

## **ENCDC's Executive Vice Chairman concludes his North America tour**

Mr. Yohannes Asmelash, the Vice Chairman of the Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change (ENCDC,) arrived in the USA on March 17 to tour various Eritrean communities in order to carry a dialogue about the upcoming second national congress of ENCDC, the challenges it is facing and to encourage the diaspora community to stay engaged, help improve and consolidate the institution of the young national council and its workings process.

He attended meetings held in: Washington DC, Bay Area, San Diego, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Toronto (Canada). He repeatedly stressed the need to do everything possible to live up to the overriding spirit that brought over 600 stakeholders and representatives at the first convening of the National Congress in 2011. Mr. Asmelash answered many questions and welcomed the recommendations and suggestion forwarded to him.

The second leg of his North America tour was focused on opening channels of communication with American governmental and non-governmental institutions. This effort was highly successful and very productive. Given the dire conditions being faced by the people of Eritrea, the need to engage the intuitions of the American administration and the vast influential NGO's was obvious. ENCDC's wish to open and expand the conversations with American institutions was well received.

Mr. Yohannes Asmelash had the opportunity to introduce the ENCDC, its vision agenda and challenges to the following organizations in an extensive conversation:

1. US State Department
2. The Congressional Sub-committee On Africa
3. US AID
4. The Carter Center
5. The International Crisis Group (ICG)
6. National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
7. International Republican Institution (IRI)

## 8. National Democratic Institution (NDI)

All institutions (without exception) affirmed that they understand the gravity of Eritrea's national crisis and look forward to finding ways that they can contribute to processes that can bring peace and prosperity to the people of Eritrea. They welcomed the opening of a communication channel with ENCDC and anticipate enhanced conversation moving forward. Mr. Asmelash took the opportunity to thank the various institutions' representatives for opening their doors and welcoming the ENCDC and for being willing to exchange open and frank conversation about the Eritrean Crisis as well as elaborating the role of their intuitions. He stressed the desire of the ENCDC to continue and broaden the communication moving forward.

Mr. Asmelash had the opportunity to conduct a two segment interview with VOA Tigrinya program on the purpose and result of his North America tour and address the diaspora Eritrean community at large by conducting an extensive conversation with the organizers and listeners of Smerr TV and Smerr Paltalk.

Mr. Asmelash concluded his 24 day visit and returned to London on April 8, 2014.

The Executive Office of ENCDC would like to acknowledge EGS's role in facilitating the meetings conducted by ENCDC in all the offices visited, and we encourage all other Eritrean civic, and human rights organizations and Zone Representatives of ENCDC to do their part in similar future foreign missions of ENCDC."

Information Office

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