

[Extract]

United Nations

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Security Council

Sixty-third year

5924th meeting

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New York

[...]

Peace and security in Africa

Mr. Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias

Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to join in welcoming to this Council His Excellency Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti, and in acknowledging the presence here of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea and the representatives of the African Union and of the League of Arab States. I should also like to express our thanks for the briefing we have received today from Mr. João Honwana of the Department of Political Affairs.

The Council is meeting today at the request of the Government of Djibouti for the purpose of assessing the serious situation on the border between Djibouti and Eritrea, where confrontations have recently occurred between the armed forces of the two countries.

In that connection, allow me to outline Panama's position. The United Nations and each and every one of its Member States are called upon to respect the territorial integrity of States, and that includes respecting their borders. When two neighbouring States dispute the location of borders, the dispute should be resolved through bilateral negotiations. If an agreement cannot be reached between the two parties, they should submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

In the event of any dispute that might jeopardize international peace and security, this Council is called upon to act to prevent the dispute from escalating into armed conflict. To that purpose, the Security Council should use all means at its disposal, including dialogue, participation and collaboration between Member States. We thus appeal to both parties to withdraw the military forces that have recently been deployed on the border and immediately to initiate bilateral dialogue, making use of the good offices and mechanisms provided by the United Nations and other relevant international bodies. Likewise, Panama considers it appropriate for the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council informed of any developments in the situation.