

Eritrea Calls for End to UN Sanctions

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Eritrea is asking the United Nations Security Council to end its sanctions, citing a U.N. report indicating some progress in ending Eritrea's dispute with neighboring Djibouti.

A report from U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon points to steps recently taken by Eritrea toward constructive engagement with its neighbors and the wider international community. Specifically, the U.N. report cites an agreement by Eritrea and Djibouti to resolve their border dispute.

At a meeting of the Security Council to review the report, U.N. Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe said Eritrea has withdrawn its troops from disputed territory, and that Qatar, which is serving as a mediator, has deployed military observers in the area. "We commend the recent concrete steps taken by Eritrea and Djibouti on the border issue with the active mediation efforts of the state of Qatar. The secretary-general has offered the technical support of the United Nations should it be requested," he said.

Eritrea's ambassador to the United Nations, Araya Desta, called the agreement with Djibouti a significant development, but he said the sanctions imposed on Eritrea by the Security Council last year were unjust.

"Eritrea takes issues of peace and security very seriously, and it shall not be discouraged or deterred from participating in meaningful and fruitful discussions that would concretely contribute to sustainable peace in its region. In light of the steps taken by Eritrea together with Djibouti under the auspices of the Qatari diplomatic efforts, and Eritrea's firm commitment towards peace efforts in Somalia, my delegation appeals to the Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed on Eritrea," he said.

Speaking on behalf of Djibouti, Kadra Ahmed Hassan told the Security Council that its adoption of sanctions against Eritrea was decisive in establishing the peace process. "Even

if the process is encouraging, the road that awaits us is a long one, and it requires an undying and a serious commitment on the part of all of us in the months to come; because the matters to be discussed are very sensitive ones, and these are the matters of the war prisoners, the missing persons, as well as the demarcation and delimitation of the border," he said.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban, in his report, says recent developments involving Eritrea are a move in the right direction, but he says Eritrea must do more to provide evidence of its compliance with the Security Council's sanctions resolution.