



**Conseil Economique
et Social**

Distr.
GENERALE

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/36
5 août 1998

FRANCAIS
Original : ANGLAIS

COMMISSION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Sous-Commission de la lutte contre
les mesures discriminatoires et
de la protection des minorités
Cinquantième session
Point 2 de l'ordre du jour

QUESTION DE LA VIOLATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES LIBERTES
FONDAMENTALES, Y COMPRIS LA POLITIQUE DE DISCRIMINATION RACIALE
ET DE SEGREGATION AINSI QUE LA POLITIQUE D'APARTHEID, DANS TOUS
LES PAYS, EN PARTICULIER DANS LES PAYS ET TERRITOIRES COLONIAUX
ET DEPENDANTS : RAPPORT DE LA SOUS-COMMISSION ETABLI EN APPLICATION
DE LA RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII) DE LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Note du secrétariat

1. Par une lettre datée du 24 juillet 1998, le Représentant permanent de l'Erythrée auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève a prié le Haut-Commissaire aux droits de l'homme de faire distribuer en tant que document de la cinquantième session de la Sous-Commission, au titre du point 2 de l'ordre du jour, le texte de la déclaration publiée à Asmara, le 3 juillet 1998, par le Ministère des affaires étrangères de l'Erythrée et intitulée "Violations flagrantes des droits de l'homme commises par l'Ethiopie à l'encontre d'Erythréens vivant sur son territoire", ainsi que le texte de la déclaration publiée le 24 juillet 1998 par le Ministère des affaires étrangères de l'Erythrée et intitulée "Violations flagrantes des droits fondamentaux de civils érythréens perpétrées par l'Ethiopie". Ces déclarations avaient été déjà communiquées, l'une au Président de l'Assemblée générale et au Président du Conseil de sécurité, l'autre au Président du Conseil de sécurité, et figurent dans les documents A/52/974-S/1998/611 et S/1998/690, qui ont été distribuées à tous les participants.

2. Dans la même lettre, le Représentant permanent de l'Erythrée a demandé que soit distribué un document de l'agence de presse érythréenne (ERINA) daté du 13 juillet 1998. Ce document est reproduit en annexe tel quel, dans la langue dans laquelle il a été reçu.

Annex

Eritrean News Agency (ERINA)

ERINA Update

Monday, July 13, 1998

The Ethiopian government has been conducting an intensive hate campaign, with few parallels in our contemporary times, through its domestic mass media since the eruption of the border conflict last May. This campaign, which centres on distortion of the root causes of the conflict, the fabrication of outright lies, and particularly a demonization of Eritrean society and its institutions which are routinely portrayed as "racists and fascists," is designed to foment irrational hatred among the Ethiopian people so that they may support the regime's war plans without hesitation. The Ethiopian government appears to be changing gear now to solicit international support for its war aims through a similar campaign in the international press. Recent statements and press releases from the Office of the Government Spokesperson illustrate the extent of this vilification campaign.

i) In one of his inflammatory statements on Tigray Radio on May 28, 1998, the Governor of Tigray Administrative Region, Ghebru Asrat, retorted that "the Eritreans feel superior and look down on the Tigrayans ... They have always claimed and boasted: one germ exterminator can kill thousands of flies, one cat can kill fifty rats." The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry now falsely attributes this quotation to Eritrea's Head of State alleging in its press release of July 9, 1998, "Implying Eritrean superiority, Isaias has previously made insulting references to one flit (fly spray) can kill 1,000 flies."

ii) The same press release alleges that "Eritrea has expelled 200 Ethiopians into Djibouti ... These expulsions came after two and a half hour radio and TV appearance by President Isaias yesterday which was clearly intended to invoke violence against Ethiopian people." This is again pure fabrication. The Ethiopians, most of whom were stranded in Assab due to the closure of the road after the eruption of the conflict, were not expelled but left of their free will. Eighty of them left Assab on July 7, one day before the President's one hour interview with the local TV which occurred on Wednesday, July 8, 1998. The departure of the others had been delayed due to transport problems. (The Assab Administration assisted them through provision of sea transport. Indeed, four of their representatives have sent signed letters of gratitude on behalf of the group to the Assab Administration and to the Immigration Office when they arrived in Djibouti.) The President's interview focused on the prospects for peace, the economy and Ethiopia's incapacity to impose a solution by force. It contained no reference or inflammatory remark of any kind about Ethiopians residing in Eritrea. Furthermore, Eritrea's declared policy, as also embodied in the

Annex

resolution adopted by the National Assembly on June 26, 1998, is to ensure the "full respect of the right to live and work of all Ethiopian residents in Eritrea."

iii) In a statement to the foreign press on June 30, 1998, the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry alleged that "Ethiopian prisoners were paraded through the streets of Asmara while the Eritrean authorities encouraged people to stone them." Again, this was a pure fabrication. No such inhumane action ever took place. Moreover, while the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry has been falsely claiming that "about 600 Ethiopians have been imprisoned and continue to be exposed to the worst form of torture," the Ethiopian Charge d'Affaires in Asmara has admitted to UN agencies and the OAU Committee of Ambassadors who visited the capital at the end of June that the alleged "number of detainees was 57." Even this figure was inflated by his own admission as he said that some of these detainees "had been long released while many others were petty traders arrested long before the crisis for ordinary criminal and civil offenses."

iv) The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry is also distorting developments in the peace process. To this end, the Foreign Ministry has arrogated to itself the role of spokesperson for visiting Heads of State. Thus, although President Kabila and President Museveni did not make any public statements regarding their respective visits to both capitals recently, the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry has falsely quoted them as saying that their visits "have failed due to Eritrea's rejection" of their proposals. The reality is again different. And although we do not wish to follow suit to put words in the mouths of these leaders, we are compelled under the circumstances to state the nature of the discussions that took place during their visits to Asmara. President Kabila proposed direct talks between the two leaders which was fully accepted by Eritrea. President Museveni suggested some form of neutral administration in the contested zones until the dispute is resolved through legal and peaceful means. This proposal was again accepted by Eritrea. Thus, if the initiatives have not produced the desired results, the answer must lie in Addis Ababa.

These abhorrent attempts to manipulate public opinion will not work as Ethiopia does not have a monopoly of the truth. But the examples cited above illustrate the extent to which the Government of Ethiopia is prepared to go to deceive public opinion in the footsteps of the Mengistu regime which had created an elaborate Department to fabricate and disseminate false information.