

A) Confidential from Foreign Office to Addis Abeba No 355 of July 19 , 1956 – Hargeisa

Note of Protest –The incident which occurred near Erer during the first week in February in the course of which a large number **of Esa tribemen**, including women and children, were killed as the result of an attack made upon them by the Ethiopian troops and police. The victims were a number of persons belonging to at least two sections of the Esa tribe who normally reside in the Somaliland Protectorate. The sections concerned had migrated from the Protectorate towards the end of 1955 on search of grazing, and had only recently arrived in the area where the incident took place. Many of them enjoyed the status of British Protected Persons by reason of their birth, or the birth of their fathers, in the Somaliland Protectorate. I have accordingly been instructed by my Government to lodge a strong protest against this killing of British Protected Persons, and to reserve the right to claim compensation on behalf of their relatives.

Moreover, apart from the male members of the tribe who were killed, Her Majesty's Government have evidence that the Ethiopian troops and police deliberately killed and mutilated women and children of the tribe who had become separated from their menfolk and were taking no part in the fighting. Her Majesty's Government can find no reason which would justify such shameful conduct.

Her Majesty's Government recognise that the use of armed force may in certain circumstances be justified if order is to be preserved. But it is the normal practice that in carrying out such police actions no more force should be used than is absolutely necessary and above all, that such actions should not be allowed to take on the appearance of brutal and uncontrolled reprisals.

Her Majesty's Government therefore trust that the Ethiopian Government will acknowledge the justice of Her Majesty's Government's protest and will take steps to ensure that such indiscriminate and barbarous treatment will not be again inflicted on British Protected Persons. Her Majesty's Government must finally point out that if satisfaction is not afforded by the Ethiopian Government in respect of this incident Anglo-Ethiopian relations will be gravely affected.

Distributed to
African Department

B) Somalis Appeal to Britain (in Hargeisa)– 24 June 1956 – Tribesmen Tell of Massacre by Ethiopians

This week a delegation from a Esa Somali nomad tribe, arrived here to seek British protection against the Ethiopian Government, whose forces, they allege, have massacred more than 400 of their men, women and children and driven them from grazing grounds because would not accept Ethiopian Sovereignty.

According to the tribal spokesmen, they were approached last January by officials on their grazing grounds in Ethiopia and were asked if they considered themselves Ethiopians. They replied that they did not, that they were Somalis and were under the protection of the British Government, by a treaty concluded in 1885.

"They, then told us." Said the Esa leader, " that if we persisted in calling ourselves, Somalis and in saying that we were protected by the British they would either expel us from the country or exterminate us. We replied that we had occupied our grazing grounds for generations, long before they had ever come there.

"In the first week of February we were attacked by **an Ethiopian force of Infantry in 20 lorries, six light tanks and two or three planes.** We had only our spears and our knives, and we were helpless against these iron machines." **After a battle lasting five days, in which 189 Esa men, 111 women and 118 children were killed, the survivors retreated into hilly country where the tanks could not follow them.** The delay in appealing to Britain, the Esa say, was because they could not hold a tribal meeting before the rains, and it took time to arrange their affairs.

The leader of the delegation went on. " We have had clashes with Ethiopians before and we know that men are killed in a battle – we have accustomed to that. **But we have never heard before of women and children being killed. The women were mutilated before being killed and the children, one of them four days old –were murdered in cold blood.**

"We have lost everything. The Ethiopians have slaughtered our cows and sheep and goats, and have burned our huts and possessions. We only ask that our plight shall be made known to the British Government and the world. That we shall be given protection against Ethiopian, and that our rights shall be restored."

The Esa are a tough, hard-bitten people, with a reputation for turbulence, but they are also recognized as trustworthy. As I sat among them and listened to their tragic story, it was impossible to remain unmoved by their faith in our ability to give them protection to which they believe they are entitled.

C) Addis Ababa Telegram No. 377 to Foreign Office – 11 JULY 1956

1) Your telegram No. 335 Esa Incident.

2) Replies received from Harar today, **The sultan, of course, requests that his name be kept out of all dealings with the Ethiopians.**

3) He confirms the incident was caused by the behavior of the Ethiopian police and military in attempting to appropriate stocks and in manhandling and raping women.

4) The Esa, who were armed, thereupon opened fire. Some thirty police and military were killed and about nine Esa.

5) Next day the troops retaliated using aircraft and armoured cars and there was some bombing from the air. Some hundred and eleven Esa were killed of whom twenty-five were from the protectorate. They had crossed for grazing last year and were about to return. They included members of the Furlabbe, Horone and Rer Kol. (see the paragraph 4 of my telegram No.368). This is in no way contrary to Pink's original reports which, of course, referred to the whole action and not only to casualties (victims) from the British protected sections.)

