



Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/628
10 July 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 10 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you a statement issued on 10 July 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea concerning the alarming statements of the Ethiopian Prime Minister concerning the expulsion of Eritrean civilians from Ethiopia.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement issued on 10 July 1998 by the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

Ethiopian Prime Minister "Justifies" mass expulsion
of Eritrean civilians

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia said yesterday that his Government "has the unrestricted right to expel any foreigner from the country for any reason whatsoever". In an interview on Ethiopian television, the Ethiopian Prime Minister said, "Any foreigner, whether Eritrean, Japanese, etc., lives in Ethiopia because of the good will of the Ethiopian Government. If the Ethiopian Government says 'Go, because we don't like the colour of your eyes', they have to leave".

In a bid to justify this alarming and extremist statement, unbecoming to any Head of Government, Prime Minister Meles said expelling foreign citizens was the "unrestricted right" of any State and was not "linked in any way with the issue of human rights". He further revealed that any criticism, like that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, would not deter Ethiopia from expelling Eritreans.

As the Prime Minister spoke on television, the Government of Ethiopia started a new wave of massive arrests of Eritreans from Ethiopia. Hundreds of Eritreans were arrested yesterday night and today. These include the families of Eritreans who have already been deported to Eritrea. Previously, the Government of Ethiopia had said that the families of those deported could stay in Ethiopia if they wished. Now, however, they are being arrested, many separated from their under-age children, and left with no one to look after their property.

To date over six thousand Eritreans have arrived in Eritrea after having been deported from Ethiopia. Almost all are permanent residents who have lived in Ethiopia for decades. Many are Ethiopian citizens who were expelled because of their ethnic origin.
