

Liberty

*Bi-Monthly English Organ of the
Eritrean People's Democratic Party - EPDP*

FRANKFURT MAYOR AND RULING GERMAN PARTIES ATTEND ERITREA FESTIVAL 2015 (p.8)



2ND EPDP CONGRESS HELD IN ETHIOPIA AND GERMANY (p.3)



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ERITREANS AROUND THE GLOBE CELEBRATE

54TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION

The start of the Eritrean struggle for national independence, peace, democracy and prosperity was launched on 1st September 1961, a date which is annually celebrated by Eritreans in all part of the world to renew their commitment to continue the struggle and attain fully those lofty objectively.

This year’s 54th Anniversary of that date was celebrated in the eve of first September 2015 in several major cities in the world. In the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa alone, over 3,000 Eritreans, the vast majority of them young people fleeing from the repressive regime in Asmara, celebrated the day with great colour and words of commitment to play their role in the current struggle for change (see picture below). The EPDP and other political and civil society organizations were participating at the great event mainly organized by the youth themselves.



Second EPDP Congress: **Epitome of Democratic Steps** **In the Right Direction**

First a background note: The birth of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) on 1st of January 2010 as a merger of two seemingly different schools of thought and struggle in the Eritrean political arena was taken as an extraordinary occurrence that was welcome to some and unwelcome to others.

Those who welcomed the merger hoped not only quick results in the struggle of removing an evil regime but also believed that the new body (EPDP) would succeed in correcting the wrong path Eritrea had taken after 1991 and thus help in laying down lasting democratic institutions selectively extracted from the legacies bequeathed by the elderly Jebha/ELF and Shabia/EPLF, its relatively younger rival/partner in the prolonged liberation struggle that ended 24 years ago. On the other hand, those who looked at the birth of EPDP with jaundiced eyes used wrong prisms to see and unfairly characterize it for what it was not.



Gondar, Ethiopia



Wiesbaden, Germany

For the sake brevity, let us put it this way: the six-year old EPDP did not yet succeed to deliver the expected "quick result" in removing the enemy in Asmara because that task was and is the responsibility of all Eritreans put together. But the EPDP has been to some extent successful in responding to the other expectations. It is difficult to deny that the party has been dutifully engaged in constructing bridges for long-term reconciliation, and laying down healthy political trends that will in the end give birth to democratic culture with dependable institutions.

- The EPDP embraced the principle of nonviolent democratic struggle for now and for always, which is already taking root, and will eventually defeat the militarist mentality Eritreans imbued in their 125-year history replete with endless wars and violence.
- The EPDP played a leading role in breaking the false barrier politicians built using the Blue Flag and the current Official Eritrean Flag. The EPDP accepted both symbolisms as its own and many followed suit.

- The EPDP continued to struggle for constitutionalism and a constitutional state without become prisoner of untimely arguments over the 1997 constitution that has been betrayed by the very regime that ratified it.
- This party showed that the Jebha and Shabia divide was not real and shall not be left to linger as the regime and its supporters wish to make it continue.

The holding on schedule the merger conference by end of 2009, followed by the first congress in 2011 and now the second congress this summer, and the conclusion of each of these notable events with enhanced and forward looking documents and resolutions are undoubtedly part of the steady growth of little noticed yet real political culture and maturity. The paragraphs below will tell more about the most recent party congress held in two different places because of the situation facing Eritreans in diaspora.

First Part of EPDP Congress Held in Gondar, Ethiopia

Between 15 and 19 July, 2015, representatives of the Horn of Africa branches of EPDP held the first part of the congress in Gondar with 31 persons taking part. As we will see below, the second part of the second EPDP congress was held in Wiesbaden, Germany during the last week of July 2015.



The part of the congress held in Gondar was attended by 31 delegates coming from different cities and refugee camps in the Sudan, Ethiopia as well as the EPDP Chairman Menghsteab Asmerom and other three executive committee members who traveled from Europe and

North America to submit reports of the Central Council covering the last four years since the first congress. The other executive members were Mr. Woldeyesus Ammar, head for foreign office; Mr. Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), head for finance, and Mr. Rezene Tesfazion, head for social affairs

Following the opening session of 15 July, the congress elected its secretariat chaired by Mr. Debesai Beyene, a senior party cadre in Ethiopia. Taking part at the opening ceremony to deliver solidarity messages of their respective organizations were senior leadership members of the Eritrean People's Unity Front (EPUF-Sagim), the Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development (EIPJD), and the Eritrean National Salvation Front (ENSF-Hidri. Other seven fraternal Eritrean political organizations also sent messages of solidarity that were read at the session.