6) The Sultan says he did not approach the Harar Consulate because the head-men of the British protected persons were in the Protectorate and he himself was detained in Addis Ababa by the Ethiopian until recently. He also felt that a protest would do no good in the circumstances, presumably because the Esa started the fight. He now says that he would be glad if an approach could be made to the Ethiopian Government to obtain assurances the Esa herds and women remain unmolested in future, and compensation for those killed and wounded.

7) This statement seems to have been freely made and not dictated by the Ethiopians, and yet you will see once more that only twenty-five British Casualties are mentioned. I still feel that it is

essential to be sure of our facts and the Sultan's facts are very different from those given by the Esa in Hargeisa. I understand that the Sultan visited the area after the incident and presumably had every opportunity to inform himself on the spot.

8) I have not yet received the Governor's detailed report. I am asking the Consul to try to obtain from the Sultan names of British protected persons killed, but this will probably prove impossible. The Consul will also investigate other sources.

D)

British Embassy
Addis Ababa
July 20th, 1956

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to draw your attention to an incident which occurred near Erer during the first week of February in the course of which a large of Esa tribesmen, including women and children, were killed as the result of an attack made upon them by Ethiopian troops and police. Her Majesty's Government, as a result of careful enquiries, are satisfied that among the victims were a number of persons belonging to at least two sections of the Esa tribe who normally reside in the Somaliland Protectorate towards the end of 1955 in search of grazing, and had only recently arrived in the area where the incident took place. Many of them enjoy the status of British Protected persons by reason of their birth or birth of their fathers in the Somaliland Protectorate. I have accordingly been instructed by Her Majesty's Government to lodge a strong protest against this killing of the British protected persons and to reserve the right to claim compensation on behalf of their relatives.

However, apart from the male members of the tribe who were killed, Her Majesty's Government have evidence that Ethiopian troops and police deliberately killed and mutilated women and children of the tribe who had become separated from their menfolk and were taking no part in the fighting. Her Majesty's Government can find no reason which would justify such shameful conduct.

Her Majesty's Government recognize that the use of armed forces may in certain circumstances be justified if order is to be preserved. But it is normal practice that in carrying out such police actions no more force should be used than is absolutely necessary and above all that such action should not be allowed to take on the appearance of uncontrolled reprisals.

Her Majesty's Government therefore trust that the Ethiopian Government will acknowledge the justice of Her Majesty's Government protest and will take steps to ensure that such indiscriminate and barbarous treatment will not be again inflicted on British Protected Persons.

Her Majesty's Government must finally point out that if satisfaction is not afforded by the Ethiopian Government in respect of this incident Anglo-Ethiopian relations will be gravely affected.

I avail myself of this opportunity to convey to your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

D. L. BUSK

His Excellency
PM/ Aklilou Habtewold,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
ADDIS ABABA

Government House,
Hargeisa
Somaliland Protectorate
23rd June, 1956

Sir,

I have the honour to request your advice and instructions on the following difficult problem.

2) The Esa, probably the most independent of the Somali tribes, live partly in the West of the Protectorate, partly in French Somaliland but mainly are in Ethiopia. Many of those who live in the Protectorate move for the seasonal grazing into Ethiopia proper, outside and well beyond the boundaries of the 1954 Agreement Territories. They are one of the Somali tribes with whom Great Britain concluded a treaty of protection in 1884. To all the Esa, that treaty is still just as valid as it has ever been.

3) For some years ever since the handover to Ethiopia of the Harar Province in 1948, till under the control of the British Military Administration, relations between the Esa and their Ethiopian rulers have alternated between uneasy peace and open fighting. Their Chief or Ugas is still as a consequence held under house arrest by the Ethiopians in Diredawa. The initial cause of these outbreaks of fighting is usually the normal Ethiopian custom of quartering their troops is not discouraged. As the Esa depend for their existence on their stock, naturally they react violently in defense of their property and attack and counter-attack have thus consequently become a regular feature of their lives. However, up to the present in these fights, the women and children were regarded as sacrosanct and continued to live their lives unharmed.

