Security Council 6674th Meeting Minutes, S/PV.6674 (Resumption 1), 5 December 2011, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> US Diplomatic Cable, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Recent Bombings Blamed On Oromos Possibly The Work Of GOE, 6 October 2006 [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06ADDISABABA2708\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06ADDISABABA2708_a.html)

*of Eritrean support for the Somali Islamist group Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujaahidiin.”*

- **2017**—“Throughout its current mandate, the Monitoring Group investigated allegations by a neighbouring Member State of support provided by Eritrea to Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Despite receiving some corroborating information from another regional Member State and regional administrations in Somalia, the Group has not been able to substantiate the allegations. As such, the Group has, for its fourth consecutive mandate, **not found conclusive evidence of support provided by Eritrea to Al-Shabaab.**”

In face of all these admissions, it is time that the U.N. Security Council takes immediate action to terminate these illegal sanctions based on a pack of lies, without any preconditions.