In the days that followed, the congress reviewed the leadership's report covering the past four years; debated article by article and adopted EPDP's future political programme, the party constitution and finally drafted political resolutions and recommendations that underline the principled positions of the party. Votes supporting each given motion are recorded by the congress secretariat so that they can be consolidated with similar votes to be made in the second part of the congress in Germany later this month to give the final shape to the documents and other resolutions.

On 19 July, the Gondar part of the congress formed an election committee headed by Mr. Ghirmai Kifle of Khartoum, Sudan, and conducted election in a secret ballot of the future party leadership that will be mandated to lead the party during the next four years.

The voting process was preceded by useful clarifications presented by the chairman of the election committee as well as by the chairman of the Nominating Committee, Mr. Rezene Tesfazion, who said that all branches of the party in five continents participated in suggesting candidates for the leadership through their votes.

Accordingly, a list of candidates who were given highest votes was presented to the congress. In addition, each congress member was considered as eligible candidate until he/she declares otherwise. In this way, each delegate was able to list up to 31 persons as potential future central council members. The ballots were then put in a sealed envelope and handed over to the party chairman who later submitted them to the secretariat of the second part of the congress in Germany. Also adopted at the Gondar part of the congress were draft resolutions and recommendations as well as the final statement of the congress. These documents took their final shape at the end of the congress in Germany.



Second Part of EPDP Congress in Germany

The 2nd part of the Second Congress was opened on 26 July in Wiesbaden, Germany, with 68 congress delegates representing party branches in 8 European countries, the United States and Canada. Scheduled to last for the coming five days, the second part of the congress is a follow up of the first part which took place a week ago in Gondar, Ethiopia, with 27 delegates and four executive committee members, including party chairman, taking part.

The EPDP congress in Wiesbaden, located some 34 kms outside Frankfurt, was opened by a welcoming address of Ms Tiebe Tekie, a senior party cadre and congress moderator, who expressed her profound pride by the collective contributions of party leadership and members in making the process a success.



She also reserved warm commendations to the chairwoman of the preparatory committee, Ms Adiam Tefera, who invested hard work and foresight in giving final touches to the preparation of the congress and invited her to the podium to present her report.

In her moving presentation, Ms Adiam Teferi recounted the long and arduous journey in preparing the second party congress, and proffered generous words of gratitude to all teams and party members who made valuable contributions in preparing the first and second parts of the party congress in Ethiopia and Germany. Ms Adiam also urged every congress participant to focus on what is to be done in coming months and years so that the cause of our victimized people could be realized within the shortest time possible.

In his statement the EPDP Chairman, Mr. Menghesteb Asmerom, briefly stated major party achievements scored in the past four years and outlined the major issues of great concern that are to be raised and discussed in this part of the congress.

During its second and third days on 27 and 28 July, the second congress discussed a comprehensive 20-page leadership report and the party constitution coordinated by a seven-person secretariat consisting of Mr. Fissehaye Hagos of USA who served as its chairman, with Mr. Gherezgiher Te wolde from Canada; Mr. Tedros Fissehaye from Zambia; Ms Ghenet H/Gherghis from Australia; Ms Alganesh Issac from Sweden; Mr. Ibrahim Atta from Germany, and Mr. Haile Woldu from UK.

The congress in Wiesbaden ended on 30 July after adopting basic party documents including timely political resolutions and recommendations.

The congress also elected a new 33-person Central Council that included

36% new council members and included youth. All five women candidates in the election registered resoundingly high scores to become Central Council members. In fact, the highest scorer of votes was Ms Adiam Teferi followed by Mr. Mesfin Hagos, a veteran freedom fighter.

The results of discussions in Gondar and Wiesbaden on every article of the political programme, party constitution, political resolutions as well as the voting outcomes were computed to give the final decisions.





All five women candidates in the congress were elected to EPDP leadership

The two-part congress also adopted 12 very important resolutions on several burning national issues including the joint tasks in removing the dictatorship in the country; the roles of the young generation, the Eritrean women, the army and the various justice-seeing forces in the current struggle as well as in post-dictatorship Eritrea. The outcome of the congress, including the political resolutions, were made public during the following week which was graced by a successful annual politico-cultural Eritrea Festival in Frankfurt.

POLITICO-CULTURAL ERITREA FESTIVAL 2015 HELD WITH ADDED SIGNIFICANCE AND STYLE

- **SPD's Mayor of Frankfurt Attends in Person and Addresses Festival**
- **German Ruling Party CDU, Green Party and Free Democrats also Address Eritrea Festival 2015; Give Support to Struggle for Democracy**
- **12 Eritrean organizations, old Eritrea Friends from Sweden make Solidarity Messages and Political Statements....**

As noted above, the city of Frankfurt and all the major German political parties this year gave an unprecedented attention to the Eritrean opposition by attending and addressing the Eritrea Festival held in the European financial capital of Frankfurt between 31 July and 2 August 2015. The Eritrea Festival is a major politico-cultural event annually organized in Frankfurt by the non-profit Eritrean Democratic Association (EDA) in close cooperation with the branches in Europe of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP). The main event of the festival took place in the afternoon and evening hours of Saturday, 1 August 2015 under the moderation of Ms Adiam Tefera and Mr. Ghirmai Zemichael speaking in Tigrinia and Arabic.



