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المجلس الوطني الإرتري للتغيير الديمقراطي
المكتب التنفيذي

Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change
The Executive Office

ENCDC - Executive Office Speech On occasion of the 23rd Independence Day

It was in this glorious day that our people got rid of the last from the successive colonizers and oppressors. It was in this day where the Eritrean people regained his right to exist as sovereign nation and owned its own destiny. In this opportunity we would like to express our gratitude to our great people who stood and sacrificed for its sovereignty. We would like to express our respect to our heroes and martyrs who passed away for realizing our independence. Thanks for all the generations that had vanished chanting the word "freedom" and "independence", and thanks to all those who had remained steadfast until the dignity and pride of their people and their homeland has been realized.

Dear friends and compatriots

As you know, the road to independence was not paved with roses. Independence has not been bestowed upon the Eritrean people as a gift or honour, neither was it a favour from anybody, but it was won through long bloody years of struggle. Indeed it has been won through bloody years of sacrifices that consumed many lives, ruined many properties, obliterated many families, and displaced many villages and towns. Yes, the bloody years of struggle consumed every thing, it swallowed heroes, crippled men and women and it orphaned children. There is certainly no home in Eritrea that did not suffer from the barrage of misery from the war.

Brothers and Sisters

The Eritrean Revolution produced championships, pulled off miracles, and taught us and many other free peoples great patience and fortitude. The Eritrean Revolution and the Struggle of the Eritrean people was recognized far and wide as the longest war in Africa, and the Eritrean people, who defeated the strongest army in the region who had been supported by the Western and

Eastern powers respectively, was recognized as a heroic people who has rebuked and punished its mighty oppressors and colonizers.

It is 23 year since independence, an accomplishment which all Eritreans are proud of; it is a day that comes as mercy on the graves of the martyrs , and as the crown of pride for those independence fighters who survived the war . Yet, many Eritreans and friends alike wonder if the dreams of the people who have had sacrificed so dear has been fulfilled? Many people who had known our heroic struggle wonder if Eritreans have achieved what they were fighting for? Our children and the new generation also question us if this is the ultimate end of our hope? They wonder why the land of their forefathers and heroes became grave yards? They ask if our swords have been broken and our boats sank? They ask why Eritrea could not be ,like any other nations, a country that embraces her sons and citizens; instead of becoming repellent to them? Why all others rush to their countries while Eritreans flee it? Young generation keep asking, why their country of the heroes and diligent people stands in the rear of the list of development and human rights? Why it champions the list of the abysses of poverty and asylum seeking? Why in Eritrea political prisoners exceeded ten thousand, according to estimates by humanitarian organizations, who languish in underground dungeons without trial?, Why all these refugees who would never return? Why the infinite so called "national service"? Why are we so prompt in feeding the fishes of the Red Sea and Mediterranean? Why young girls and boys of Eritrea are herded and sold on the hands of human trafficking Mafias? Why all these incessant wars with neighbours? Why and why and countless whys?

Yes , we have to answer the questions of our young generation. No, our swords are not broken, and what is prevailing now is just a mere warrior's break, and a nap of a giant. Not soon the giant be waking up and coming forcefully. That is how the giant heroic Eritrean people always is. It is a people who never capitulate to oppression of any kind. The rebelliousness waged by some contingents of the Eritrean Defence Forces, the various dissatisfaction and defiance inside Eritrea, in tune with the angry youth movements, and the relentless struggles of political and civil forces in the Diaspora would bring diverse impressive results soon.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Eritrea has many resources both underground and above ground. Eritreans are very diligent people, they are known as hard working and productive people. Eritrea is home to believer, compassionate, law-abiding, and family sanctifying people. A people of such endowments is supposed to be in the ranks of the civilized and developed nations. Many economic experts, let alone Eritreans, question where the Eritrean gold revenues that exceeded billions of dollars for the last four consecutive years, has gone? Where are the copper mines and Fishery revenues? where is the infamous so called "income tax" of 2% , collected from the Diaspora, through intimidation or false promises? Where is the international aid that comes in succession in recognition of the deteriorating economic and humanitarian cases? All these is swallowed in a black hole of the corrupted dictatorial regime and has no effect in the life of the miserable people. The Eritrean people suffer from starvation without the hope of getting enough food, it suffers diseases that kill it without any hope of medical care, its nights are all darkness with no hope to find electricity for lighting homes let alone for entertainment and luxuries!

Eritrea is a country economically dependent on smuggling its basic needs from the Sudan . Eritreans live in the mercy of smugglers and black market dealers, suffering from unpredictable huge price rises , while the criminal and corrupted president and his high officials of the so called PFDJ live in affluence . Eritreans undergo all sorts of humiliation, human degradation and hunger, while Isayas and his criminal officials and officers harvest all sorts of economic benefits, looting the meagre resources of the nation, working as smugglers and black market dealers, sponsoring and protecting human traffickers and money laundering. PFDJ officials who live the most luxurious lives in Eritrea, transfer their savings to banks and business in other countries . They send their sons and daughters to the most expensive schools and universities around the world. They sign contracts with the finest hospitals to treat them and their family patients in different countries.

