



# SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



18 May 2010 No. 2

## PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA: DJIBOUTI

### Expected Council Action

On Wednesday, 19 May, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti is scheduled to address the Council in an open meeting. In a letter sent earlier this month Guelleh requested to appear before the Council to discuss Horn of Africa issues. He is expected to address both Djibouti's border dispute with Eritrea, as well as the situation in Somalia.

### Background and Key Recent Developments

In June the Council is expecting a report from the Secretary-General on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of resolution 1907 adopted on 23 December 2009. This resolution reiterated the demands of resolution 1862 of January 2009 that Eritrea:

- withdraw its forces to their positions before the outbreak of the border clashes with Djibouti in June 2008;
- acknowledge the border dispute and engage in dialogue with Djibouti; and
- abide by its international obligations as a UN member state and cooperate with the Secretary-General's good offices.

It also demanded that Eritrea support the Djibouti peace process and the reconciliation efforts of the Somali government and cease all efforts to destabilise the government, as well as any support to armed opposition groups in the region.

The resolution imposed an arms embargo on Eritrea and targeted sanctions (travel ban and assets freeze) on individuals or entities that violate the arms embargo, support armed groups seeking to destabilise the region or obstruct implementation of resolution 1862 concerning Djibouti. However, such targeted sanctions have yet to be implemented by the Somalia/Eritrea Sanctions Committee.

Eritrea has so far responded defiantly to resolution 1907 and has not complied with any of the demands of resolution 1862. It seems to maintain its long-held position that the border dispute with Djibouti is a fabrication instigated by the US. It also continues to deny any involvement in Somalia.

In January, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki sent a letter to the Council calling for a repeal of resolution 1907. He accused the Council of ignoring Ethiopia's "lawless defiance" of the final and binding decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission on the border demarcation between the two countries and reiterated his criticism of American policy in the Horn of Africa, accusing the US of harassing his country. He also renewed Eritrea's denial of any involvement in Somalia and rejected the notion of any border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti.

In April the chair of the Somalia/Eritrea Sanctions Committee, Mexican Ambassador Claude Heller, accompanied by Council members Turkey, Uganda and the US at expert level, visited Eritrea as part of a trip to the region to raise awareness about the Somalia and Eritrea sanctions regimes and discuss some of the findings and recommendations of the Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group's report, presented to the Council in March. (The original itinerary included stops in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates. However, because of the disruption of air travel following the volcanic eruption

in Iceland, the trip was cut short and in the end included only Yemen and Kenya in addition to Eritrea.) In Asmara, Heller met with the president's Chief of Staff Yemane Gebremeskel, Presidential Adviser Yemane Ghebreab and Foreign Minister Osman Mohammed Saleh, among others.

Following these meetings, Eritrea sent a letter to the Council detailing its positions on resolution 1907 and on the border dispute with Ethiopia, its relations with Djibouti and the situation in Somalia. It reiterated well-known positions, once again denying any border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti. It also called on the Council to revoke resolution 1907, take punitive action against Ethiopia to end its occupation of Eritrean territory and launch a comprehensive investigation of the crisis in Somalia aimed at finding a durable solution.

Djibouti for its part has continued to support the Djibouti peace process and has indicated its willingness to contribute special forces to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Most recently, it was reported that Djibouti sent a delegation to Mogadishu in April to mediate in the recent political dispute involving members of the Somali parliament, its speaker Sheikh Adan Madobe and the Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. The dispute escalated, however, and on 17 May Madobe announced his resignation and Somalia Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke was voted out of office by parliament.

### Options

The main option for the Council at this stage is to simply listen to President Guelleh's briefing. In addition, Council members could also use this opportunity to express their national positions on the issues.

### Council Dynamics

While Guelleh's request was not very specific as it only refers to Horn of Africa issues, it seems there was no opposition to allowing him to address the Council. Council members are likely interested in Djibouti's position on the issues, in particular in relation to the border dispute with Eritrea.

It was unclear at press time whether Council members would speak in response to Guelleh's intervention. However, any substantive discussion on the issues is unlikely as Council members held a debate on Somalia just last week and are waiting for the Secretary-General's June report on implementation of resolution 1907 to consider the border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti.

### UN Documents

#### Selected Security Council Resolutions

- S/RES/1916 (19 March 2010) extended the mandate of the Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group and requested the Secretary-General to reestablish it for a period of 12 months with three additional experts.
- S/RES/1907 (23 December 2009) imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against Eritrea.
- S/RES/1862 (14 January 2009) demanded that Eritrea withdraw its forces within five weeks to the positions of the status quo ante in its border dispute with Djibouti and engage in dialogue to resolve the dispute.

#### Selected Presidential Statements

- S/PRST/2009/15 (18 May 2009) called on the Monitoring Group to investigate reports that Eritrea had supplied arms to insurgent groups in Somalia. (It also condemned the renewed fighting by Al-Shabaab and other extremists in Somalia and demanded an immediate end to the violence.)
- S/PRST/2008/20 (12 June 2008) called for a ceasefire between Djibouti and Eritrea.

#### Reports of the Secretary-General

- S/2010/234 (11 May 2010) was the latest report from the Secretary-General on Somalia.
- S/2009/163 (30 March 2009) was the Secretary-General's response to the Council's request in resolution 1862 for a report on the situation between Djibouti and Eritrea and the parties' compliance with their obligations.

## Selected Meeting Record

- S/PV.6254 (23 December 2009) was the adoption of resolution 1907 with explanations of vote.

## Other

- S/2010/225 (3 May 2010) was a letter from Eritrea to the Sanctions Committee chair.
- SC/9904 (12 April 2010) was the press release from the Somalia/Eritrea Sanctions Committee announcing designations of individuals and entities for targeted sanctions.
- S/2010/91 (10 March 2010) was the letter from the chair of the Sanctions Committee transmitting the Monitoring Group's latest report.
- S/2010/116 (1 March 2010) was a letter from Eritrea transmitting a copy of a letter to the Secretary-General from a campaign organised by the Organisation of Eritrean Americans calling for the annulment of sanctions against it.
- S/2010/69 (4 February 2010) was a letter from Eritrea protesting against an Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) communiqué in support of resolution 1907.
- S/2010/59 (28 January 2010) was a letter from Eritrea transmitting President Afwerki's call for resolution 1907 to be repealed.
- S/2009/666 (23 December 2009) was a letter from Eritrea transmitting a press release entitled "A shameful day for the UN".
- S/2008/294 (5 May 2008) was a letter from Djibouti bringing the situation at its border with Eritrea to the Council's attention.

## Other Relevant Facts

### Chairman of the Somalia/Eritrea Sanctions Committee

Claude Heller (Mexico)

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