The Festival Panel that lasted for nine hours and attended by a large number of people including a significant number of youth, was started by a welcoming address of Mr. Tesfamariam Kibreab, the EDA chairman, who spoke in German and Tigrinia to explain the objectives and significance of the annual festival attended by hundreds of Eritreans of different political orientation coming from many countries.

The history-making occurrence was the presence at the festival for the first time by the Major of Frankfurt, **Mr. Peter Feldmann**, a member of the German Social Democratic Party (**SPD**).



In his speech, the mayor recounted the welcoming spirit of Frankfurt and its multicultural people, majority of whom consisted of migrants of 180 ethnic origins. He noted that the city is also home to many Eritreans whom he urged to accept Frankfurt as the permanent home of their children and grand children and take part in its every-day life, including its politics.



Delegates of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (**CDU**); the Free Democratic Party (**FDP**) and the German Green Party also addressed the festival expressing support to the Eritrean struggle for democratic change. In particular, **Dr. Klaus Dieter Grothe of the German Green Party**, expressed strong support to the cause of justice-seeking Eritreans and apolo-



gized for a mistaken support the Greens gave to the regime in Asmara for quite a long time. He said no country can develop without democracy and human rights, all of which are absent in today's Eritrea. He urged Eritreans in diaspora to unify and prepare for a smooth transition from dictatorship to democracy.

Also invited to the podium for their moving reflections on the past and present situations in Eritrea were two former journalists, Mr. Bo Bjelvenstam and Ms Christina Bjork from Sweden (see next story).

EPDP Chairman Menghesteab Asmerom presented his keynote speech in Tigrinia and Mr. Hamid Drar helped to convey the message to the audience in Arabic. Mr. Menghesteab Asmerom warmly welcomed all invited guests and festival participants and explained the situation of Eritreans in 2015, the status of the struggling forces and the core objectives that require immediate attention for democratic change in Eritrea. He also read 12 political resolutions of the second party congress that was held in two parts in Ethiopia and Germany.



EPDP Chairman and the Mayor of Frankfurt at the Festival

Presentation of statements by German political parties, the two historic friends and the EPDP chairman was followed by solidarity messages from 12 Eritrean political and civil society organizations. These included chairpersons and leadership representatives of two wings of the Eritrean National Salvation Front (ENSF and ENSF-Hidri); the Eritrean People's Unity Front (Sagem); the Eritrean Nahda Party (ENP); the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP); the Eritrean Forum for National Dialogue (EFND - Medrek); the Eritrean Unity for National Salvation (EUNS); Eritrean Initiative for Eritrean Women in Germany, Network of Eritrean Women, and Eritrean Youth Solidarity for Change (EYSC). Also speaking on the significance of the Geneva demonstration of 26 June was Dr. Daniel Rezene of Geneva who emphasized the need of new initiatives to seize the momentum created by the mass manifestation in support of the decisions by the UN Human Rights Council.



After a short break, a lively festival panel discussion was started under the able moderation of Mr. Haile Woldu of UK and Ms Feven Ghideon of Germany. All the 12 speakers were invited as team to the front stage. They were **Mr. Menghesteab Asmerom of EPDP; Dr. Daniel Rezene; Dr. Habte Tesfamariam (ENSF); Ms Amal Ali Mohammed Saleh of Medrek; Dr. Almaz Zerai of women's network; Ms Alganesh Ghebre of women's initiative; Dr. Harnet Bokrezion of EYSC; Mr. Bahta Hailemariam (Sagem), Mr. Fessehazion Ghebre (ENSF-Hidri); Mr. Abdulaziz Anwar (Al-Nahda); Mr. Menghesteab Kidane (EDP); and Mr. Dirar Abraha of EUNS.**

The panelists exchanged with the audience their understanding of unity of action in the opposition camp, the various shortcomings of all forces opposed to the dictatorship in Eritrea and the expectations of the general public from the younger generation which is suffering of the consequences of state failure in Eritrea.

The audience was engaged not only in asking questions but also in providing answers to the burning national issues of the current stage as well as the challenges ahead in post-dictatorship Eritrea.

The political discussions were followed by an all-night folkloric music and dancing staged by young singers and musicians from different parts of Europe.

Details on the speeches as well as the solidarity messages were posted in www.harnnet.org.

