

ERITREAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION	
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**E.P.L.F.'S 2ND STATEMENT
ON EMERGENCY RELIEF OPERATIONS**

DRAUGHT IS THREATENING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DEATH AND STARVATION PARTICULARLY IN ERITREA AND MANY PARTS OF Northern ethiopia. it is to be recalled that some parties who claimed to have vigilantly following the situation were, after the draught of 1984-1985, speaking as if natural disasters were a thing of the past, although they are now speaking as if they had anticipated the present disaster from the start. it is probably that they may have been misled by the heavy and unseasonal rains. The dergue's regime, in order to maintain its power and for the sake of its colonial and oppressive interests has also been boasting of its economic plans, of its "villagization" and "moving and resettling people in fertile areas" "as a" "scientific" solution to draught and its consequences. It will also be remembered that very recently, when the first indications of draught appeared the regime attempted to deny it. Now that it is too late and thousands of people are starving and some have started to die, those parties whose assessment was wrong and the addis ababa regime are heard making belated and emotional statements. There is no doubt that this is a result of their guilty conscience and an attempt to evade responsibility. The attempt being made to cover up and find a scapegoat by depicting the Eplf's operation of 23.10.87 and of 10.11.87 as the cause of the problem and obstacle to their rescue operation through persuasive and emotional propaganda cannot confuse the true cause of the problem already stated above.

However, the world community and especially those who in practice donated their aid are not only the ones who should not bear the main responsibility, irrespective of whether they recognized or understood the problem in time or not, but should rather be thanked for their assistance. The dergue's regime is the one which must bear the main responsibility and which can not avoid blame under any pretext, the regime has used the 1984-85 draught to maintain and strengthen its military and

security as well as "kebele" institutions. It has considered all the aid that was given to it to have been rendered in order to "win it over" and thus did not to feel any pressure or responsibility. The regime has already begun to use this year's serious draught to reinforce its power, its institutions of oppression and its inhuman policies as it did in 1984-85. It is vigorously pushing its "villagisation" and "resettlement" activities. The transportation of weapons and other military hardware and materials is being escalated. The destructive attacks of the war plans which cost millions of dollars for their bombs, fuel and maintenance is being intensified. At a time when the people are suffering from famine and death, the military conscription, main concern of the dergue, disrupting the life of the population and heightening their frustration. And as many quarters have observed the dergue is yet again preparing for a large scale offensive in Eritrea.

Draught and relief activities have thus provided a cover and a good opportunity for the dergue's "villagisation" "rounding up and resettlement", large scale military activities and preparations, military conscription programmes, dissemination of "shengo" related propaganda, and finally for proping up the regime's crumbling power. Proposals submitted and efforts made for a fundamental solution i.e., to achieve peace, by the EPLF and interested parties are rejected by the dergue. A call for a cease fire issued by the EPLF during the 1985 draught in order to expedite relief distribution was rejected out right by the Addis Ababa regime. The EPLF's recent proposal of safe passage for relief materials and activities was also arrogantly rejected by the regime. It is thus clear that the main cause thus clear the main cause and complicating factor of the problem is the dergue.

In a situation where politics, war and draught have combined to produce such harmful consequences, the EPLF cannot deny the above mentioned reality. There is no doubt that this is also the belief of all concerned and people with conscience. The EPLF will always raise and struggle for what it believes to be a fundamental solution a political and lasting solution to the Eritrean case. Until such a political solution is found, and as long as the dergue's efforts to militarily smash and force the Eritrean people into submission persists, there is no other choice but to intensify armed struggle that has been going on for the last 26 years. While the political and armed struggle continues, however, the EPLF has been doing its best to facilitate the smooth function of relief operations, and will continue to seriously do so.

The incident of 23.11.87 was a result of mixing relief with the military. Those who mixed relief with the military were the dergue and those who fell into its trap unwittingly. However, to convince people that there were no trucks loaded with together with those that were destroyed, fabricated baseless stories so as to make the EPLF a scapegoat. It was presented in the media sensationally. The incident of 10.11.87 of mai seraw (southern Eritrea) which was clearly a military convoy was also presented as a convoy of independent commercial trucks loaded with

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grain, forgetting that there are no independent commercial trucks that are free from dergue use military control. The EPLF, under such circumstances, can do nothing but present the truck as it is. The issue should be viewed outside of mere good will, sensational propaganda, intimidation and useless boasting, the EPLF, in addition previous proposals, is here under presenting further elaboration to help in the practical implementations.

A. distribution of relief aid within eritrea

1. distribution centers should be identified and made public.
2. as the people do not have the strength to walk over long distances and should not be forced to abandon their villages, distribution centers should be sufficient in number and within easy access to beneficiaries.
3. all roads leading to distribution centers should be free from military obstruction, whether by land or sea, at all times (day or night)
4. all relief truck movements/transportation should not be military escorted either by EPLF or dergue.
5. information on time and mode of relief movement, transportation, logos, should be continuously supplied to the EPLF and the addis ababa regime.
6. land, sea and air ports of entry granted by the sudanese government for relief operations should be utilized.
7. parties active through the dergue and EPLF side should be informed of time and places of possible hazards in battle zones and that they can take it into account in their relief activities.

B. relief items passing to ethiopia through eritrea

1. all parties involved in relief operation should inform the EPLF of relief materials passing through eritrea, of time and places and mode of movement/transportation and logos.
 2. all parties involved in relief operation should insure that all relief movement/transportation is without military escort and separate from dergues military transportation.
- Finally, in the event that the regime in addis ababa rejects the above detailed proposals, the EPLF will exert all efforts to prevent all possible damage that might befall relief operations, furthermore, the EPLF wants it to be known that it has instructed all its units to separate military and relief, where dergues military movement and relief transportation are mixed, and to take all possible precautions to insure that relief materials and relief transportation are not harmed.

24-11-87