PRESS RELEASE

DJIBOUTI

Statement by

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Before the Security Council

On the situation in Somalia

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Check against delivery

At the outset, Djibouti wishes to express its profound gratitude to the Members of the Council for this opportunity to offer Djibouti's perspective on the status of the mediation between Djibouti and Eritrea and share with you some recent negative developments which constitute a violation of the Council repeated demands that Eritrea cease arming, training and equipping armed groups including Al-Shabab.

Djibouti feels compelled to make this contribution today because Eritrea has often offered a misleading and deceptive account of the progress made in the implementation of the 2010 Mediation Agreement signed by Djibouti and Qatar in an attempt to justify a call for rescission of the sanctions imposed on Eritrea by Security Council Resolutions 1907 (2009), 2023 (2011) and 2244 (2015) and the one just adopted today

Eritrea has often cynically characterized in various fora the border dispute with Djibouti as one of the "pretexts" under which the sanctions were justified and invokes the June 2010 Mediation Agreement facilitated by His Highness the Emir of Qatar as a purported basis for rescinding sanctions. But it would be no exaggeration to state that the assertion that "Eritrea is fully committed to the Qatar Mediation process" is dishonest and disproven by the facts. In respect of prisoners of war, the Mediation agreement includes a single provision "That each State promptly provide a list of names, identification numbers of all prisoners of war and other missing persons held in its territory". Djibouti promptly provided the list of all Eritrean Prisoners of war in its custody. Nearly six years have passed and Eritrea still refuses to provide the list or otherwise account for the remaining Djiboutians it has now held in its custody, incommunicado and in the most inhumane and degrading conditions for the past eight years. Djibouti was hopeful that the release of four (4) prisoners of war earlier this year would signal a radical departure from past practices and indeed induce a change in the behavior of the State of Eritrea – we thought that "denial, obfuscation and procrastination" belonged to the past. The United Nations Secretary General indeed the international community as a whole welcomed the

development as positive and expressed hope that tangible progress would be made. But that hope has quickly vanished!

Eritrea, instead of honoring its international obligations and commitments has continued to conduct activities aimed at destabilizing the region and inciting violent strife in Djibouti as documented in the report of the Monitoring Group but has also provided weapons and ammunition to Al-Shabab in Somalia. We have provided evidence of that to the Monitoring Group and Members of the Security Council and we stand ready to provide additional information to the Group. This is in violation of Security Council Resolutions and runs counter to our effective efforts. The Security Council in its most recent open debate, carefully analyzed the magnitude of threats posed by asymmetrical attacks by terrorists and other armed groups targeting peacekeepers. Djibouti few weeks ago again lost soldiers to such attacks in Somalia. We will of course continue to support our brothers and sisters in Somalia at this critical juncture of the political process.

We all face competing priorities as developing countries. One wonders why would a developing country with so many challenges divert precious funds from its development needs to undertake activities that aim at undermining peace in the region.

In conclusion, allow me to thank Members of the Security Council for their continued vigilance and support to the legitimate goals pursued by Djibouti in particular the settlement of the border dispute with Eritrea and the release of all remaining 13 prisoners of war.

Thank you for your attention!