

## UN Imposes Arms Embargo on Ethiopia and Eritrea

- [Arms Control Today](#)

Days after Ethiopia launched a military offensive against Eritrea, the UN Security Council on May 17 unanimously approved an arms embargo on the two African states, which have been fighting intermittently since May 1998 over disputed borders. The embargo will be limited to 12 months, though it can be renewed by the Security Council or ended immediately once the UN secretary-general declares a peace settlement has been reached.

Sponsored by the United States, the embargo proscribes the sale or supply of arms, ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, and paramilitary equipment to both countries. Training, technical assistance, and the supply of spare parts associated with the prohibited items are also forbidden. The embargo applies to future deals, as well as agreements concluded prior to the UN action. A sanctions committee composed of all Security Council members will report on compliance with the embargo.

Russia, France, and others insisted on the 12-month limit. Moscow and Paris have been outspoken in criticizing the indefinite sanctions imposed on Iraq following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Russia, according to its latest voluntary arms export data, delivered heavy artillery to Ethiopia and combat aircraft to Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998. Belarus, which identified Russia as the state of origin, and Bulgaria reported shipping 40 and 50 tanks, respectively, to Ethiopia during the same period. China, Israel, North Korea, Romania, and Ukraine have also been identified as supplying arms to the two poverty-stricken states in recent years.

A U.S. government official noted that "Ethiopia and Eritrea are frequently held up as examples of what is wrong in the current system of arms export restraints."

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