Bo and Christina of Sweden at Eritrea Festival 2015 in Frankfurt

In 1969, Bo interviewed Emperor Haile Selassie in Addis Ababa about Eritrea. Two years later, he was joined by Christina and other friends to form 'Eritrea Gruppen' to help Eritreans. Help they did, and still continue to stand on the side of the Eritrean people.

The annual Eritrea Festival 2015, held between 31 July and 2 August in Frankfurt, was graced by the presence of these two veteran Swedish journalists: the 91-year old and still strong Bo Bjelvenstam and Christina Björk. No wonder that a roaring welcome awaited the two old friends of the prolonged Eritrean struggle when they were introduced to the Festival audience and invited to the podium to make solidarity speeches.



Both expressed feelings of family reunion with Eritrean freedom fighters whom they met many decades ago, and still struggling to realize a democratic Eritrea. Old friend Bo started by informing the festival audience that when he interviewed

the Ethiopian Emperor in 1969 for the Swedish television. The Emperor denied any presence of rebellion in Eritrea. Bo visited the ELF-held territories in 1971 and confirmed to his country people and the world at large that Ethiopia was indeed at war with the Eritreans.

In his impromptu speech, Bo expressed his profound sadness as to what happened to Eritrea after territorial independence in 1991, but called on all Eritrean freedom fighters to mend their fences

and realize the lofty objectives of democracy and the rule of law for whose sake so many lives were sacrificed.

He also stated that he with Christina and other Swedish friends formed the Eritrea Gruppen over 40 years ago and that group catered for many years medical and other support to Eritrean civilians in the liberated areas.

On her part, Christina read a short prepared-text in which she recalled with nostalgia her encounter with Eritreans in those early years and urged present-day freedom fighters to unite for the common cause they are struggling for. She added: "When the dictatorship falls I hope that the external opposition which today is divided into several groups will be able to cooperate. What I like with the EPDP is that both former ELF and EPLF members are already cooperating."

Reproduced below are excerpts from Christina Björk's statement at the festival.

Dear friends:

Some of us Swedes like Mr Bo and I have been interested in Eritrea since the early 70th. We felt indignation about the injustice and the way the Eritrean people were treated by the Ethiopians. It was unfair. And it was a scandal that the UN made a decision to which they did not take responsibility.

That's why many of us in Sweden felt that we had the obligation to support the struggle.

In 1981, I visited Eritrea and made a film about the struggle for independence. It was during a very difficult time for the people. But what you can see in the film is that they had a hope for the future. Cooperatives had been organised. The liberated areas were used for farming and the products were distributed among the civilians. Mobile clinics offered health care and I saw functioning schools everywhere. Most important of all people believed in a better future. .

During the last years I have been interviewing Eritreans who participated in the struggle for independence during the 60', 70' and 80th. I made interviews with young Eritreans as well. These interviews will be kept in an archive for future research. Some of the material will become published in a book which I am writing at present...

Unfortunately all the sacrifices you made during the war for independence resulted in dictatorship and Eritrea became a prison for the people....

During 2015, Eritrea at last obtained the attention it deserved from the international community and the media.....

When the dictatorship falls I hope that the external opposition which today is divided into several groups will be able to cooperate. What I like with the EPDP is that both former ELF and EPLF members are already cooperating.

I will finish by saying that I feel hope. I believe there will become a democratic Eritrea in the future I hope that all of you will be able to go home and feel that all the sacrifices you did will help you building the country of our dreams.

UN HRC Decision Is a 'Sword of Damocles' Hanging Over the Eritrean Dictator, Isaias

The English language borrowed from the Greco-Roman legend the phrase "Sword of Damocles" which gives the sense of an ever present peril hanging over persons in power, especially the abusive kind. Coincidentally, the Greek name of Damocles('fame of the people') translates in Eritrean to the now infamous Tigrinia phrase of "Nsu Nihna, Nihna Nsu" ('he is us, we are him').

For the past quarter of a century, Eritrea's president Isaias Afeworki, defied all sensible norms of governance leadership as well as the basics of normal co-existence with the rest of the world. As a result, Eritrea and its people find themselves in what they are today. The full story of this tragedy was recounted in a 483-page report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea released last June. Based on this report, the politically and morally powerful 47-member UN Human Rights Council decided on 2 July 2015 as follows:

"In a resolution ([A/HRC/29/L.23](#)) on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, adopted without a vote, the Council strongly condemns the systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations that have been and are being committed by the Government of Eritrea in a climate of generalized impunity; reiterates its numerous calls upon the Government of Eritrea to end its use of arbitrary detention of its citizens, to end the use of torture or other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment, to account for and release all political prisoners and to end the practice of forcing citizens to participate

in the militia; and calls upon of the Government of Eritrea to take immediate and concrete steps to implement recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry in its report. The Council decides to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea for a period of one year. It also decides to extend, for a period of one year, the mandate



of the Commission of Inquiry to investigate systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in Eritrea with a view to ensuring full accountability.

