



# Organization of Eritrean-Americans

23 December 2014

## **For Immediate Release**

### **On 5th Anniversary, the OEA Calls on the UN and US to lift Unjust Sanctions**

Tuesday, the day before Christmas Eve 2014, marks the fifth anniversary of another tragic day "that will live in infamy" in the history of the United Nations with regards to Eritrea. On December 23, 2009, Christmas Eve, the UN, led by Washington, adopted Resolution 1907 (2009), imposing sanctions on Eritrea based on groundless charges orchestrated by Eritrea's traditional enemies, especially Ethiopia. This was a continuation of a history of UN betrayal of Eritrea and the Eritrean people.

The Organization of Eritrean Americans (OEA) has called on President Barack Obama and the members of the UN Security Council to lift the two UN Security Council Resolutions 1907 (2009) and 2023 (2011). "It is time to do the right thing and stop unjustly punishing the people of Eritrea," the letters said. Here below are the salient portions of the two letters:

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"These two resolutions were politically motivated; they were based on naked lies and fabricated stories that came out of Ethiopia. A year ago, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and veteran Ambassador Herman Cohen, with years of experience and intimate knowledge of the region, said it well: *"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."* Eritrea, as a nation that had faced its fair share of religious extremism, is the most reliable partner we have for peace and security in the Horn of Africa. It deserves our help and positive engagement, definitely not sanctions based on lies. There was no, and there is no *"intelligence, real or fabricated"*, that links Eritrea to Al Shabab or any form of extremism in the region other than that what the Ethiopians told us. Surely, as a superpower, and a nation that takes pride in fairness and justice, we should never punish nations and people based on what we know too well to be fabrications. Thus, it is time that we take a lead in the UN Security Council to terminate these illegal sanctions against the hard working people of Eritrea and we know your leadership can play a positive role.

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"There was no rational justification to impose the sanctions in the first place, and there is even less rational explanation to maintain them now. The fact that the SEMG (Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group) had come out in the open and admitted that there is no credible evidence that links Eritrea to Somalia in its past three reports is another reason to do away with them. Thus we feel the immediate and unconditional lifting of these sanctions is long over due. "

"Furthermore, the OEA calls on the US, as one of the guarantors of the Algiers Agreement, to fulfill its obligation by demanding that Ethiopia immediately and unconditionally vacate the sovereign Eritrean territories it is illegally occupying, including the town of Badme. No nation, large or small, should be allowed to get away with breaking international law. The US government's action in the past, as Congressman Dana Rohrabacher lamented recently, *'has undermined our ability to arbitrate other disputes.'* In essence we are eroding our own credibility when we let Ethiopian leaders *off the hook.'*

"The OEA is convinced that a long-term and fruitful relationship between Eritrea and the US is essential for maintaining peace and security, and fighting off poverty and extremism in the Horn of Africa. Therefore, we ask your administration to do what is moral and ethical and constructively engage Eritrea and the Eritrean people. As Americans of Eritrean origin we are ready to contribute to a future of engagement, cooperation and better relations between our two countries."

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