

The Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) Report

Written by Administrator

Monday, 28 February 2011 13:00 -



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The UN Monitoring Group for Somalia says it will publish its full report in July 2011 but once again, in violation of its mandate, has chosen to secretly “distribute” in advance its report on Eritrea, no doubt to prejudice public opinion against Eritrea when the final report is delivered in July. The report undermines the non-partisan nature of the Monitoring Group and its stated mandate. Unfortunately, it continues to regurgitate and present for fact the minority regime in Ethiopia’s version of the truth and ignores verifiable facts right in front of its face. Despite its extensive travel itinerary, 22 countries and “some more than once” and meetings with over one hundred individuals, it fails to produce a coherent report that reflects the true nature of the crisis in Somalia.

On 23 December 2009, the Security Council adopted the US engineered illegal, unfair and unjust resolution against the State of Eritrea. Susan Rice, US Ambassador to the United Nations said that it was an “African Initiative”-By now, thanks to Wikileaks, everyone knows the truth about the whole sordid affair, the backroom arms twisting and lies, and the shameful shenanigans of US Ambassadors in the region. The cables show how Johnnie Carson, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs used the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) and African Union (AU) against Eritrea. They show his incessant campaign of vilification and defamation of the State of Eritrea and its leadership. It is no wonder then that he is now considered persona non grata in Eritrea.

Fortunately, not everyone was fooled by the illicit US and Ethiopian sponsored campaign to scapegoat Eritrea. Despite the illicit campaigns by US State Department officials including the US Deputy Assistant Secretary Karl Wycoff’s globe trotting campaign to vilify and isolate Eritrea and get support for sanctions against Eritrea, according to the 11/18/2009 leaked cable, the Europeans were reluctant to sanction Eritrea. They were also suspicious about the role of Ethiopia. Here is what the cable said:

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“...The EU representative saw the "long arm of Ethiopia" behind the sanctions initiative...”

Eritreans were not surprised by any of the revelations on Wikileaks and confirmed what Eritreans had long suspected. Anyway, more on the cables next time. For today, I will address the latest “leaked” Monitoring Group’s Report on Eritrea.

The Monitoring Group begins its report with the following statement:

“...The Monitoring Group has observed little change in the Security situation inside Somalia since its March 2010 report...”

Isn't in fact true that the situation in Somalia has deteriorated significantly since March 2010? Allow me to present the following monthly assessments by USAID; it may serve as a useful “resource” in putting together the final Report.

USAID Situation Report #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-Issued 10 March 2010:

“...On March 5, UNHCR reported that approximately 28,200 people have been displaced within Somalia as of February 1. Of the total, an estimated 25,900 individuals were displaced from or within Mogadishu, including 19,600 people that fled the city and 6,300 others displaced to other areas within Mogadishu...”

USAID Situation Report #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-Issued 15 April 2010

“...According to UNHCR, violence displaced approximately 168,000 Somalis between January 1 and March 25, 2010, an 82 percent increase over the 92,000 displacements recorded during the same period in 2009. On March 25, UNHCR confirmed that

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approximately 97 percent of all displacement in 2010 to date resulted from insecurity...”

USAID Situation Report #5, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-Issued 14 May 2010

“...Ongoing conflict and insecurity in south and central Somalia continue to result in displacement and reduced humanitarian access to affected populations.

According to OCHA, UNHCR estimates that conflict displaced 12,700 people...”

USAID Situation Report #6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-Issued 17 June 2010

“...UNHCR estimates that conflict had displaced 59,800 people countrywide between

April 1 and June 11, including 40,500 individuals from Mogadishu. Of those displaced from Mogadishu, an estimated 23,100 individuals fled the city and 17,400 people relocated to other areas within Mogadishu.

Between May 21 and June 4, UNHCR reported that fighting had displaced approximately 17,400 people from Mogadishu....”

USAID Situation Report #7, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-Issued 22 July 2010

“...Ongoing conflict continues to result in population displacement in Somalia, particularly from and within Mogadishu and surrounding areas. On July 9, OCHA reported that conflict and insecurity had displaced an estimated 200,000 individuals since January 2010, including approximately 20,900 individuals displaced during June. Between July 1 and July 16, UNHCR reported that insecurity had displaced approximately 14,200 people, including 11,500 individuals from or within Mogadishu...”

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USAID Fact Sheet #8, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-Issued 28 September 2010:

“...As of September 17, violence had displaced more than 32,000 people, according to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Human rights staff working in the area reported approximately 640 injuries and 300 deaths due to the fighting. Violence included an August 24 suicide attack on a Mogadishu hotel that resulted in more than 150 deaths, including four TGF Parliament members...”

The latest report by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says:

“...The number of war-wounded patients in ICRC-supported hospitals in Mogadishu has sharply increased since 2009. The two referral hospitals for war casualties in the city – Keysaney and Medina – admitted 5,000 such patients from January through September. Among them were 1,900 women and children...”

On 5 December 2010, Garoweonline reported the following:

“...At least 202 people have been killed and more than 35 others wounded in two days of fighting between African Union (AU) forces and al-Shabab fighters in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, Radio Garowe reports....On Saturday, the fighting caused 12 deaths and 20 wounded, while at least 10 people were killed and 15 others wounded during Sunday's heavy clashes...”