4) Early this year rumours began filtering through to the Protectorate that following a serious reverse suffered by Ethiopian regular troops at the hands of the Esa in late 1955, the Ethiopian Government were taking stringent measures to break them. Due to the very efficient Ethiopian news censorship, no confirmation was ever received of this but lately more rumours began filtering through again that the Esa tribe had taken a terrible beating as a result of the full force of the Ethiopian Army and Air Force being used indiscriminately against them. These rumours were confirmed when a delegation of the Esa from Ethiopia journeyed secretly to the Protectorate, contacted their kinsmen who live under us and, under their aegis (patronage-protection), on 20th June approached this Government for help. They stated that in February an Ethiopian punitive force in armoured cars and supported by planes of the Ethiopian Air Force entered the Esa country and after a five day running battle defeated the men and drove them away from their women and children whom the Ethiopian soldiery then butchered in the most revolting manner, cutting off the breasts of some of the women before killing them. The livestock were then slaughtered, the houses were burnt and the Esa left destitute except for a few camels. They were seen by the Chief Secretary and I attach herewith a record of the meeting.

5) The bald fact is that as a result of the latest Ethiopian measures the Esa as a tribe are practically broken, not only physically but morally. What has achieved this is not their loss in manpower but the cold blooded extermination of women and children by Ethiopian troops armed with the most modern weapons. The emissaries have produced the details, which are attached at Appendix 'A', of the women and children who have been deliberately killed, both Ethiopian subjects and British Protected Persons.

6) We should not blind ourselves to the fact that any Ethiopian soldiers unfortunate enough to be captured by the Esa are most probably brutally done to death but this does not justify their barbarity towards the Esa Women and children.

Honourable ALAN LENN-BOYD, M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

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The result is a most embarrassing situation for this Government. The Esa clans involved are partly British and partly Ethiopian subjects. At the Harar Conference last December agreement was sought about which Government was responsible for these people but at no avail, as the Ethiopian obdurately claim that the Whole Esa tribe belonged to them and would entertain no other view. We cannot possibly admit the Ethiopian claim and abandon the rights of our own Esa tribesmen and even those of the Esa who the Ethiopians could illegitimately claim to be their subjects still regard themselves as British Protected Persons by virtue of their old agreement. And because of the attitude adopted at Harar the Ethiopians will deny our right to intervene on the ground that it is purely domestic matter of their own. We could offer sanctuary to the remnants of the Ethiopian Esa tribesmen; but it would be a meagre offer since our own Esa country is the most unfertile, barren and waterless part of the Protectorate and it could not possibly support them.

- 8) You will note that they have made the following three requests:-
- 1) Arms, ammunition and fighting men.
 - 2) Assistance for their complaints to be put forward so that the world hears of them and the Ethiopians will give them peace.
 - 3) Assistance for their destitute families.

No.1 is quite out of the question. As regards No.2 even their 1884 agreement is superseded by the 1887 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty, yet some of these people are ours and we obligations towards them and as for the Ethiopian Esa I do feel that we have at least some residual obligations even to them under their agreement with us and that resolute diplomatic action on their behalf must be possible.

9) While this Government could not legitimately afford relief to Ethiopian subjects in Ethiopia ye we could not, on humanitarian grounds, deny succor to any fugitives seeking sanctuary in the Protectorate, especially if they were women and children. It would be far better of course if diplomatic action could dissuade the Ethiopians from the savage measures they are using and allow these people some freedom to live their own lives, when as we know, they are less trouble than many other somali tribes. Previously they had only apasmodic (intermittent, irregular, occasional feuds with the Danikil in French Somaliland and to a much less degree with the Gadabursi in the Protectorate. In any event their case is not likely to go by default as they heard of the N.U.F. and had gone to them for assistance, but it is of course preferable that such assistance should emanate from the efforts of H.M.G. rather than the N.U.F. Sot is unlikely their case will remain unventilated(unexamined).

10) As I have said, the Esa in Ethiopia have been in more or less continuous conflict with the Ethiopian Government for some years. And yet it these same people who came in to the Protectorate for grazing as far North as Zeila but this government and I say this in no spirit of self righteousness, has never had any trouble with them as a tribe. Our officers and people move freely and unescorted through the Esa country, as do the French officers who frequently come into the Protectorate. The Esa cannot therefore be said to be unresponsive to fair and sympathetic handling.

11) As already requested, I should be grateful for your advice and instructions.

12) I have sent copies of this dispatch to the Embassy in Addis Ababa, Harar and Jiggiga.

I have the honour to b ,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,
Governor British Somalia

F) MEETING WITH DELEGATION OF ESA PEOPLE HELD IN THE SECRETARIAT LIBRARY ON 20TH JUNE 1956

Present:- Mr. Stebbing, O.B.E., Chief Secretary

Mr. Michael Mariano, M.B.E. and representatives of National United Front.

Twelve Esa Tribesmen representing Esa Tribesmen in Ethiopia.

Mr. Omar Isman, Judge, Subordinate Court , Zeilah.

The Kadi of Zeilah,

Head of Abdul Khadir

Mr. W.M. Dickinson – Assistant Secretary, Political.