Brothers and Sisters

Honourable Guests

The situation prevailing in Eritrea is not what the great Eritrean struggling people deserves. It is just a passing emergency situation imposed by an authoritarian bloody regime that does not respect the human and democratic values of our people. It is a regime who neither has an idea of how states are managed, nor it has learned how nations behave. Eritrea and its people, in their

long search for national salvation from foreign oppressors, has fallen victim to a bandit group of its own sons. His own sons, who never comprehended the meaning of citizenship, or has never attained the wisdom of the value of national dialogue. His own sons, who never acquired the art of preserving internal sustainable peace and across borders with neighbours.

In the PFDJ lexicon, Democracy is a spoiled foreign goods unfit to Eritrea. Freedom of speech and political freedom are luxuries abused by imperialists. Multi-party system is means to sell your own country to foreign interests. Escaping from the infinite national service and the dire situation in Eritrea is a national treason and betrayal to the homeland. Nevertheless, the PFDJ deem its stand of denying the burial of dead Eritrean historical leaders in their own homeland, that they had fought for, as an ultimate power show. Economic growth and development in the understanding of PFDJ is to utilize forced labour of old men and women, young boys and girls of school ages, political prisoners and conscripts to pave one hundred kilometres of asphalt road within twenty years of independence, or annually dig one or two water trenches that never survives the next rainy season.

In the whole world, occasions of National Days are celebrated to review the achievements of development, offering and promising the people new ventures and projects that improve the living conditions of the citizen. National Days are also used in many countries over the world to boost national unity and pride. Governments and parties parade their accomplishments on constitutional developments, human rights and respect of citizen rights. More freedoms are promised and advocated by contesting politicians and political parties. Even in developing countries of the so called "third world" some quazi-dictator governments release prisoners and detainees, who had been convicted through fair trials, as a gesture of good will to the people, or to please some of its citizens in such a solemn occasions. However, Eritrea is an exception of all these. In such National Days in Eritrea injustices are reiterated and repression extended, and imprisonment and torture are intensified. Reluctant people are dragged or pushed unwillingly to attend pretentious bogus celebrations of national days. For Isaya Afwerki's Regime, Independence Day Celebrations are just reviewing pale and distorted music shows, to draw the attention of diplomats residents in Eritrea and some foreign journalists and politicians interested in Eritrean affairs.

Dear brothers and sisters

Facing such a situation in our beloved country, it becomes destiny to stand up and struggle for the salvation of Eritrea and its people. Have patriot democrat Eritreans left with any other choice than to stand up and fight for the salvation of their country and people? We have to stand up and respond to or destiny to bring about salvation.

Brothers and Sisters

Our most effective Means to uproot such as PFDJ malignant epidemic which perch on the chest of our people and country for more than two decades, is to come over our secondary contradictions, unite and consolidate our struggle mechanisms against the PFDJ. Let us come together and throw PFDJ all from the same arc. let us use all the legitimate means available to us. Let us work hard to revitalize and set in motion our common umbrellas of action. Let us rejuvenate ENCDC, build larger EDA that embraces all functioning political organizations, and let us encourage the Eritrean public inside Eritrea and in the Diaspora to organize and build their respective syndicates and social groups' umbrellas and unions. Raising above trifle secondary differences to address the salvation of Eritrea and its people is a mutual responsibility and is a mature political civility that will brings all our potential to be warhead against PFDJ. This will lead to salvation now and saves our country from political uncertainty after the demise of the dictatorial regime.

Some brothers in the region may envy us for our common umbrellas of struggle , because the fall of injustice on their side has come before they attain united forums of struggle. the result was abortion of the victory, sinking down to chaos, and pandemonium worse than the inherent injustice. learning lessons from some episodes around us, it would have been enough honour for the Eritrean political opposition umbrellas, even if its only accomplishment have been to sit together around the table, practice free dialogue , and agree on national parameters. Certainly this is not a call to be content with what we have, however, it is to evaluate where we stand, and go forward towards acquiring more efficient mean of struggle to save our country and people.

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have urgent tasks we should come together to realize :

- Save our people who are exposed to death on the seas and deserts, and is victim of human trafficking Mafias or languishing in prisons in Egypt, Libya, Sudan and in others countries.

- Urge countries who host Eritrean Refugees and humanitarian organizations to aid our people in the camps , especially refugees in Yemen .
- Reminding States and organizations concerned with the right of refugees to fulfil their moral obligations towards Eritrean Refugees.
- Reminding big powers about their moral responsibilities towards the agony of the Eritrean people, urging them to exert pressure on the dictatorial regime in Eritrea and to support of the Eritrean opposition .
- Work hard for the realization of the projected all inclusive umbrella for the political organizations, and ENCDC Second Conference.

Dear brothers and sisters

These are urgent tasks. however, the most important tasks for the salvation of Eritrea and its people must worked out in our common umbrellas and their plans of action and programs .

Pride for our nation dignity and freedom for our people Glory and eternity to our martyrs

ENCDC Executive Office
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