

PRESS RELEASE



DJIBOUTI

STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI TO THE UNITED
NATIONS**

BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL

ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

WEDNESDAY – 14 NOVEMBER 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

At the outset, Djibouti wishes to express its profound gratitude to the Members of the Council for this opportunity to offer Djibouti's views on the unresolved border dispute with Eritrea and the remaining 13 prisoners of war still unaccounted for.

It further wishes to thank Mr. Kairat Umarov, Chair of the Sanctions Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea and lauds his efforts, continued faith and perseverance in the execution of his mandate.

We of course commend H. E. Karen Pierce of the United Kingdom for all the consultations and outreach in the process leading to the drafting of the resolution just adopted today. Most importantly, Djibouti expresses its gratitude to the Members of the Council for their unanimous support to its legitimate security concerns, aspirations and goals.

On Somalia,

Djibouti is heartened by the progress made in the implementation of the Federal Government and Political road map, the national security architecture and the transition plan and supports the call for acceleration of these efforts.

Djibouti welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2431 (2018) extending the mandate of AMISOM until May 2019 – AMISOM'S continued enabling role and support is vital in the implementation of the transition plan and strengthening of the capacities of the Somali security forces.

However, it notes with utmost concern that Al-Shabab remains a threat to peace and security in Somalia as evidenced by the latest terrorist attack in which dozens of innocent women, children and men were killed or injured. It routinely commits brazen terrorist attacks, at home and abroad, and executes targeted political assassinations. It is therefore urgent to implement the national security architecture and we should collectively mount in earnest a meaningful effort to degrade and defeat Al-Shabab.

Djibouti remains committed to peace in Somalia and will continue to contribute in any way it can.

In this regard, I wish to inform the distinguished members of the Security Council that the African Union Peace and Security Council, currently chaired by Djibouti, will be conducting a field visit in Somalia on the 27th and 28th of November. The Council will have an opportunity to gather first-hand information and conduct an in-depth analysis of the security situation in Somalia and therefore be in a position to articulate practical action-oriented recommendations on the way forward.

On Eritrea,

At the outset, Djibouti welcomes the lifting of arms embargoes, travel bans, asset freezes and targeted sanctions on Eritrea. Djibouti's paramount interest, as Council is aware, is to obtain a peaceful permanent resolution of all boundary and territorial differences, in accordance with international law. Those differences arose in 2008, led to an armed conflict that year, have remained unresolved and constitute a threat to Djibouti itself, and to international peace and security.

Direct negotiations and mediation by third parties have been attempted but failed to make significant progress toward a settlement. Djibouti has called upon the Council, with the assistance of the Secretary General, to facilitate an agreement of the parties to voluntarily submit their boundary and territorial differences for full and final settlement by an impartial third party, such as an international arbitral tribunal or the international Court of Justice, in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter:

What Djibouti seeks are impartial, forward-looking measures that assist the parties in settling their prolonged conflict, by recommending a specific means of settlement from among those identified in Article 33, and establishing a mechanism leading to agreement on those means.

In this regard, Djibouti reiterates its gratitude to the Members of the Council for unanimous support to the resolution, just adopted. It underlines the importance of continuing efforts towards the normalization of relations between Eritrea and Djibouti for regional peace, stability and reconciliation (OP3), the settlement of dispute in a peaceful manner consistent with international law (OP7) and the support in the resolution of these matters in good faith (OP8). As noted in para 3, the President of Djibouti and the

President of Eritrea met in Jeddah on September 17, 2018 and agreed to continue efforts toward the normalization of relations between the two countries.

Djibouti is committed to deepening dialogue and negotiating in good faith with Eritrea until an amicable resolution is achieved on all outstanding issues.

But continued stalemate is not an option! – we need to expedite the process!

We welcome, in this regard, para 57 of the resolution and underscores the importance of the Council's continued engagement, guidance and oversight.

Djibouti is committed to working with Eritrea until the parties reach a full and final agreement on:

- the international land boundary,
- the sovereignty over Doumeira Island
- the Maritime Boundary
- the status of the Prisoners of War

On the Prisoners of war,

Thirteen remaining prisoners are unaccounted for and are in Eritrean custody. As we stated before in this Chamber, the release of our remaining

POWs from the cruelties of their captivity has been uppermost in our thoughts. We will engage meaningfully with Eritrea to clarify the fate of the remaining prisoners of war and work tirelessly to ensure their prompt repatriation.

We express hope that after nine years of stonewalling about them, Eritrea is at last willing to comply with UN's Security Council decisions and will engage in good faith on "the issue of the Djiboutian Combatants missing in action" as called for in para 6 of the resolution just adopted. The Government of Djibouti has authorized the High Commissioner for refugees to review all the individual histories of Eritrean prisoners of war held in Djibouti since the clashes of 2008 and to make recommendations with respect to their status and need for protection.

Finally, Djibouti welcomes the reporting mechanism as provided for in para 57. We are looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General to be presented to the Council no later than 15 February 2019. Indeed, progress can be made and it can be made swiftly if there is commitment to the process by the disputing States.

Monsieur le Président,

En conclusion, Permettez-moi de réaffirmer la volonté de Djibouti à contribuer au raffermissement des liens de bon voisinage entre les pays de la région – Il nous faut tout mettre en œuvre afin que la métaphore à laquelle nous avons souvent recours pour décrire la dynamique actuellement en cours dans la région « le vent de paix » qui souffle dans la Corne ne soit pas qu'un cliché, un slogan creux, au mieux un mot d'ordre sans réalité concrète et palpable. La paix dans la région doit être totale! Elle doit être inclusive ! Elle doit générer une force transformatrice qui permettra aux pays de la Corne de l'Afrique de libérer leur potentiel économique pour le bénéfice des peuples qui l'habitent.

Merci, Monsieur le Président