Mr. Omar Isman:-

We are grateful for the opportunity to meet our fellow tribesmen here today and we are grateful for the peace given by the British Government and their help in arranging this meeting. We want Government to understand the Esa point of view.

Mr. Stebbing:-

I am happy to greet the Esa who have come here today. I realise they come from another country under another Government. Our first concern here is about the future of the Somalis within our own borders; we want them to advance. We want our visitors to understand that while we will listen, we cannot say whether we shall be in a position to help. We will listen to everything you have to say and I promise to try and understand what the trouble is. I cannot promise help.

Mr Wais Mohamed(Esa tribesman):

Sometime ago, the Ethiopian Government sent officials to enquire what nationality we claim to have. We answered we were Esa. Then we were asked again who we were and we said we were Somalis; they told us to remain Esa, but Ethiopian subjects. We replied that we were Esa and Somalis but we were not Ethiopian subjects. Then they asked us what Government we were subject to; we told them that Somalis claim to be British Protected Persons. We, Esa, replied that from the time of our grand-fathers and our fathers, we have told that we have agreements with Great Britain. Then the Ethiopians said that if we said we were Somalis and had agreements with Great Britain, we must leave their territory. Then we were at a place called Tolo. We were born in that place. We had nowhere else to go. Then the Ethiopians said that if this is true, we must stop making assertions that we had agreements with the British Government and were Somalis. We said we could not give up these things which were traditions handed down to

us from our forefathers. Then the Ethiopians Said we would be compelled to move. We had no force nor might to resist but we were born in the place, so we had to stay there. The next thing that happened was the Ethiopian military attacked us. It was Friday, 1st week of February. The fighting continued for 5 days and nights. We were forced back across 7 river beds until we were driven to the last and 8th river bed at Erer. We had not the ability to resist this force. We were driven away from our women and children but this did not worry us as they had always been left untouched before. On this occasion however the Ethiopians killed all they could find. We were attacked by armoured cars, we have always had fighting and trouble in our lands, but we had never been attacked with armoured cars before. We are used to fighting soldiers with bayonets rifles but not with armoured cars. I do not know how many armoured cars were there but this is what defeated us. After this we talked together and it was decided that we should be sent to meet the Government and to meet the Somalis of this Protectorate and to ask their help. We marched six days and six nights to Abdul Khadir without rations or water. In the past we have been attacked by Ethiopians and we are used to this but this time they have killed our livestock, destroyed our houses and all our people were lost. Our worst fighting in the past used to be between the Esa and the Danakil and we accept the fact that men get killed in these fights, but women and children have never been killed before. When the men were forced to retreat and flee, the women and children were left behind because we thought they would be safe. Then the Ethiopian troops came in their armoured cars and killed the women and children and destroyed the houses. Nothing is left. Our houses, our women, our children and our livestock – all are gone. We were sent by our elders to seek the assistance of the British Government either by complaints being made to the Ethiopians which would give us peace, or by reinforcements of arms and ammunition to enable us to fight. Our request is for help in man-power and guns or for the Government to protest and complain and so help us.

Mr. Ali Geleh-Esa tribesman._

The main points of our news have already been given by the previous speaker. If a man dies, his son takes his inheritance and what we are asking for is our inheritance from our forefathers. It is clear what happened in the past. Before the Ethiopians and the French came to the Somalilands, the British Government came first, and the British Government was our protector and made agreement with us. It has always been clear in our minds that there was an agreement between our elders and the British Government. We have not got written copies of this agreement but it is our tradition which has been handed down. As far as we know, the Ethiopians have been in Somali country for about 50 years but the British have been here for more than 70 years. As I say, these are the words which have been handed down and we believe that whatever we might be we are British subjects, although we cannot establish this fact on paper. The reason why men, women and children had been killed is because we said we were Somalis and had agreements with the British. We stand by what our fathers said and have always believed. We felt we should go to the source of our protection and to see what help we can get. The most terrible thing is not our men being killed because we know that men do get killed in battle but it is the wanton killing of our women and children. We have no stock left and our women have been killed. This is the day of our greatest need and we have come here to see what help we can get. We will take back any reply that you give us to our elders. That is the object in our coming here.

Mr. Mariano:-

The Particular request of these people to the Government and the Somalis may be summarized as follows:

1. Arms, ammunition and fighting men.
2. Assistance for their complaints to be put forward so that the world hears of them and the Ethiopians will give them peace, and
3. Assistance for their destitute families.

