

21.12.87 12:39

**ERITREAN PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMME**

BCM BOX 865, London WC1V 6XX

Telex: 265871 (MONREF G) Quote Ref: MMU 316

Tel: 01-837 9236/7

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FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

TO: EMNETU TESFAI
FAX NO: 010 475 03 632
FROM: YOHANNES
DATE: 21.12.87 TIME: 11:15
NO OF PAGES TO FOLLOW: 2

Dear Emmet.

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FACSIMILE MESSAGE

TO EMNETU TESFAI
FAX NO. 450 363 2
FROM YOHANNES
SUBJECT: INFORMATION
DATE 26.10.87 TIME: 3:40 p.m.
Number of pages including this one 2

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Yohannes

N.B. PLEASE NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF:

1. ALL PAGES ARE NOT RECEIVED
2. MESSAGE IS GARBLED

NEWS IN BRIEF

Band Aid attack

ERITREAN rebels fighting the Ethiopian Government attacked a relief convoy heading for Tigre in northern Ethiopia on Friday, destroying 23 lorries laden with supplies, *London Herald* writes from Nairobi. An aid official said one driver was killed, while 380 tons of food were set ablaze. Of the lorries destroyed, 16 were operated by Band Aid, the charity organisation set up by Bob Geldof in 1985. Plans to transport supplies to the northern provinces of Tigre and Eritrea by road have been halted. An aid official described the consequences of the attack as catastrophic. The UN and the Addis Ababa authorities have warned of a danger of mass starvation in the north of the country next year following crop failures. Meanwhile, in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, a French nurse, Ms Sophie Bedon, was handed over to the French embassy after being held by Tigrean rebels in Ethiopia for over three weeks.

The BBC - World Service, on its 25th October broadcast at 07:00 hrs GMT, reported that thirty two trucks loaded with relief supplies were destroyed by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. The circumstances causing and the context of the incident was not, however, correctly stated.

It is clear to the international community and not least to the BBC that a 26 - year-old war of liberation is going on in Eritrea. Thus the whole of Eritrea is a war zone. It is within this context that this reported incident should be seen. In a state of war such incidents are bound to happen unless an orderly truce is observed.

The EPLF in its, 29th October 1984, statement has expressed its readiness to observe a ceasefire so that relief agencies can distribute food safely provided that the Ethiopian government agrees to do the same. This offer, which is still valid, has never been heeded by the Ethiopian government. The international community, while expressing their concern about the need to get food to the population, have not exerted a sufficient pressure on the Ethiopian government to agree to this.

Under such circumstances, while appreciating the concern of the humanitarian agencies over the impending famine in Eritrea and Ethiopia, the point must be made that those who wish to operate in Eritrea officially should approach and inform the EPLF beforehand. Indeed some agencies have been operating in Eritrea with the consent of the EPLF by constantly informing it of their operations and movements within Eritrea. Failing this, the EPLF cannot be held responsible for any damages that may be caused.

However, the EPLF would like to reiterate its commitment to the peaceful resolution of the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict which has been a major factor of the state of affair in the region.

Yours sincerely,

ZEMEDE TECLE
EPLF Representative for the UK
and the Republic of Ireland