



**OEA Statement
For Immediate Release**

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An Ill-Advised and Uninformed Hearing on Eritrea

A hearing on Eritrea scheduled by the House subcommittee on Africa for Wednesday, September 14, 2016, titled “Eritrea: A Neglected Regional Threat,” is ill-advised and seems to reflect complete lack of knowledge of the reality in the Horn of Africa region. The hearing does not augur well for the US Congress to dwell on Eritrea and a non-existent threat, while ignoring the real regional threat that is in Ethiopia. This diversion will only embolden the regime in Ethiopia and allow it to continue with its belligerent stance against Eritrea and its people.

Depicting Eritrea as a regional threat can only come from the twisted minds of Ethiopia’s lobbyists and their enablers in Washington in a futile attempt to protect their client in Addis Ababa from the condemnation of world opinion it deserves. The officials of the minority regime in Addis Ababa are experts at using everyone and everything to implement their agenda of demonizing Eritrea.

The hearing is also an insult to the people of Eritrea who just celebrated their 25th Independence Anniversary without ever being a threat to the region, but rather as the only haven of peace in a turbulent region. For this august body to provide forum to known apologists for the regime in Ethiopia, to disseminate distortions about Eritrea and its people and undermine its proud cultures of religious and ethnic respect and tolerance, is a disservice to the American people in general and Eritrean Americans in particular.

Any fair-minded assessment of the reality in the Horn of Africa would show the small and young African nation of Eritrea as an anchor for peace, not a regional threat, in the Horn. It is the only country that has successfully weathered the turmoil that has ravaged all the other nations in the Greater Horn region, stretching from Burundi to South Sudan, from Kenya to Somalia, and now engulfing the biggest nation, Ethiopia, in the center.

Some see the hearing as a desperate attempt to take world attention away from the murderous acts now being committed against innocent Ethiopians by the minority regime ruling that Horn of African country. Here is where the subcommittee’s attention should be because what the regime has been doing and continues to do with little response from the West may in fact lead to the disintegration of this African nation, constituting a major threat to this region.

The US has repeatedly allowed itself to be used in this game of victimizing Eritrea in an attempt to prop minority regimes and keep a tattered empire, Ethiopia, together. Washington must learn from the errors of such misguided policies that seem to benefit neither the US nor the region. For example, rewarding a regime that is conducting mass massacres against the two largest ethnic

groups in the country (the Amharas and the Oromos), with seats on the UN Security Council and UN Human Rights Council doesn't show concern for justice or any of the other values Washington says it fights to protect.

The regime in Ethiopia continues to flout international law because of the diplomatic, political and military shield and support it receives from the United States and its allies. Its occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories, and its ethnic policies that had resulted in the uprooting of and deporting nearly 80,000 Ethiopians of Eritrean origin from their homes and villages in 1998-2000 is now continuing with Ethiopians that do not belong to the same ethnic group as those in power, and its invasion and occupation of Somalia has contributed to the humanitarian disasters across the region. The regime remains the only threat to peace, stability and security in the region.

As Americans of Eritrean origin we have a vested interest in seeing peace, stability and security returned to the Horn region. However, demonizing the only nation that is serving as an anchor for peace in the region in an attempt to protect the real regional threat, Ethiopia, doesn't help maintain security in this troubled region.

Organization of Eritrean Americans (OEA)