Suffice it mention the headlines until February 2011:

7 December 2010, Associated Press (AP) - **“Clan fighting in central Somalia kills 20”**

9 December 2010, **“Puntland police kill 2 assassins, blame Al Shabaab”**

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12 December 2010, “**15 killed in Mogadishu clashes over weekend**”

14 December 2010, - “**Dawn battle erupts in Mogadishu**”

17 December 2010, “**Somalia: 20 killed, 35 wounded in Mogadishu attacks**”

Somalia: 10 killed, 20 wounded in Mogadishu fighting

Somalia Jan 29, 2011 (Garowe Online)

Somalia: Young man killed in Somaliland bomb blast

At least one young man was killed in a deadly bomb blast in the capital of Somalia's
Jan 29, 2011

Somalia: Anti-Somaliland demonstration in Las Anod turns violent

Somalia Jan 31, 2011

Jan 29, 2011 **Somalia: 5 killed in Mogadishu, as firm begins work at airport**

Somalia Feb 1, 2011 Feb 1, 2011

Somalia: 20 killed in Mogadishu as TFG soldiers open fire indiscriminately

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At least 20 people were killed Monday including many civilians after Transitional
Jan 31, 2011

Somalia: 11 killed, 37 wounded in Mogadishu insurgency clashes

Somalia Feb 10, 2011

Somalia: 87 killed as Puntland warns Somaliland 'not to attack civilians'

Somalia Feb 8, 2011 (Garowe Online)

Now if “security situation” has a different meaning in UN lingo...I stand corrected, but if it means the wellbeing and security of the Somali people, I think the situation HAS NOT remained unchanged. It has actually deteriorated...dangerously.

In its 9 February report the MG said that it:

“...relies first and foremost on its own, independent investigative capacity. Information provided by States is extremely valuable to the SEMG, but serves a primarily corroborative function...”

In any case, since they asked to go to Eritrea, the Government of Eritrea obliged and allowed

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them to come. The MG visited Eritrea in September 2010 and again on January 2011. The Group met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense, National Security Agency, Civil Aviation Authority, Commercial bank, the People's Front for Democracy and justice, the Red Sea Corporation, and Housing and Commerce Bank. The group also met with the diplomatic community in Asmara...

Yet the MG says it considered the Eritrean government's cooperation to have been "disappointing". Why is that? Did the MG think that it had been given a Godly right to invade Eritrea's sovereignty and be given carte blanches access to everything in the country? Considering the fact that the resolution was illegal to begin with, they ought to be grateful that they were even allowed to enter Eritrea. It is not Eritrea that has to prove its innocence, it is the Security Council that has taken punitive actions against Eritrea (sanctions) without providing an iota of evidence to support the "made in Ethiopia" allegations. So don't expect Eritrea to lay out the red carpet...

Eritrea was sanctioned because it did not "recognize" the illegitimate Transitional National Government of Somalia (TNG) Eritrea's is not obliged under the UN Charter or international law to "recognize the Transitional National Government of Somalia". There is nothing in international law or the UN Charter that says Eritrea has to bless and "recognize" illegitimate governments, especially when they are not recognized by their own peoples. Several Arab countries have refused to recognize the State of Israel, but we don't see them being sanctioned for that.

Self-determination constitutes a limit to SC Chapter VII action and implies that the Council does not have the power to impose or introduce under Chapter VII any particular form of government, rule or administration upon the entire or part of the population of any State against its people's will. Today, the UN and its partners are calling for the removal of the TNG led by Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. Once again, Eritrea will not be party to such illegal acts. Eritrea's principled position on Somalia and the call for respect for the right of the Somali peoples to self determination remains unchanged.

The MG also mentions Ethiopian opposition groups and Eritrea's support for such groups. Once again, this is not based on facts but on what the minority regime's version. Once again, allow me to refer to the comments of Donald Yamamoto as written in the cabled dated 11/28/2007:

"...The Ethiopian leadership has stressed in public and in private that the Ogaden counter insurgency operation is critical to the security (and survival) of the government,

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and that the ONLF must be neutralized. Second, the Ogaden is very much tied to Somalia. The ONLF has safe haven in Somalia from clans opposed to the GoE. Prime Minister Meles points to the declaration by extremists in Somalia to take the battle into Ethiopia and argues that the infiltration into Ethiopia by extremist figures like Aden Ayrow justifies GoE's prosecution of a brutal and excessive counter insurgency operation in the Ogaden.... The role Eritrea plays in Somalia, for instance, is probably insignificant. Although there is significant speculation and circumstantial evidence of Eritrean support, Post has received no explicit evidence provided by any source outside of the GoE [Government of Ethiopia] that shows significant Eritrean support for the ONLF ..."

Emboldened by the Security Council's sanctions against Eritrea, the minority regime launched attacks on Eritrea and continues to finance, harbor and train terrorist groups such as the Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and 10 other groups which have launched attacks from Ethiopia.

