



Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea
To the United Nations, New York

Statement

By

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Mr. President
Mr. Secretary-General
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first join previous speakers in expressing my delegation's deepest sympathies and condolences to the families, the people and the Government of Kenya on the terrorist attack at Westgate Mall in Nairobi.

It is almost two generations now since Eritrea first begun to lodge petitions for justice to this august body. Sadly, in all these instances, this assembly has persisted in ignoring Eritrea's pleas; shuttering its door as a "closed monastery". These setbacks notwithstanding, Eritrea remains firmly convinced that the promotion of peoples' rights and interests, and, mutual respect among the community of nations, will remain precarious without an international body that upholds the supremacy of international law and justice. As such, our choice, like those of other peoples, has been and remains the funneling of efforts towards expediting the reform of the United Nations.

To isolate and focus on the harms meted to the people and State of Eritrea may convey the false impression of "an aberration" in an otherwise effective and well-functioning UN. As it is, the particularity of our case only amplifies the wider backdrop of a UN debilitated by chronic weaknesses and shortcomings. In the event, my message today will primarily focus on the urgency of reforming the UN and for redressing the injustices committed against the people of Eritrea as well as the peoples of the world.

The negative experiences gleaned in the first fifty years after the formation of the UN; the paralysis and constraints under which the UN had to operate in the realities of the Cold War in a bi-polar world, had accentuated the need for structural reform of the UN at that time. In Eritrea's case, our inalienable right to independence was trampled at the onset of the Cold War since the country was perceived as a mere pawn in the overriding strategic rivalry of both superpowers. Our liberation struggle was likewise suppressed by both superpowers in alternating fashion for the same strategic considerations and shifting alliances. This history of yesterday is too fresh in our minds to induce in us some nostalgia for the Cold War. Our call for reform of the UN is not, thus, influenced by some innate preference for the return of the old, bi-polar configuration to replace the prevailing uni-polar world order.

The fact is the UN should have undergone incremental reform and revitalization during the fifty years of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War was certainly the most auspicious moment for undertaking the belated task. Indeed, it is clear in retrospect now that had these reforms occurred then, the wars and destructions that have unfolded in the past twenty years would have been avoided. However, the major powers who controlled the UN General Assembly, as well as its different institutions and agencies, through partial hegemony, felt after 1991 that they were better positioned to secure and consolidate their total domination of the UN. In the event, they blocked any reform of the UN to stem the historic opportunity for the prevalence of international peace and justice.

In the past twenty years we have witnessed:

- excessive control of global resources and creation of spheres of influence thereby triggering international instability;
- the use of force and coercion as primary instruments for controlling global resources while preventing and denying others the opportunity to acquire comparable military capabilities and technology.
- the deployment of international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the IMF in order to control the global economy, thereby entailing intractable global financial crisis with lethal ramifications to the majority of the peoples of the world;
- the misuse of the mass media and cultural centers in order to create false images and to promote decadent value systems, intimidate peoples as well as -demonize any dissension.
- the employment of various subterfuges in order to control, directly or indirectly, all international, continental, regional, governmental and non-governmental bodies.

These manifestations of the current world order, can be corroborated, beyond abstract analysis, by numerous specific cases and evidences related to particular events, places and time. This is precisely why the 21st century requires a revitalized United Nations that transcends a bipolar or uni-polar world order and that is firmly rooted on the supremacy of, and respect for, international law and justice.

Mr. President,

As intimated above, Eritrea, like other African States that were formed during the colonial scramble, should have attained its sovereign independence during the process of decolonization that transpired in the aftermath of the Second World War. The inalienable national rights of the Eritrean people were however compromised to serve the strategic interests of the United States that had emerged as a triumphant power. Eritrea was thus doomed to colonial rule by proxy. The people of Eritrea had to endure colonial suppression for almost 40 years under successive regimes who were propped up, alternately, by the US for the first 23 years and by the former Soviet Union for the subsequent 17 years. The Eritrean people had to wage their liberation struggle under these conditions which exacted heavy sacrifices from them to achieve their independence in 1991. This historical truth, coupled with other similar phenomena, illustrates the perils of a world order that is driven by the rivalry of domineering super-powers and highlights the need and urgency of an effective United Nations.

The Eritrean people were neither compensated for the transgressions meted to them nor given respite in the subsequent years. As they embarked on the arduous task of rebuilding their war-torn country, they again became pawns in the wider, Horn of Africa/Middle East, chessboard of domination and influence to suffer unjust and distorted policies for the past twenty years. In this respect:

- “Border conflicts” that do not have political and legal justifications, and that were never raised prior to the independence of Eritrea in 1991, were subtly fomented to ensnare Eritrea in a spiral of crises.

- Although the Boundary Commission had rendered its “final and binding” decision in 2002, the spurious “border conflict” that erupted under the rubric of “Badme” continued to simmer for 11 years due to obstructive violations by the US Administration.
- The Eritrean people were also subjected to a sustained human trafficking campaign, illicit measures aimed at undermining economic growth and development as well as diplomatic and propaganda campaigns of demonization.
- Going even further, US officials imposed unlawful sanctions against Eritrea in 2009 through the UN Security Council. Four years on, they insist on maintaining the sanctions despite the lack of any evidence or justification by relying on widely discredited “reports” of the Monitoring group.
- Beyond Eritrea, the same approaches and policies have exacerbated crises and further undermined stability, development and cooperation in Somalia and other parts of the horn of Africa.

Despite these massive hostility and in the face of tremendous odds, the people and government of Eritrea have remained steadfast, prioritized development efforts and the improvement of the lives of citizens and have worked persistently to make their modest contribution to regional peace and stability, including by fighting terrorism and piracy. Their achievements, given the difficulties they faced, have been remarkable, even though they fall far short of their aspirations. Looking forward, the people and government of Eritrea are prepared to link hands with regional and international partners, including the United Nations, and to work for the betterment of their country, for peace, stability and regional integration in the Horn of Africa and a fairer and more just world.

Mr. President,

The transgressions that have been perpetrated against the people of Eritrea and other peoples in the past twenty years speak to the persistence of an unfair and unjust global order and the absence of a strong and representative United Nations. And yet, the telltale signs of the advent of a new, promising, era are discernible. In this context, I add the voice of the Eritrean people to other voices in the world to urge the UN General Assembly to keep this flicker of hope alive in its current session and to adopt timely resolutions aimed at a fundamental reform of the UN. The fact is this august assembly has legal, moral and historical obligations and responsibilities entrusted to it by the peoples of the world that it cannot shrug off.

In conclusion, I urge the UN to pass practical resolutions that are commensurate with its legal, political and moral responsibilities to:

- uphold the rule of law;
- bring to an end the invasion of our sovereign territories;
- lift the unlawful and harmful sanctions against Eritrea;
- terminate interventions that jeopardize peace and stability of the peoples of the Horn of Africa; and
- deter all acts that breed crises, loss of life and destruction.

I thank you.