This is the call for an intensive investigation to determine which of the human rights abuses of the Eritrean authorities can be defined as Crimes Against Humanity. That is a real Sword of Damocles hanging over dictator Isaias Afeworki and his gang.

This publication recommends, rather appeals, upon all readers to go over every paragraph of the excerpts below of the UN HRC resolution and keep helping the success of the Commission, and by doing so take part in helping Eritreans overcome their problems, rather, their tragedies.

The Human Rights Council,

.....

Commending the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea for completing its work in a transparent, impartial and consultative manner,

Deeply regretting the lack of cooperation by the Government of Eritrea with the commission of inquiry and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, including the lack of access to the country,

Stressing the importance of the first-hand accounts of victims and witnesses who delivered testimonies at the confidential interviews held by the commission and through written submissions,

Emphasizing that everyone has the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and expressing grave concern that national elections in Eritrea have not been held since 1993 and that the Constitution of 1997 has never been implemented,

Reiterating its deep concern at the ongoing reports of grave violations of human rights by the Eritrean authorities against their own population and fellow citizens,

Expressing deep concern at the commission's findings that systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have been and are being committed by the Government of Eritrea, and that the violations in the areas of extrajudicial executions, torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence and abuse, national service and forced labour may constitute crimes against humanity,

Noting with grave concern the continued use by the Government of Eritrea of arbitrary arrest and detention, including incommunicado detention and in life-threatening conditions, of persons for suspected of evasion of national service, attempting to flee the country or having a family member who has fled, inability to produce identity documents, being a journalist, exercising the right to freedom of religion, being perceived as critical of the Government, and of those who return to the country, as well as those detained in the aftermath of the takeover on 21 January 2013 of the building housing the Ministry of Information,

Expressing grave concern at the widespread use of indefinite conscription into national service, a system that constitutes forced labour, and the reported forced conscription of children under the age of 18 into military service, and regretting that the fear and experience of a lengthy national service causes large numbers of Eritreans to leave the country,

Expressing grave concern also at reports that the Government of Eritrea is also forcing persons to participate in its citizen militia,

Deeply concerned that the situation of human rights in Eritrea incites an ever-increasing number of Eritreans to leave their country, often facing risks of abduction, abhorrent physical and mental abuse and other ill-treatment on their migration path, abused by smugglers and human traffickers,

Reaffirming that everyone has the right to leave any country, including his or her own, and to return to his or her country,

Noting the participation of Eritrea in the second cycle of the universal periodic review as well as its approval of several recommendations, while regretting the lack of implementation by Eritrea of the recommendations made at its first review,

Recalling the obligations of Eritrea under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,

SWISS BANKS: SECURE COFFERS FOR ERITREAN DICTATORSHIP

Marie Maurisse, a Swiss journalist for the French-language magazine, L'Hebdo, published on 20 August, 2015, an investigative report on Eritrea in which she exposes shocking facts other than the already reported \$700 million that PFDJ/Eritrean regime thieves had stashed in the Switzerland branch of the global HSBC bank.

In the article, Ms Maurisse says that it is not only the hard-pressed Eritrean youths who are leaving the poor country but also millions of hard currency illegally earned by the rogue regime and its supporters. "Switzerland is a popular destination" for Eritreans and a lot of stolen and illicitly earned Eritrean money, the investigative report confirms. Agents of the regime transiting illicit funds live in US, Italy, Switzerland and other places masquerading as taxi drivers, mechanics or embassy staff.

The funds are hidden abroad (in Switzerland, Cyprus, Dubai etc) under so many names attached to the regime. Even the name of Yemane Ghebremeskel, the Eritrean president's long-time adviser who was recently given the information portfolio, is among the long lists, with his account showing a "modest" amount of about \$300,000. Tens of millions of money collected through "illegal activities of the regime is transited through accounts in Geneva and Zurich, including UBS". To manage its assets for security purposes and for supporting opposition organizations in the region, the Asmara regime "has a web of network so fine and so large that it is difficult to disentangle".



Yemane G/Meskel denying having Swiss account?