These are unvarnished facts. I realise that not all these requests are compatible with what either the Government or Somalis are able to do but nevertheless this is what they have asked. This tradition about which they talk has not been made up just for the purpose of this visit. It is a thing which is deep in their hearts; and they had their men, women and children killed firstly because they said they are Somalis and secondly because they have agreement with the British. We have questioned them most closely and held a special meeting with them yesterday. We are convinced that they are telling the truth. You will notice that on two elderly men have arrived. They told us that 7 other elderly men had to be abandoned on the way due to the hardships of the journey. Their actual words to us were "we have left a destitute people and shall be going back to starving and destitute people". These people have had no previous contacts with the N.U.F. or other political organisations. They have simply lived their simple life with their livestock in the interior, but they have considered it worthwhile dying for their beliefs. We were surprised at their reports of the wanton brutality of the Ethiopians but we believe they are telling the truth. Furthermore, we consider that this is in keeping with the Ethiopian policy in the Haud and that it may not be long before they try these tactics on our people too. There are other things which speakers have not mentioned because they are modest and interior men and have not liked to tell them in a meeting such as this today; but they have told us that their women have had their breasts cut off before being killed and of the other horrible atrocities and we believe these statements also to be true. Mr. Ahmed Hassan has the list of people who have been killed.

Chief Secretary:-

Apart from the sections mentioned in the list are there any other sections in the Esa involved in this? **What is the position of the Ugas** (Chief of all the Esa people, who lives in Ethiopia)?

Mr. Mariano and others:-

We will produce a list of the other sections involved. **The Ugas is paid by the Ethiopians and kept under house arrest in Dire Dawa.** The Esa was taken by the Ethiopians to Addis Ababa.

Kadi of Zeilah:-

The Ugas sent messages to the British Government which we gave to the District Commissioner, Borama. These men have come here because their elders thought it right to send them and they needed help so badly. The Ugas is a prisoner and there is no opportunity of seeing him. Even the Esa people in towns like Dire Dawa are oppressed and shot up. Only the other day a man was shot in Dire Dawa for no reason. All the territory between 7 to 8 Rivers beds which they attacked have been occupied by Galla and

agricultural tribes but these people refuse to settle and said that not only it was not possible to farm the area but the land belonged to the Esa. Some of them were punished for this and some were shot. What has happened in the past is nothing. It is, what is going to happen when the Ethiopians hear that these Esa have come here today which is the trouble. I am sure the Ethiopians will make more trouble for the Esa. What these men need is protection from retaliation when they return. From the farthest point in the west where there are Esa to the farthest point in the east where there are Esa, all the Esa are united in being Somalis and having agreements with the British Government.

Mr. Omar Isman:-

When I first met these people at Abdul Khadir, I all all I could to test their sincerity. I told them that no reinforcements or arms will be provided by the Government and I advised them to return to their people. They said they realized that this was true but even if the Government could not give them arms, could not the Government, in support of whom they had fought and in support of whose name they had met with these misfortunes, speak on their behalf? I told them I did not know. In any case, they said their mission was to the highest point of the Government in Hargeisa and they had to go there before they return. Another thing I said was that for the present time as they have suffered so much, why they do not leave the future to itself and submit to the Ethiopians? I told them that this might be the best thing because Somalis in the Protectorate and the Government in the Protectorate were so far away from them. They replied that when a man is born and given a name, he cannot be given another name later on. What was inherited from their forefathers would be kept by them. They said there was an Esa seaman who had listened to the radio and had heard that Government in Somaliland was doing what it could for the Somalis and they had also heard that Somalia was getting self-Government, Therefore they, the Esa, were not prepared to sacrifice their birthright of British protection. They were used to fighting with soldiers with rifles and bayonets but could not fight against armoured cars and it was the first time that women and children had been killed in the fighting. It was this last fact which had made the tribe so desperate and had made them to decide to send the people here today.

Kadi of Zeilah: _

Tolo is the name of the river bed where the fighting started but the nearest railway station is Matahara which is north of Awash station.

Chief Secretary:-

I am very glad you have come and told us these things. Feel for you and understand your troubles. We had heard about these troubles earlier but we did not know the details. The fighting took place about four months ago and I understand the suffering and trouble which you have gone through since that time. This is the first occasion on which we have been able to get a proper understanding of the problem which you yourselves considered so long before sending representatives here. It would be quite wrong for me to try to give you a full answer in a moment. It took you some time to think the matter over and we must also think of what to do. There is an agreement signed by the British Government with the Esa. I am not quite clear what is in the agreement but I will look at it again carefully. Until now we have always felt that we have our country and when the Esa cross into it they are our people and we do our best to give them justice and to give them the things they expect from a Government. It is difficult to do these things when people cross

into another country. We will go into all these questions very carefully and will see what we can do within this country to help. We will also see if there is anything we can do to help you in Ethiopia. Now, I ask you to give your information to Mr. Mariano and the people here and I should be very glad to see again if you wish to have a further interview. I ask you to stay here until we consider the matter and can give you our answer. Then, we will have another meeting and discuss it again. We might have another meeting fairly soon with a few people to clarify any points which we want to understand better. We will give subsistence to enable you to stay in Hargeisa.

