

REPUBLIQUE DE DJIBOUTI

جمهورية جيبوتي

LE PREMIER MINISTRE

رئيس الوزراء

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

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YOUR EXCELLENCY,

1 March
I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency a copy of letter which has been just sent to the BBC by the Secretary General of Information of the Republic of Djibouti.

I very much regret to initiate this personal correspondence with Your Excellency on a complaining note, particularly in view of the excellent relations that our two countries have consistently maintained.

The warmth and cordiality with which our Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation has been received during his recent visit to your great country reflected better the mutual esteem our two countries have for each other.

May I draw Your Excellency's attention to the gravity of the charges made against the Republic of Djibouti and the scarcity of factual for the same basis. We appreciate the freedom of opinion enjoyed in the United Kingdom by the media, naturally including the external services of the BBC. Such freedom however presumably covers only the opinions expressed, and obviously falls far short of a licence to invent the facts needed to portray the Republic of Djibouti as a country on the verge of political and financial disintegration.

As Your Excellency may know, the BBC allegations are particularly damaging to a country like the Republic of Djibouti whose main asset is its reputation for financial stability of its economy and finance.

The competent organs of the Republic are studying the legal and other remedial options available to the Republic of Djibouti against the BBC. However, as Your Excellency know such options at best compensatory, and can in no way undo the damage caused.

A third-world country like Djibouti is therefore completely defenceless against first-world onslaughts of this type. As her Majesty's government in the United Kingdom has strongly opposed proposals

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like those of unesco for alleviating some of the media handicap of the ways and means available to us to protect ourselves against such greatly damaging half truths and pure inventions vouched for by the immense resources, prestige and credibility of the BBC.

I can assure Your Excellency's that we in Djibouti are determined that this unfortunate attack of the BBC. Will not disturb the traditional friendship linking our two countries.

Please, my Excellency's accept my highest considerations my most cordial feelings.

HER EXCELLENCY
MARGARET THATCHER
PRIME MINISTER OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM
LONDON

