



# UNMEE

## UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA



**LOCATION:** Eritrea and Ethiopia

**OFFICES:** UNMEE maintains offices in Asmara, Eritrea and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**DURATION:** 31 July 2000 to present

**CURRENT MANDATE:** Until 15 September 2003  
(Security Council resolution 1466 (2003) of 14 March 2003)

### **SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND HEAD OF MISSION**

Legwaila Joseph Legwaila (Botswana)

### **DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE (Addis Ababa)**

Cheikh-Tidiane Gaye (Senegal)

### **DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE (Asmara)**

Angela Kane (Germany)

### **FORCE COMMANDER**

Major-General Robert Gordon (United Kingdom)

### **DEPUTY FORCE COMMANDER AND CHIEF MILITARY OBSERVER**

Brigadier General Walid Fares Kreishan (Jordan)

### **STRENGTH**

- Authorized maximum strength (Security Council resolution 1320 of 15 September 2000):  
4,200 troops, including 220 military observers
- Current strength (31 May 2003):  
4,077 military personnel, including 3,855 troops and 2227 military observers; UNMEE also includes 236 international civilians and 260 local civilians

### **CONTRIBUTORS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL**

Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Zambia

### **FATALITIES**

3 military personnel

### **FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

- Method of financing: Assessments in respect of a Special Account
- Approved budget: 1 July 2003-30 June 2004: \$196.89 million (gross)

### **FUNCTION**

According to Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) of 15 September 2000, UNMEE has the following mandate:

- Monitor the cessation of hostilities;
- Assist in ensuring the observance of the security commitments agreed by the parties;
- Monitor and verify the redeployment of Ethiopian forces from positions taken after 6 February 1999, which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998;

- Monitor the positions of Ethiopian forces once redeployed;
- Simultaneously, monitor the positions of Eritrean forces that are to redeploy in order to remain at a distance of 25 kilometres from positions to which Ethiopian forces shall redeploy;
- Monitor the temporary security zone (TSZ) to assist in ensuring compliance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities;
- Chair the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) to be established by the United Nations and OAU in accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities;
- Coordinate and provide technical assistance for humanitarian mine-action activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it; and
- Coordinate the Mission's activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it with humanitarian and human rights activities of the United Nations and other organizations in those areas.

The Security Council emphasized that the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities linked the termination of the United Nations peacekeeping mission with the completion of the process of delimitation and demarcation of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border.

By its resolution 1430 (2002) of 14 August 2002, the Security Council adjusted the mandate of UNMEE in order to assist the Boundary Commission in the expeditious and orderly implementation of its Delimitation Decision, to include:

- Demining in key areas to support demarcation, and
- Administrative and logistical support for the Field Offices of the Boundary Commission

in accordance with the recommendations provided by the Secretary-General in his report of 10 July 2002 (S/2002/744) and Security Council resolution 1398 (2002).

## **BACKGROUND**

Fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia erupted in May 1998, as a result of a border dispute. The Secretary-General immediately contacted the leaders of both countries, urging restraint and offering assistance in resolving the conflict peacefully. He requested Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun (Algeria), his Special Envoy in Africa, to assist the mediation efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

At the OAU summit in Algiers in July 1999, the two parties accepted a document - the Modalities for the Implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement. In this document, Eritrea committed itself to "redeploy its forces outside the territories they occupied after 6 May 1998." Ethiopia committed itself to "redeploy, thereafter, its forces from positions taken after 6 February and which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998." After further consultations with the parties concerned, Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia, Special Envoy of the Current Chairman of OAU, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun and Mr. Anthony Lake, representative of the United States President, reviewed and finalized a document entitled: Technical Arrangements for the Implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement and its Modalities. The document called for the establishment of a Neutral Commission to determine the precise areas from which the two sides were to redeploy. The Technical Arrangements provided for the deployment of international military observers to verify the envisaged redeployments. The document also called for demilitarization and delimitation of the entire common border between the two countries. Eritrea announced its acceptance of the document. Ethiopia reserved its position and requested clarifications, while reaffirming its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The international mediation continued, but tension along the border remained very high and there was fear that hostilities could resume and possibly spread, uprooting more people who thus far had not been affected directly by the conflict.