G) Reprt on Visit of Esa Country – 21st/22nd JULY, 1956. -- SECRET

1. I left Harar on 21st July, 1956, to visit the Area of Erer (JDH.85) AND GOTA(JDH.75),with the object of obtaining as much information as possible about two clashes between the Esa and Ethiopian Security forces, in the Area – a major one in the first week of February, 1956 and a minor about the 10th July, 1956. I was accompanied by Abdi Hersi (the British Consulate Harar Interpreter) and a driver, both of whom were Somali speakers.

2) Whilst in Harar I had ascertained that Ethiopian security forces were located in the area as follows:

- a) 30th Infantry Bn - JAEDORRA(JDH.79)
- b) Two Infantry Coys of the Imperial Bodyguard – OSBOLI (JDR. 50)
- c) Detachment of the Armoured Squadron - OSBOLI(JDRP)
- d) One Bn of Special Police - (exact position not known)

These forces were in addition to the normal Ethiopian Police posts (1 sgt or cpl and 10 men in the area).

3) Whilst in Harar my interpreter had ascertained from an Ethiopian armoured sqn officer, who was on leave from OSBOLI, that "about 4 months previously" he had taken part, in an armoured car, in an action against the Esa near ERER..

4) Two days earlier I had requested permission from the commander of 3rd Division (HQs in HARAR) to visit the Ethiopian Army units at Jaedora and Osboli, but permission was refused. Since H.M.'s Consul Harar had previously been refused permission to visit the Esa country, and as I had no permission to visit that area, it was my intention during my tour, to avoid contact as far as possible with any Ethiopian officials – District Governor, Army, Police, etc.. During the journey I passed through a number of Police posts but at no time was I stopped and asked to produce Identity card or travel permit, etc. Since the journey was undertaken during a weekend, most Ethiopian officials were off-duty.

5) The two particular incidents, about which I was hoping to obtain some information were:-

a) a major clash near ERER in the first week of February, 1956, during which, according to the Esa delegation which visited Hargeisa in mid-june, 1956, over 400 Esa men, women, and children had been killed by Ethiopian forces using aircraft, tanks, and armoured cars.

b) A minor clash also near ERER, approximately 10th July, 1956 (reported by H.M.'s Consul HARAR on the 13th July, 1956), during which 25 Esa villages starting to move back towards

the Protectorate had been prevented from doing so by Ethiopian Police, with resulting casualties on both sides.

6) I first visited ERER and GOTA, two small villages – the former about 3 miles south of the ADDIS ABABA – DJIBOUTI railway, and the latter on the railway.

There were no Esa present in either village, I questioned a number of the local inhabitants. I could obtain little detailed information apart from the fact that there was undoubtedly a general knowledge in both villages that:-

a) there had been a big fight between the Esa and the Ethiopians in the flat country to the north of the railway some months previously (some said 3 months and others 4), and that the Esa had suffered many casualties and heavy loss of livestock

b) there were considerable number of Ethiopian troops stationed near Jaedorra and that they lived mainly on livestock which they looted from the Esa from time to time.

c) Esa people came every year from the Protectorate to the ERER –GOTA area for grazing livestock.

7) None of the people whom I questioned seemed to have heard of the later incident (in early July, 1956), two men were able to confirm that they had seen aircraft flying over the area during the earlier incident and diving towards the ground. On further questioning they said they had seen aircraft, 2 or 3 at a time, over the area on three consecutive days.

8) I then went to ERER railway station (some 3 miles north of ERER), where there is a small village. Questioning of the local inhabitants produced no more detailed information, but as in GOTA there was a general knowledge of the major incident.

9) I decided then to take the track northwards from the railway towards Jaedorra, intending to try to make contact if possible with some Esa villages, without actually going into Jaedorra or Osboli.

Just outside the village there was a small Desert Locust camp which I visited. The Locust Officer (Mr. Massy) was away and his staff could give me little further information, as they had only arrived in the area from the Ogaden about 2 weeks previously. They had, however, been to Jaedorra a few days earlier and were able to confirm that there was an Ethiopian Bn there and that they had seen armoured cars in that area. They also mentioned that there was a Bn of Ethiopian police in a temporary camp approximately 5 miles North of the railway, on the track from ERER to Jaedorra, and that the distance from the locust camp to Jaedorra was 27 miles on a reasonably good track.