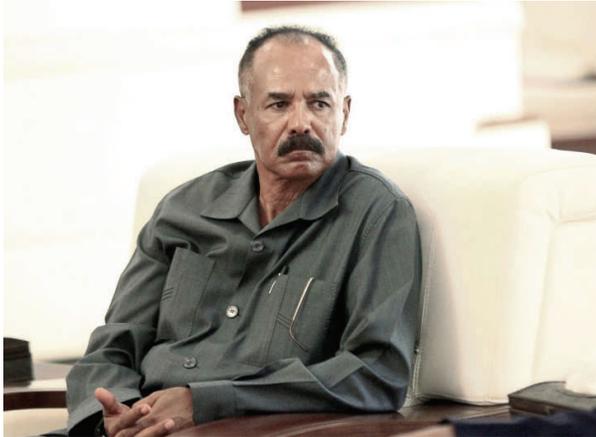
Excerpts from the investigative report state as follows:

" A great lover of whiskey, he is described as angry and tyrannical. The boys and girls of the country are compulsorily enrolled in the army for a service that lasts practically a life time....President since independence in 1993, Afeworki rules over his country with an iron hand, closely monitoring the population, prohibiting the holding of elections, mastering all sectors of the economy... This powerful man, aged 69, set up a juicy system of earning money, run entirely by his bodyguards or his single party called the Popular Front for Justice and Democracy (PFDJ).

"The PFDJ has a sprawling and monopolistic organization called Hidri Trust, which, itself, oversees a number of firms active in the publications and construction, such as the Red Sea Trading Corporation. Officially, this company has worked in the import-export of food. In reality, it also serves to manage a parallel, opaque financial system, fully in favor of the regime. The Eritrea Monitoring Group linked to the UN Security Council, wrote in its latest report of 2014 that 'senior Eritrean officials continue to gather each year millions of dollars through fraudulent arrangements, private business and companies controlled by the PFDJ in the country and abroad.' DZ Bank or Commerzbank is one of them. Some of the offshore companies are based in Cyprus, while Dubai is, in the opinion of experts, the financial basis of Asmara.

"... the revenue generated is 'considerable'. These funds have several origins: commissions levied on commercial profits of corporations or large checks signed by mining companies to the Asmara regime... There is also the famous 2% tax to be discharged by the Eritrean diaspora numbering more than 1.2 million.

"The L'Hebdo investigation discovered that Asmara had, at least until 2012, a big chunk of money at UBS in Zurich. This money was well hidden until a complaint filed with the International Court of Arbitration in London on behalf of Kuwaiti for unpaid oil cargo. This account No 230-80110-05D of the Commercial Bank of Eritrea had to pay \$60 million to Kuwait because the Eritrean authorities, whose funds were threatened with freeze by decision of a Swiss court, were afraid of bad publicity.



"Afeworki, sometimes nicknamed **Caligula of Africa**, not only earns money with below-the-table 'commercial transactions', but also from human traf-

ficking.... Some senior Eritrean officials charge up to \$3,000 to people who want to leave the country..... (safely)."

Switzerland is still reluctant to demand accountability from Afeworki and his clique. She is not the only one: to date, according to our information, no investigation was opened in countries where the regime has corporate and banking relationships."

Targeted UN Sanctions NOT implemented till now:

The writer regrets that even the targeted UN Security Council sanctions have not been seriously implemented to date. For example no list of names of those entities aimed to be affected by the freeze of assets or travel permits has been given by the concerned UN bodies.

Therefore, "Switzerland can hardly intervene on its own for the confiscation of assets belonging to those aimed to be affected..." .

"In Switzerland, Didier Burkhalter, the Foreign Minister, calls for joint action by European governments to put pressure on Asmara... "

(From comments on the article:

Carlo Sommaruga, National Councillor (SP / GE) and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council, said it is time to freeze assets held in Switzerland by the Eritrean government. The investigation of L'Hebdo shows that the regime in Asmara has several million in Swiss banks.... The regime in Asmara levies a tax on the income of its diaspora. On the other, we discover that the revenue from this tax is partly invested in Swiss institutions. There is a great contradiction in that.

Do you think we need Bern freezes Eritrean assets placed in Switzerland?

.... It is unacceptable that the money from one of the worst dictatorships in the world is in Switzerland. That is why I believe that Bern should impose effective sanctions.

1. *Welcomes* the report of the commission of inquiry on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, and notes the importance of the work of the commission of inquiry and the information it has collected in support of future accountability efforts;
2. *Also welcomes* the third report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea.

POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECOND EPDP CONGRESS

The Second Congress of EPDP, held last July, adopted resolutions on 12 very important national issues as printed below.

1. On Eritrea's Young Generation

The Second Congress of EPDP,

- Being fully aware of the fact that talking about a bright future for Eritrea is not different from talking about the future and the role of our youth, and the duty of the older generation to hand over responsibility to the new generation that constitutes over 70% of the Eritrean people;
- Having unwavering conviction in the need of a serious and effective participation of youth as the driving force of the people's cause and guarantee to its success;
- Mindful of the negative consequences on the youth of the 1998-2000 war; the state of no-war-no-peace situation that continued to prevail between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the endless and harmful "national service" that deprived the young generation of proper education, work opportunities and decent life;
- Also being well aware of the still weak mobilization/organization and participation of the young generation in the current struggle mainly due to the negative legacies bequeathed by the regime as well as the shortcomings of the opposition camp;
- Recalling with nostalgia the history-making national awakening of the Eritrean youth in the 1960s; and above all
- Attentive to the duties of the young generation in building the nation and guaranteeing its survival, and saddened by the tragedies it faces while vainly trying to escape the situation at home;

