

## **STATEMENT**

### **Press Statement**

#### **Kidnapped Ethiopians and Europeans, Victims of Terrorism**

Five Europeans and eight Ethiopians were forcefully abducted and taken to Eritrea while site seeing in the Afar National Regional State. Among the hostages, the five Europeans were freed in Asmara on Tuesday, 13 March 2007. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia wishes to express its satisfaction over the safe release of the European hostages. However, the eight Ethiopian hostages abducted with the Europeans have still not been released.

No doubt the crime of abduction was masterminded and executed by the Eritrean Government. Notwithstanding the fact that the Ethiopian Government has discovered this truth, the focus was on securing the safe-release of these abducted individuals.

Undoubtedly, this criminal act is part and parcel of the terrorist activities the Eritrean Government has been undertaking. It will be recalled that the Ethiopian Government has disclosed the terrorist acts committed by the Eritrean Government in different cities and towns in Ethiopia including in Addis Ababa. Through these terrorist acts, the Eritrean Government carried out bomb attacks against hotels, market areas and public transport targeting civilians. The in particular, in its latest terrorist act the Eritrean regime had planned to disrupt the 8th African Union Summit, which was successfully held in Addis Ababa. This terrorist act was foiled by the joint anti-terror task force of the Federal Police and The National Intelligence and Security Service with the active participation of the public.

The international community is fully cognizant of the fact that the Eritrean Government is perpetrating terrorist activities aimed at destabilizing the region. It will be recalled that the Report of the UN Security Council Monitoring Team on Somalia exposed that the Eritrean Government has been training, organizing and providing weapons to terrorist groups in Somalia.

The anti-peace activities conducted in Somalia by the Eritrean regime in collaboration with Afghan trained al-Qaeda extremists, the like of Colonel Hassan Dahir Aweys, Abdellah Al-Sudani, Adan Hashi Ayro, Muktar Robo and other extremists was thwarted by the Ethiopian Defense Forces. It is clear that the Eritrean regime is bent on reorganizing the remnants of the Islamic Courts in order to send them in yet other terrorist missions. Thus, it has become manifestly evident that the Eritrean regime not only supports and propounds terrorism but is also directly involved in active terrorism.

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The Ethiopian Government has reiterated its commitment to securing the well-being and safe-release of the hostages and has exerted utmost efforts to this end. Though the Eritrean Government has been denying involvement in the abduction, it was forced to release five of the thirteen hostages owing to pressure exerted by the international community. However, the fact that the Ethiopians, who were accompanying the foreigners and have fallen victims to the terrorist act of abduction committed by the Eritrean Government, remain hostages, is of great concern to the Ethiopian Government.

The Ethiopian Government expects that the international community will take appropriate measures regarding the terrorist act committed by the Eritrean regime in flagrant violation of international law. Above all, the Ethiopian Government demands the unconditional release of the eight Ethiopian nationals, victims of terrorism. It holds responsible the Eritrean Government for any injury they might sustain. The Ethiopian Government is fully confident that the international community and the media will put the limelight with similar intensity on the grave situation of the abducted Ethiopian nationals while supporting efforts to make the Eritrean Government accountable for its terrorist act.

Unless timely action is taken, the destructive activities of the Eritrean regime would further undermine regional and international peace and security.

It should be underlined here that the Ethiopian Government has the legal basis, relying upon all the human and material evidence at its disposal, to make the Eritrean regime account for its deeds in the appropriate fora. As the terrorist acts of the Eritrean Government claiming lives and causing damage to property were committed in broad day-light, they will be corroborated beyond any doubt.

**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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**Addis Ababa**