Here I was fortunate in finding an Esa man, by name Adan Wais, who had not long been in the area but who was employed in the locust camp as a night-watchman. He told me the Esa people had, since the clash about 2 weeks previously, withdrawn from ERER area to the North-East, and were starting back towards the Area of Zeila (on the coast) where they came from. He did not know exactly where they were located then, but thought they would be to the East of Jaedorra and of the ERER river.

I therefore started off northwards along the track towards Jaedorra, taking the Esa man with me as a guide.

10) After about one mile I passed a small temporary camp situated on a low hill. The huts were made of branches and grass, and the camp was occupied by one Company of Ethiopian police. Near this

camp there was a stockade made of thorn branches and around which were grazing about 100 head of livestock, about a dozen camels and sheeps. My Esa guide was definite that these were Esa livestock which had been looted by the Ethiopians.

About 4 miles further on the track passed another rather larger temporary camp which accommodate more Ethiopian police and around which were grazing 60-70 sheeps, almost certainly looted Esa livestock.

These two temporary camps contained the Battalion of Special Police. In each camp there was a sentry on duty near the track, but neither took much notice of us as we passed.

11) After a further 17 miles, when about 5 miles south of Jaedorra, we left the track and turned to the East. Then after crossing with some difficulty the ERER River and continuing Eastwards for a further 5 miles or so we came out on to an open rather barren plain, which was fairly dry and with little grazing left. There was no sign of life at first but after driving further to the East we saw some Esa encampments and a few very small flocks of sheep.

12) I stopped the Landrover about 200 yards from the first small collection of huts (low round huts of matting over wooden hoops), and sent the Esa guide to tell the people who we were. Just before, we had passed some women, tending the small flocks of sheep, who had appeared very apprehensive.

At the first small encampment there were two men, as well as 6 or 7 women and children, and one of the men, PROBLA ALI by name, said he was the headman of a group of villages in that area. When I told I had come from the British Consulate in HARAR, he seemed very glad and said that this was the first occasion he could remember of a British official coming to see him.

He said he was of the WADIY or WADIR Section (I am not sure that this spelling is correct) and that there were also WALALDOON in the area. They had heard, he said that there had been rain recently in the Protectorate, so they were moving back towards the Zeila area whence they came nearly every year to graze their livestock in the ERER area. Pointing to the barren plain in which they were situated, he said there was little grazing left and in any case the Ethiopians were always stealing their livestock. He estimated that they stayed in the ERER area for 5-5 months each year and that it would take them about 3 months for the journey back to the Zeila area.

13) I then asked him if he could give me any information about two recent fights between the Esa and the Ethiopians in the ERER area, mentioning that that was the main purpose of my present visit.

I questioned him closely, and the following are the main points which he made:-

a) He was born near ZEILA in the British Somaliland Protectorate and was therefore a British protected Person. His father had been born there, as well as his wife and 2 children. He was emphatic that he and his family were BPPs, and added that all the Esa people who came from the Protectorate to graze in the Ethiopia were BPPs. He was of the opinion that even if some of them were born in Ethiopia, they were still BPPs.

His wife (who was pregnant) and other men were standing near him while he was talking, and they clearly indicated that they were in agreement.)

b) there were many Ethiopian troops in the Jaedorra area, who had been there all the time that he had been this time in the ERER area. They were well armed and had "Heavy vehicles" (reference to tanks and armoured cars), whereas the Esa had very few weapons and hardly any ammunition so they could do nothing against the many armed Ethiopian

troops, who frequently surrounded them and stole their livestock. He had never been questioned by any Ethiopian about his nationality, and was certain that the object of the Ethiopian attacks was to steal livestock.

c) "About four months previously", he and many other Esa had been grazing in the Tolo area when they were attacked one day by many Ethiopian troops with "heavy vehicles". The Ethiopians attacked them for 5 days, and fired at everyone and everything with their machine guns and rifles. Their houses were set on fire and great numbers of their livestock were rounded up and taken away by the Ethiopians. Though he had been in the area at the time, he and his family escaped injury but lost about two-thirds of their sheep in the chaos which resulted.

"Many, many Esa" were killed (he could give no figures) including a number of women (some pregnant) and children, by rifles and machine gun fire. He had seen aircraft on two days diving and firing at their encampments with machine guns.

d) For a time after this everything was fairly quiet and they continued to graze in the area between ERER and JAEDORRA. Then "about three weeks ago", a party of about 200 armed Ethiopian police came from the direction of the railway and surrounded them. They tried to resist them, but it was not used and the Ethiopians took away approximately 700 head of livestock. Some Esa who had rifles fired at the Ethiopians, who returned the fire killing 11 Esa men. We believe that 2 or 3 Ethiopians had been killed.