The Second Congress of the EPDP, therefore, adopted the following resolutions on the role of Eritrea's young generation:

As a follow up of past efforts, the EPDP confirms that this is the time to speed up as top priority the process in creating the right methods and mechanisms for timely handing over of responsibilities and mandate to the young generation to build the future by playing its vanguard role. The Party is committed to work towards introducing effective methods and lines of communication and organization. On this basis, the Congress called upon the Eritrean youths to realize the weighty responsibilities they will have to bear in national redemption by redoubling their participation in the struggle.

2. The Role of Eritrean Women

- Cognizant of the fact that women constitute half of the Eritrean society, no struggle for change can triumph without their participation;
- Also noting with deep concern the fact that their participation in the current struggle is lower than at any time before;

The Second EPDP Congress, therefore, affirms its obligation to further study their situation and

work to address the problem. Also being aware of the multiple outrageous abuses inflicted upon the Eritrean women, the Congress called upon them to actively join and take part in the efforts being made to bring about democratic change in the country.

3. Regarding the Means of Struggle

- Taking lessons from outcomes of past experiences like the successful people-power movements of the 1990s and the objectives of the recent grassroots uprisings in the Middle and North Africa;
- Noting the steadily growing popular resistance of Eritrean justice seekers inside the homeland and abroad;
- Also convinced further that the nonviolent mode of democratic struggle being pursued by the EPDP is the most appropriate means of struggle at the current Eritrean situation as well as to future handing over of power (in a multi-party system), the second congress resolved as follows:

The Party's adopted means of nonviolent democratic struggle for removing the dictatorship and replacing it with a democratic system of governance, which shall be pursued, requires hastening the mobilization of the broadest possible and participation of the people inside and outside Eritrea. At the same time, the Congress reiterates EPDP's firm conviction that change shall come from within the country.

4. On Unity of the Eritrean Opposition

- Believing in the urgency of creating a viable common front that can lead the current struggle and replace the dictatorship by a democratic system;
- Taking lessons from the repeated failures to create such a common front because of lack of inclusiveness and ill-preparations in the creation of alliances;
- Convinced that peaceful and democratic contest for political power will only be possible in an environment to be created in post-dictatorship Eritrea;
- Also believing that that the priority objective at the present time is the removal of the regime;

The Second EPDP Congress, therefore, expresses its full commitment to work towards creating a national umbrella that promotes reconciliation; encourages all justice seeking forces to play their respective roles in the ongoing struggle, and one that can effectively lead this struggle for democratic change. Likewise, the EPDP shall struggle in overcoming and defeating the debilitating practices and legacies such as the lingering mistrust and intolerance among the forces of change.

5. On National Sovereignty

Defending national sovereignty, which was won through heavy sacrifices, is a central objective because Eritrean national aspirations can be promoted only within an independent and sovereign Eritrea. And no wonder that national sovereignty remains a core agenda for the Party. As such, we condemn the abusive policies and misuse by the PFDJ regime of our people's patriotic devotion to their country and its sovereignty. In other words, the survival of the Eritrean people and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state are inseparable parts of the same coin. Accordingly,

- The Congress noted the significance of the decisions of a third party (the arbitration tribunal) towards settling the matter;
- Springing from the belief that, on the basis of the Algiers Agreement of 2000, the final and binding decision of the boundary commission would have to be implemented as is unless the two concerned parties agree to change its terms;
- Taking into consideration the legal, political and moral obligation of Ethiopia to accept and im-

plement on the ground the boundary decision as the Ethiopian government has already played a significant role in recognizing Eritrean sovereign existence settled through a popular referendum that had country's firm support;

- Understanding that the two governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia, as transient bodies, are expected to give top priority for the promotion of the hard won principles and common interests and peaceful coexistence based on good neighbourliness and mutual respect;
- Fully appreciative of the fact that the repressive regime in Eritrea is misleadingly claiming its failure to address the question of democracy and constitutional governance in Eritrea to the Ethiopia's failure to correctly respond to the final and binding arbitration decision on the border conflict;

The Second EPDP Congress,

- Recalling Ethiopia's recognition of Eritrean independence and sovereignty through accepting the 1993 referendum, the Congress now urges the Ethiopian Government to once again affirm that same stance by implementing the decision of the boundary commission and by the establishment of good neighbourly relations and mutual respect between the two sovereign states;
- Condemns the excuses and wrong claims of the Eritrean regime that it is Ethiopia's refusal to abide by the boundary decision that prevented Eritrea from promoting the rule of law and human rights through introducing constitutional and democratic governance.

