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## From the IBPP Research Associates. Eritrea/ Ethiopia: Pan African News Agency

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(An IBPP Research Associate who chooses to remain anonymous provided the following report from the Pan African News Agency with its permission for posting in IBPP. The Pan-African News Agency can be reached at <http://www.africanews.org/pana>)

Ethiopia, Eritrea Fighting Enters Sixth Day. February 11, 1999.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (PANA) - As fighting continued for the sixth consecutive day Thursday between Ethiopian and Eritrea forces along their disputed border, Addis Ababa has called on the government in Asmara to evacuate civilian from battle zones. This was in reaction to reports and Eritrean government claims that five civilians were killed in the village of Laili Deda Tuesday by Ethiopian fighter planes that attacked the close-by Eritrean positions on the Badme/Shiraro front.

Ethiopian foreign minister, Seyoum Mesfin, "regretted" the incident Wednesday night during a press conference in Addis Ababa. "We never target civilians in our military operations. We respect international norms governing war," he said. Seyoum made Ethiopia's stand clear when (he) stated: "Our only objective is to regain our territory that has been forcefully occupied by Eritrea." He added that Asmara "will not be given respite" by Addis Ababa unless the former accepts the OAU (Organization of African Unity) proposals and evacuate(s) Ethiopian territory that its forces had illegally been occupying for the last nine months.

In a related development, Ethiopian government spokesperson, Selome Tadesse, Thursday reiterated that Ethiopia "never intentionally targeted civilians." She asserted that the village of Laili Deda "is within the military zone of the Badame triangle and close to the front line." She stated that her government "sincerely regrets the civilian deaths, if indeed such accounts are accurate." Selome said Eritrea should have evacuated civilians from the areas of battle zones after fighting broke out on Badme front on 6 February, but also "should have never positioned civilians close to the hostile border for any length of time."

Selome also rejected Eritrean claims Wednesday night that fighting on the Badame front "had died down," as "false". She instead said fighting was "raging today as indeed (it was) yesterday on the Badme/Shiraro and Tsorona fronts."

It appears the appeals for a cease-fire on both parties by the United Nations and the OAU have fallen on deaf ears, as one African diplomat in Addis Ababa observed Thursday.

IBPP Comment. As Western authorities have marshaled considerable resources to prevent further political violence in Europe--viz., Kosovo--such violence continues in Africa between Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as within Sierra Leone, the Congo, Angola, Algeria, Guinea-Bissau, the Sudan, and on the Congo-Rwandan border among other locations. Political psychologists might ponder the aspects of strategic-moral calculus shaping Western decisions to allocate finite resources of intervention to prevent political violence. (Keywords: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Pan African News Agency.)