14) In this encampment there was a woman with 3 or 4 children. She told me that her husband (PROBLA AHME) had been killed by the Ethiopians " about two weeks before " when he was trying to stop Ethiopian police from taking their sheep. She said that she and her husband had been born near ZEILA and they had come nearly every year to graze their livestock in the ERER area. She said she has lost both her husband and her livestock and had small children to care for. She was in a very distressed state.

15) I did not visit JAEDORR and OSBOLI, where no doubt there were many more looted Esa livestock.

I returned to ERER Railway station where I spent the night in the Desert Locust camp, and drove back to HARAR on 22nd July, 1956.

16) Although I was not able to obtain any very detailed information, my impressions are these: _

1) The information received does confirm the reports which, we have had if the two armed attacks by Ethiopian forces.

i) In February, 1956

ii) in early July, 1956

against the Esa, who were quite definite that they were British Protected Persons on grounds of place of birth.

a) the attacks were carried out by Ethiopians, for the purpose of looting Esa livestock, using a considerable amount of force (including aircraft).

b) that many Esa had been killed during the period, including a number of women and children who were shot while trying to protect their livestock, and that the Esa had suffered a considerable loss of livestock as well.

Addis ababa – 25 July, 1956

Leuit. Colonel

Military Attache.

(T.P. Luckook)

APPENDIX 'A'

List of Deaths suffered by Esa Tribesmen at the hands of the Ethiopians → 466					
Seciton	British	Male	Female	Children	Remarks
	Walaal Doon	41	23	30	Graze into Ethiopia as far as Erer
	Fur Labeh	26	13	19	
	Horoneh	21	11	60	
	Total:	88	47	109	244
Ethiopian					
	Rer Gulaneh	36	27	21	As above
	Harlah	24	17	15	
	Rer Musa	31	18	9	Graze as far as Zeila
	Odah Goob	6	4	9	
	Urweeina	3	-	-	Enter Protectorate to graze
	War Diiq	1	-	1	
	Total:	101	66	55	222

The Esa Treaty

We, the undersigned Elders of the Esa tribe, are desirous of entering into an agreement with the British Government for the maintenance of our Independence, the preservation of order and other good and sufficient reasons.

Now it is hereby agreed and covenanted as follows:-

Article I.

The Esa tribe do hereby declare that they are pledged and bound never to cede, sell, mortgage or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, any portion of the territory presently inhabited by them or being under their control.

Article II.

All vessels under the British flag shall have free permission to trade at all ports and places within the territories of the Esa tribe.

Article III.

All British subjects, residing in, or visiting, the territories of the Esa tribe, shall enjoy perfect safety and protection and shall be entitled to travel all over the said limits under the safe conduct of the Elders of the tribe.

Article IV.

The British Government shall have the power to appoint on an agent or agents to reside in the territories of the Esa tribe, and every such agent shall be treated with respect and consideration and be entitled to have for his protection such guard as the British Government deem sufficient.

The above-written treaty shall come into force and have effect from the date of signing this agreement.

In token of the conclusion of this lawful and honourable bond Ali Gridene, Waberi Adan, Warsame Idlay, Fadhl Mohamed, Boh Molla, Ail Shirdone, Nagaya Bidar, Samater Roblay, Gaillay Ishak, Weil Mohamed, Yunus Fahi, Girhi Egal, Mohamed Bergel, Burray Awadh, Ali Karrat, Khairullla Magan, Boh Hiersee, Abdalla Ali, Ali Idris, Shirdone Samaduder, Rogay kaynt,

And

Major Fredrick Mercer Hunter, Assistant Political Resident at Aden, the former for themselves, their heirs and successors, and the latter on behalf of the British Government, do each and all in the presence of witnesses affix their signatures, marks, or seals at Zeila on the thirty-first day of December one thousand eight hundred and eight-four (1884), corresponding with the thirteenth Rabia-ul-awal one thousand three hundred and two (1302).

(signed) T.M. HUNTER, Major,

Witness (signed) M. EDWARDS, Captain, I.M., Commanding I.M.S. "Amborwitch",

(signed) DUFFERIN, Viceroy and Governor General of India.

The treaty was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor General of India in Council at Simla on the twentieth day of May, A.D. one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five.

(signed) H.H. DURAND,

Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

Certified that the above is a true copy of the original treaty.

(signed) H.J. CUNNINGHAM

Simla)
The 22nd May)
1885)

Officiating, Underr Secretary to the
Government of India,
Foreign Department.