



4 November 2003

Dear Sir,

Rebuttal of Ethiomedia News Item of 3 November

UNMEE wishes to place on record that the article of 3 November 2003 which appeared in Ethiomedia under the headline "UN Peacekeepers Reportedly Come Under Fire In North" and which alleges that "UN peacekeeping Forces were forced to retreat back to base in Eritrea" after coming under a "barrage of gunfire from local Ethiopian citizens" near ZelaAmbesa, is a complete fabrication. UNMEE's Force Commander Major-General Robert Gordon, has investigated these claims, which he says are utterly false and alarmist. We are concerned that this type of irresponsible journalism linking, as it does, this incident to part of the local people's reaction to the impending demarcation process, can only lead to unnecessarily exacerbating tensions in the Central Sector of our operation. UNMEE, therefore, requests that Ethiomedia should immediately issue a retraction of this story on its website.

Once again, UNMEE appeals to Ethiomedia to ensure the veracity of such stories before going to print. UNMEE remains available to answer queries on this or any other enquiries that your organization may have on the peace process in general or UNMEE's work in particular.

Yours sincerely,

P.P. Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte
Spokesperson and Chief of Public Information Office

The Chief Editor
Ethiomedia
Addis Ababa