### ***Security Council Mission to the Region***

As part of its tour of Africa, the seven-member special mission of the United Nations Security Council visited Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Asmara, Eritrea, on 8 and 9 May 2000, respectively. The mission, which was headed by the Permanent Representative of the United States, Richard Holbrooke, included: Jean-David Levitte (France); Moctar Ouane (Mali); Martin Andjaba (Namibia); A. Peter van Walsum (Netherlands); Said Ben Mustapha (Tunisia); and Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom). The mission held talks with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia on 8 May, and on the following day with President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea. The discussions concentrated on ways to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and to avoid renewal of the fighting.

### ***Fighting Erupts Again***

Despite all efforts, the fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia erupted again on 12 May 2000. By its resolution 1297, adopted on the same day, the Security Council expressed its concern with the renewed fighting and noted that the new outbreak of violence had a serious humanitarian implication for the civilian population of both countries. The Secretary-General issued a statement deeply deploring the resumption of large-scale fighting. He urgently appealed to both countries to cease hostilities immediately and to return to the process of negotiation.

### ***Sanctions Imposed on Both Countries***

On 17 May 2000, Security Council adopted resolution 1298 by which it imposed measures aimed at preventing the supply of weapons or arms-related assistance to the two countries. The Council demanded the earliest possible reconvening, without preconditions, of substantive peace talks, under the auspices of OAU, on the basis of the Framework Agreement and its Modalities and of the work conducted by the OAU so far, which would conclude a peaceful definitive settlement of the conflict.

According to that resolution, "all States shall prevent" the sale or supply to Eritrea and Ethiopia of weapons, ammunition, military vehicles, equipment and spare parts, as well as any provision to the two countries of technical aid or training related to the manufacture or use of arms.

### ***Humanitarian Aspects***

As of March 2000, it was estimated that over 370,000 Eritreans and approximately 350,000 Ethiopians had been affected by the war. The humanitarian situation in parts of Ethiopia was exacerbated by the severe drought, which led to the emergence of a major food crisis with almost 8 million people affected. UN humanitarian agencies prepared programmes for both countries, aimed at mobilizing international resources for multi-sector emergency interventions.

On 31 March 2000, the Secretary-General appointed Ms. Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), as his Special Envoy on the Drought in the Horn of Africa. Ms. Bertini was asked to travel to the Horn of Africa and to raise public awareness of the deteriorating situation and the growing threat of famine. She also was to seek commitments from governments and other parties to the conflict to provide secure access for humanitarian agencies, examine the country-specific and regional dimensions of the crisis, and address logistical concerns.

In a parallel development, on 7 April, the Secretary-General announced the establishment of a task force to deal with the United Nations response to emergency and long-term food needs in the Horn of Africa. The Task Force on the United Nations Response to Long-term Food Security, Agriculture Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa is chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Ms. Bertini visited the Horn of Africa, including Eritrea and Ethiopia, on 10-19 April 2000. After her survey of the region and discussions with senior Government officials there, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy said that famine in the Horn of Africa could be averted with "swift" international response. She noted five priority areas: water, basic medicines, food aid, security and technical support in transport, and infrastructure to ensure distribution of aid. According to Ms. Bertini, "the international community has a rare opportunity of prevention"; she added, however, that "timing is absolutely critical" to prevent a disaster.

With the resumption of fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea in May 2000, the situation in the region became even more critical. On 19 May 2000, the United Nations Secretary-General said he was "deeply alarmed" about the impact of the renewed hostilities on the already critical humanitarian situation of hundred of thousands of innocent people in both countries. In a statement by his Spokesman, the Secretary-General called the large-scale military effort "tragic", with large numbers of civilians fleeing the fighting in Eritrea adding to the humanitarian challenge in the region. In his statement, the Secretary-General endorsed the appeals from the international community for an immediate halt to the fighting and the resumption of peace. He also expressed gratitude to donors who had continued to provide generously to the urgent needs of innocent victims, and hoped that such assistance would remain forthcoming while a durable solution to the crisis was pursued.

### ***Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities***

In the meantime, the proximity talks between Ethiopia and Eritrea, conducted under the chairmanship of the Minister of Justice of Algeria and the Personal Envoy of the Current Chairman of OAU, resumed in Algiers on 30 May. Those talks culminated in the signing, on 18 June 2000, of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea by the Foreign Ministers of both countries, under the auspices of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, in his capacity as the Current Chairman of OAU. The talks were conducted with the assistance of the Personal Envoy of the Presidency of the European Union, Rino Serri, and the representative of the President of the United States, Anthony Lake.

