

Toronto Mourners Observe Candle Vigil for the Shipwreck Victims:

“Dictator Isias, the Eritrean youth in and outside the country, are going to stop you preventively from oppressing, torturing and exterminating the Eritrean people, and ruining the country. We warn you that you better realize that living on borrowed time is not possible anymore.”

(A young Torontonians Mourner)

On October 8, 2013 Canadian-Eritreans of Toronto and its vicinities gathered outside the Queen’s Park to pay tribute to the victims, mostly youth, who perished in a shipwreck in the Island of Lampedusa in Italy about a week ago. The victims took the nasty risk in a desperate attempt to cross the Mediterranean and seek refuge in Europe, after they had escaped the PFDJ terror in Eritrea and went through unusual sufferings, horrible experiences and devastating humiliations in Libya, where they had stayed for some time.



The candlelight vigil came to symbolise that life is sacred and that all Eritreans are a big family, giving the mourners the outlet to send a clear and strong message to the monster and his cronies that they are responsible for the loss of the precious lives of those youth and hundreds of others, who had faced the same fate before them. Furthermore, the vigil constituted a forum for the mourners to call for a united assault on the root problem that is bedeviling Eritreans, while urging the

international community to interfere and put pressure on the brutal dictatorship to bring such human tragedies to an end. It also became an occasion for the mourners to bring their kids and their non-Eritrean friends to learn more about what the Eritrean people have been going through. This way, the speakers who belonged to different ethnic and social backgrounds were spontaneous but their messages were eloquent, candid, and extraordinarily moving; with some of them touching the audience deep inside.

The social composition of the mourners was diverse, with a very distinct predominance of the youth, including high school kids. The presence of such great number of youth in the vigil would hit the dictatorial regime in Eritrea with fear and worries because the regime understands that the youth are the fuel and the driving force of the nation. At time of peace, the youth are the fuel for civilization and development, and at the time of war the fuel that is stronger than the nuclear energy. That will definitely cause sleepless nights for the PFDJ supporters and their masters.



Opposition members who sometimes collaborated on some initiatives, but not necessarily looked eye to eye on many issues, stood side by side to hammer the message of unity with their voices cracking but abiding by a non-verbal agreement or

tacit consent to make the event non-political. That filled us with a myriad of questions, the most important being: Could we read that as a new development or an emergence of a conviction that the state of consciousness in which we, Eritrean opposition forces, ignore our inter-connection is the reason for the continuation of so much pain and suffering of the Eritrean people? Does that reflect a realization that nothing would be achieved if the political parties continue to stick to their decades-long narrow party politics, polarizing rhetoric and stubborn positions? We are yet to see, but that is what everybody hopes. Nevertheless, we have learned from that candlelight vigil and the degree of participation observed that while suspicion of one another and social division may complicate our national struggle, they are by no means insurmountable.

To conclude this report, we would like to bring to the attention of the Eritrean readers that the PFDJ leaders of Toronto Chapter, who have failed to see the Eritrean citizen beyond a mere tool to protect the ruling power of the police and Fascist state, were conspicuously absent from the candlelight vigil. More disgustingly, they were at that particular time busy calling and approaching Eritreans in the streets, asking them to petition the Canadian Government regarding the 2% that was banned and which consequently led to the dismissal of the PFDJ Consul General, as a persona non grata, a couple of months ago.

God bless Eritrea and save it from the monster and the devils around him!

Foro 2013 Support & Solidarity Committee

Toronto, October 10, 2013