

An Open Letter to the UN\* Secretary General  
(\*United Nuisances)

Dear Sir,

There is a saying that goes "You can't wake up someone who is pretending to sleep" and countless times this has rung loud and clear when the Eritrean people have tried to present their side of the issue to international community in general and the UN in particular. Countless times, renowned scholars, government officials, diplomats and ordinary Eritreans and their colleagues have presented their side of the argument on the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict both to the international community as a whole and to the UN in particular and countless times they have been ignored; the truth misconstrued and to add insult to injury have even been accused as the one's causing the problem!

In light of this, it would be futile for me to try and "wake" your organisation from the "sleep that it is pretending to sleep". The UN has turned a deaf ear deliberately towards Eritrea and that is a fact that we have learned to live with – just like we lived with it during our long and protracted thirty-year War of Liberation.

As such I would not have bothered writing this short letter had it not been for the fact that the latest statements coming from your office coupled with how the international media is reporting these statements have irritated me so much that I felt I would briefly address this issue.

The statements that I refer to are those in which you have claimed that *there is a serious threat of war breaking out between Eritrea and Ethiopia if the UN peace keepers are completely withdrawn from the area!*

Does your good office honestly believe that war has not broken out between the two countries who have a combined army of close to a million men in arms simply because the UN maintained a flimsy and corrupt, inept "peacekeeping force" between them? Isn't it a well known and historically proven fact that the first people to always leave a trouble spot at the first shot being fired are the UN "peacekeepers"? Do you honestly believe that if either of the countries wanted to open hostilities your "peacekeepers" would be in a position to stop them? The first thing that the UN would be rushing to do is guarantee a "safe passage" for its people and then once they were safely out the diplomats would sit around and fume and puff over the wording of their resolution to condemn whomever they considered was the aggressor. Even then, knowing how the UN treats Eritrea, there wouldn't be points for guessing who the condemned party would be – regardless of the reality on the ground.

The point I want to make is that I think this is a futile exercise at magnifying the importance of yet another failed UN mission and history is replete with the bare bones of such missions with millions continuing to suffer because of that. Even in countries where the UN claimed complete success the truth couldn't be far from the target. Take East Timor for example. A country that had the UN as its midwife. Today if there was any country on the verge of collapse, it would be East Timor despite a huge UN mission "helping the country get back on its feet".

On reporting about your statement to the Security Council, the BBC website wrote "*The BBC's UN correspondent, Laura Trevelyan, says a complete withdrawal of UN troops could undermine future deployments elsewhere.*" This – in a nutshell - is the true reason that the UN wants its mission in Eritrea to stay. It is to save its own face and continue to provide the UN-technocrats and bureaucrats not to mention their sons and relatives who are involved in dubious contracts (remember the food-for-oil scandal???) related with such missions and the lucrative contracts that they have been used to throughout the whole world. It is NOT to help in bringing about a lasting solution. After all a lasting solution would be kin to killing the goose that laid the golden egg wouldn't it?

If war is to break out in the Horn it will be because the war mongering regime of Ethiopia starts it (as it did in Eritrea and Somalia while the UN stood by and watched) most probably to divert attention from its internal problems. If that is the case, the UN over the last ten years has shown that it has neither the will nor the go-ahead from its American paymasters to do anything that would disappoint the Ethiopians. So it would still be back to square one again with UN "peacekeepers" being evacuated at the first shot!

So I beg to differ with yourself, Mr. Secretary General, that war would break out if your mission left the region. In fact it might actually be a good opportunity for peace in the long run because for one thing it would deny the Ethiopian regime the blind backing it has been receiving from the UN.

So please, Mr. Secretary General, stop insulting our intelligence by telling us that we owe our peace to your bureaucratically over-burdened, corrupt, inept organisation.

"Know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Yacob Zecharias  
Eritrean