The arms embargo violates Eritrea's inherent right to self-defense. The right to self-defense is one of the most basic rights of any state. In recognition of this, Articles 2 and 51 of the U.N. Charter codify that right and affirm that every state is entitled to use self-defense to protect its territorial integrity and political independence. When the Security Council acts on matters affecting peace and security, it must do so within the confines of both the U.N. Charter and the inherent rights of its member states. Thus Security Council resolutions may coexist with Eritrea's inherent right to self-defense, but they cannot abridge that right. By imposing an arms embargo on Eritrea and thereby preventing it from defending its territory and population from Ethiopia's aggression and occupation, and terrorist acts from groups that it finances, harbors and trains, the Security Council will be acting beyond its authority. The MG should endeavor to report accurately on the situation on the ground and not become a mouthpiece for the minority regime in Ethiopia and its handlers.

The Security Council has failed for the last 12 years to take "effective action" to restore Eritrea's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Eritrea is under direct military attack by groups sponsored by the minority regime in Ethiopia and also by the regime's own forces who continue to occupy sovereign Eritrean territories. Although the Security Council has spilled much ink on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border issue and adopted over two dozen resolutions calling on Ethiopia to abide by its international obligations, Ethiopia continues to occupy sovereign Eritrean territories, including Badme.

The MG mentions the Djibouti-Eritrea issue in its biased report. It says:

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“...Eritrea declined to discuss the issue with the SEMG on the grounds that it is now being addressed under the auspices of the Government of Qatar...the Government of Eritrea’s conduct may obstruct the implementation of resolution 1862...”

The Government of Eritrea and the Government of Djibouti both agreed to allow Qatar to mediate. Security Council Resolution calls on the two parties to resolve their issues peacefully. It also calls on both parties to withdraw their forces “to the positions before fighting broke out between the two countries on 10 June 2008”. Eritrea is in compliance. One more thing, there is nothing in the UN Charter that says the Security Council and its Committees can violate the sovereign rights of the member states.

As I have stated in the past, through Resolution 1907 (2009)-the Security Council again overstepped its boundaries by forcing Eritrea to accept recommendations which violated Eritrea’s rights under the UN Charter which are enshrined in Article 33. Now the MG wants to do the same. Article 33 clearly says:

“...The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice...”

In addition, Article 95 of the UN Charter says:

“...Nothing in the present Charter shall prevent Members of the United Nations from entrusting the solution of their differences to other tribunals by virtue of agreements already in existence or which may be concluded in the future...”

Members of the United Nations are at complete liberty to solve their disputes as they deem fit so long as they do so in a way that does not endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Despite the saber rattling and deliberate misinformation by certain quarters, Eritrea is not occupying a single inch of Djiboutian territory and the brotherly people of Djibouti and Eritrea are working to find mutually acceptable forums to iron out their problems, without resorting to the use of force. And that is all that they are required to do by resolution 1862.

The MGs primary responsibility is to find out who is violating the Somalia Arms Embargo and not to fish to incriminate Eritrea. At the time the sanctions were imposed on Eritrea neither the MG, nor the US Security Council had any evidence except hearsay and allegations from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda, three mercenary regimes with a vested interest in sustaining the chaos and violence in Somalia. In addition, there were many other states that were mentioned in past MG reports and yet, Eritrea was singled out, labeled a spoiler, and sanctioned-for not

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recognizing the illegitimate TNG.

As the 12/27/2009 Wikileaks cable 'DAS WYCOFF DISCUSSES SOMALIA AND ERITREA WITH DJIBOUTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER', clearly shows, there were countries (US allies) that were providing arms to Somalia in violation of the Somalia Arms Embargo and yet, the US and its partners in the Horn region chose to scapegoat Eritrea and sanction Eritrea without ever producing any evidence to support their wild allegations. Let us take a look at what the cable said:

“...FM Youssouf stated that Algeria was providing 30 tons of arms to the TFG; the shipment was currently in Dire Dawa (Ethiopia), and would arrive in Djibouti December 9 or 10. The TFG had previously considered delivery by road, but was concerned about theft. Wycoff urged that care be taken in handing over the arms to avoid their being misappropriated, noting that the USG worked through AMISOM to try to ensure best use was made of any lethal equipment provided. Noting that Djibouti had previously shipped weapons to the TFG in April and June (ref B), FM Youssouf stated that Djibouti would ship the Algerian arms on to the TFG only to specific locations when specified by President Sharif...”

Despite its intensive globetrotting, it is preparing to deliver another biased and hollow report, further undermining the MG's credibility, integrity and most of all the neutrality. Once again, Somalia bleeds... heavily. Peace and stability remain just as illusive. The immeasurable suffering of the people of Somalia continues and the violence rages unabated. Instead of finding real solutions for the Somalia crisis, the MG has decided to work with those who are determined to prevent a strong central government from being established in Somalia and with those who are working to disintegrate Somalia into three, or four autonomous regions.

Once again, the people of Eritrea will reject the MG's findings and any subsequent actions taken by the Security Council at the behest of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda, US-backed mercenary regimes in the region.

The rule of law must prevail over the law of the jungle!

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