6. The Eritrean Regime and the 1997 Constitution

The long-held position of the EPDP is that *the unimplemented 1997 constitution in Eritrea, which has been collecting dust for 18 years since its drafting and ratification, can find suitable ground for contemplation only after the fall of the PFDJ regime. Likewise, need for change or improvement on that document can only be the mandate of a nationwide referendum or the responsibility of an elected national parliament. In 2015, the regime is trying to once again mislead the public by fabricating unacceptable arguments against the constitution it ratified and failed to implement, and now raising the false promise of "drafting a new constitution".*

- *The Second Congress strongly condemns this repeat of a the regime's falsehoods;*
- *The Congress also urges the Eritrean people and the international community at large to ignore this false claim and deny listening ears to such dishonesty pledges.*

7. Regarding Political Prisoners, and Prisoners of Conscience

The EPDP commends and supports the various courageous initiatives and measures Eritrean patriots take in order to bring about change in the country while reiterating the Party's commitment for continued contribution to concretize the unfinished national task. The Congress denounced the regime's fabrications of misinformation to discredit popular acts of struggle and called on the people to disregard such falsehoods and instead bolster the resistance with unity of purpose and action. Likewise, the congress called on the international community to increase pressure on the repressive regime to release political prisoners and prisoners of conscience who paid dearly for the national cause and are now incarcerated on framed up charges.

8. Regarding the UN Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea

The 483-page report of UN Commission of Inquiry documented gruesome evidences of human rights violations in Eritrea that could constitute crimes against humanity. The EPDP Congress welcomed and hailed the report and decisions of the UN Human Rights Council and committed itself to help in the upcoming additional tasks of inquiries mandated to the Commission whose tenure was extended for one more year. The Congress also urged concerned international bodies to redouble their efforts to help end political repression and human rights violations in Eritrea.

9. On the Significance of the Geneva Demonstration

The recent years in Eritrea and among Eritreans in diaspora have witnessed increased anger and movements against the prevailing situation at home in light of the exodus of large number of youths and the multiple tragedies they encountered, including the drowning of over 360 near Lampedusa. The Congress thus hailed the exemplary mass demonstration of 26 June 2015 in Geneva which the first of its kind in so many years. This and other mass demonstrations held in support of the UN report did not only terrify the regime in Asmara but have also emboldened the resistance and showed that united action makes an impact. The Congress thus called the momentum to be kept up and pledged the EPDP will do what it takes to play a committed role in its success.

10. Demolition of Residential Homes in Eritrea

The regime's repeated crimes and denial of due respect to human dignity of the people are by now well known to everyone. The recent acts of wanton demolition of homes in Eritrea did not only leave thousands homeless during a rainy season but many patriots were killed or imprisoned while trying to protest against the aggressive actions of "their" government. The Second EPDP Congress condemned this criminal act, which is only a repeat of such crimes, and called on the international community to join in condemning also this particular crime.

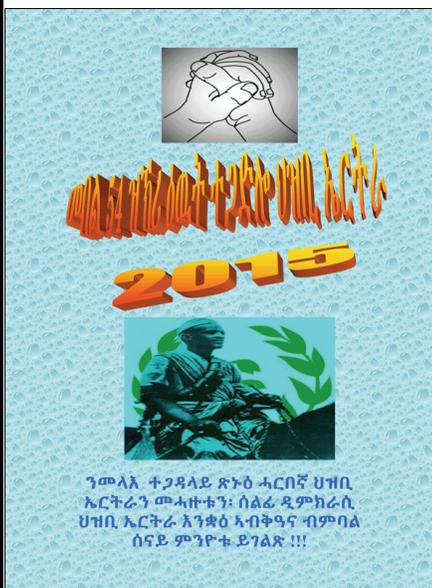
11. EPDP Relations with Neighbouring Countries

Springing from its established principles enshrined in the political programme that affirm the Party's commitment to promote relations with neighbouring countries based on non-interference; respecting international accords and mutual interests, the Second Congress once more committed the EPDP to work towards further developing those objectives for good neighbourly relations with all countries, in particular with the Sudan and Ethiopia, which have historical and cultural relations with our nation. The Party shall make good use of the cooperation obtained thus obtained for energizing the current struggle for democratic change in Eritrea.

12 The Eritrean Defense Forces

Being part and parcel of the nation suffering under the abuses of the dictatorial regime while also carrying the heavy burden of defending the nation, the Eritrean army is called upon by this congress to play its role in struggle being conducted to remove the regime and bring about peace, justice and prosperity in post-repression Eritrea.

All-inclusive Participation Reassures Victory of Our Just Cause!!



The Struggle Celebrates 54th Anniversary and Continues until full Success of the People's Cause