The Agreement committed the parties to an immediate cessation of hostilities. The parties also reaffirmed their acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement and its Modalities. Under the Agreement, the parties called upon the United Nations, in cooperation with OAU, to establish a peacekeeping operation to assist in the implementation of the Agreement.

### ***United Nations Mission Established***

In a 30 June 2000 report (S/2000/643) to the Security Council, the Secretary-General described the Agreement as the first but extremely vital step towards the restoration of peace between the two countries. He informed the Council about his intention to dispatch an "appropriate" number of liaison officers to each capital, to be followed by the deployment of a military observer group. It was envisaged that up to a total of 100 United Nations military observers would gradually be deployed to each country over the next two months, pending the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

On 31 July, the Security Council, by its resolution 1312 (2000), decided to establish the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) consisting of up to 100 military observers and the necessary civilian support staff in anticipation of a peacekeeping operation subject to future authorization. The Mission's mandate would be to undertake the following tasks: establish and maintain liaison with the parties; visit the parties' military headquarters and other units in all areas of operation of the mission deemed necessary by the Secretary-General; establish and put into operation the mechanism for verifying the cessation of hostilities; prepare for the establishment of the Military Coordination Commission provided for in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement; and assist in planning for a future peacekeeping operation.

The Secretary-General was asked to continue planning for a peacekeeping operation and to begin to take the administrative measures for assembling it, subject to future Council authorization.

Reporting to the Security Council on 9 August, the Secretary-General outlined the mandate of the expanded UNMEE and recommended a total of 4,200 military personnel, including 220 military observers, three infantry battalions and the necessary support units, to monitor the ceasefire and border delineation between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The report, based on the findings of the United Nations reconnaissance mission to the region, recommended that with the poor infrastructure and difficult terrain, the mission should use planes and helicopters, as well as ground forces and armoured personnel carriers. UNMEE would be composed of "political, military, public information, mine action and administrative components, and include a mechanism for coordination of its activities with those of the humanitarian community". A Special Representative would have overall authority for the activities of the mission and of the United Nations system in the temporary security zone and areas adjacent to it, and maintain close contact with the political and military leadership of the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea, OAU and the United Nations country teams in both countries. Offices in Addis Ababa and Asmara would be complemented by regional headquarters based in Mendefera, western Eritrea, and Mekele, northern Ethiopia.

The Mission would be deployed in three phases. The first phase, already under way at the time, would involve the despatch of liaison officers to each capital. Under the second phase, up to 100 military observers along with necessary civilian support staff would be deployed. In phase three, the full peacekeeping operation would be deployed once it was authorized by the Security Council.

By resolution 1320 of 15 September 2000, the Security Council welcomed the Secretary-General's report of 9 August 2000, authorized the deployment within UNMEE of up to 4,300 troops, and set out the mandate of the mission. (See "Function", above.)

### ***Comprehensive Peace Agreement Signed***

In the meantime, the parties continued negotiations aimed at a final and comprehensive peace settlement of the conflict. The talks, facilitated by President Bouteflika of Algeria, resulted in the signing on 12 December 2000 in Algiers of a comprehensive Peace Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Secretary-General welcomed the Agreement as a "victory for the voice of reason, for the power of diplomacy and for the recognition that neither one of those countries -- nor the continent as a whole -- can afford another decade, another year, another day of conflict". "The United Nations and the international community are determined to work closely with the parties to ensure the implementation of both the 18 July Agreement and the one signed today, so that lasting peace can be achieved and that reconstruction can begin," the Secretary-General said. He emphasized that UNMEE would accomplish its tasks expeditiously. "We have a job to do, we shall do it effectively and efficiently, and then we will withdraw," he said. The Secretary-General, who visited Ethiopia and Eritrea prior to the signing of the Agreement, also called attention to the humanitarian crisis facing both countries.

By signing the 12 December Peace Agreement, the parties undertook to "permanently terminate military hostilities between themselves" and to refrain from the threat or use of force against each other. The Agreement, among other things, required the establishment of a neutral Boundary Commission to "delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border", foresaw the creation of a neutral Claims Commission which would decide on claims from either side, and called for an independent investigation into the origins of the conflict.

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*Prepared by the Peace and Security Section, Department of Public Information*