

# Liberty

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

## **EU, REST OF EUROPE URGED TO EXPEL ERITREAN REGIME SUPPORTERS ABUSING REFUGEE LAWS**



This is not a unit of ISIS or Al-Qaida killers in the Middle East but Eritrean “refugees” in Europe sent by the ruthless dictatorship in Asmara. They call themselves **Eri-Blood** and YPFDJ. Their mission: to disrupt, intimidate and harm innocent Eritrean refugees opposed to the regime and their friends. In recent past, they even physically harassed UN HR Rapporteur Sheela Keetharuth, and Professor Miryam van Reisen of the Netherlands.

### **And this on 3 August 2019 in Oslo!**

The **Eri-Blood** and Y-PFDJ gangs with their promoter **Yemane Ghebreab**, Eritrea’s second-strongman, celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the infamous “National Service.” Norway is considering taking action on hooligans masquerading as “refugees” in Europe. The EPDP urges EU and the rest of Europe to do the same. (See p. 3)



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### PROTEST LETTER OF FOUR ERITREAN ORGANIZATIONS TO ETHIOPIAN PM

When the reformist Ethiopian Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, came to power nearly 20 months ago, all Eritrean political opposition formations and movements welcomed his domestic reforms and his call for peace with neighboring Eritrea. However, the subsequent announcement of an unclear “agreement” with the one-man dictatorship in Asmara and the sloppy language occasionally uttered by the Eritrean dictator and his newfound friend in Ethiopia were uncomfortable - if not extremely disturbing - to most Eritreans at home and abroad.



Again, Eritrean opposition leaders, including EPDP Chairman Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), sent lukewarm message to congratulate the Ethiopian leader as an African figure for obtaining the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet, Eritreans knew too well that Dr. Abiy Ahmed did not fully qualify for it as regards Eritrea and the still unknown Ethio-Eritrean relations.

A key condition to win that prize required doing “the most or the best work for fraternity between nations” and reducing their armies “for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.” The reality on the ground today is that none of this is realized, nor they seem to be in the coming. The other sad story is the unchanged internal situation in the country and the continued escape of people from that grand prison called Eritrea.

To further aggravate the deep concerns of Eritreans, the Ethiopian Prime Minister said at speech in an Addis Ababa gathering celebrating his Nobel Peace Prize that he was once again speaking on behalf of himself and that of the Eritrean dictator told him represent Eritrea. (More on p.5)

## **EPDP CHAIR URGES EUROPE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ASMARA REGIME AGENTS ABUSING REFUGEE LAWS**

In a timely and important message addressed to Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, and copied to all European Governments, Mr. Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), the Chairman of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP), urged European countries consider the Norwegian initiative of carefully scrutinizing and take appropriate action against Eritrean regime agents masquerading as "refugees" while continually violating refugee laws in the host countries.



The memorandum warmly saluted those EU and other European countries which are generously

providing political protection for up to 400,000 Eritreans in the continent. It also condemned those few among the "refugees" who turned out to be Eritrean regime agents and infringing domestic laws of host countries by engaging in illicit payment of 2% taxes to the repressive authorities in Eritrea and collaborating with them in other different ways.

*The message further stated that the vast majority of Eritreans who are opposed to the regime in Asmara will not regret any appropriate action by Norway and other European Governments against those "Eritrean regime agents or refugees who forfeit the political protection they obtained by collaborating with the abuser regime in Asmara." Reprinted below is the full text of EPDP Chairman's memorandum to EU and other European leaders.*



### **A Call for Scrutiny & Action against Eritrean Regime Supporters Abusing Refugee Status in Europe**

**To:** H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, Brussels, Belgium

**CC:** To Heads of State & Government of 28 EU Member States +Norway, Switzerland and non-EU Schengen Member States, 18 August, 2019

Dear Mr. EU President Juncker and Heads of State and Government in Europe,  
On behalf of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) in exile and its Eritrean friends and sympathizers, I wish to draw the kind attention of Your Excellencies receiving this modest memorandum by calling for appropriate action against yet another abuse of refugee laws in Europe by the lawless Eritrean regime and its agents masquerading as "refugees."

*During the past few weeks, concerned organs of the Norwegian Government have started discussing the possibility of taking action against those Eritrean "refugees" who appear to be closely linked to the Eritrean government that they claimed to have opposed and fled from it for its endless national service and other multiple abuses, including extreme forms of political and human rights violations.*

Dear EU President Juncker, and Excellencies,

We in the Eritrean opposition have always called for action against Eritrean abusers of host country laws by paying illegal and undeserved 2% taxes and other forced financial collections to the Eritrean regime. Today, one can only welcome the reported intention for scrutiny and possible action

*by Norway against Eritrean regime agents and collaborating “refugees” who are violating refugee laws in that country which kindly gave shelter and protection to about 22,000 Eritrean refugees assuming that all of them had nothing to do with the abuser regime in Asmara.*

*Your Excellencies may also very well know that about a third of Eritreans (up to two million, including old refugee caseloads) are outside home without their will to be refugees and to remain refugees. Of this big number of exiles, an estimated 20% (i.e. over 400,000) are in Europe. Our Party’s rough estimations are that over 120,000 Eritrean refugees live in Italy; 80,000 in Germany; 50,000 in Sweden; 40,000 each in Switzerland and UK; 25,000 in Holland; 4,000 each in Finland and Denmark 3,000 each in Belgium and France and so on.*

*We in the EPDP and sister organizations are grateful for the warm welcome and humane treatment of Eritrean refugees by many European countries during the past several decades.*

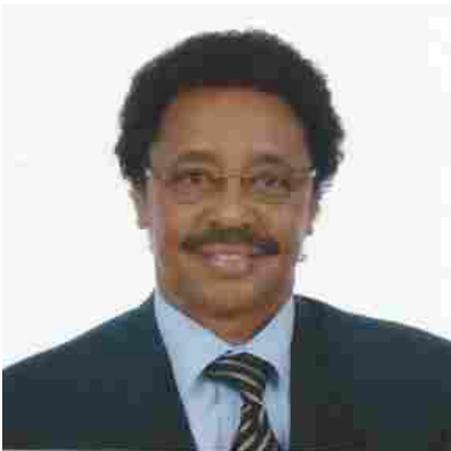
*However, we do know, as the Norwegian authorities have rightly indicated, that there are some “refugees” who willingly gave up their right to enjoy political protection by violating refugee laws and closely working with the Eritrean embassies and attending festivities organized and addressed by top regime officials that were alleged by a UN Commission of Inquiry in 2016 to have committed “crimes against humanity”. The UN Inquiry Commission also made a list of alleged perpetrators of those egregious human rights abuses in Eritrea. Mr. Yemane Ghebreab, the presidential advisor and the second-man to the Eritrean dictator, could undoubtedly be part of that black list submitted to the UN Secretary General and the UN Security Council for a follow up action which, unfortunately, is not yet taking place.*

*Excellencies,*

*As the pictorial exhibits in the Annex to this memorandum show, the Norwegian authorities started discussing the process of scrutiny and possible action against the “refugees” abusing their status following an Eritrean embassy celebration in early August this summer in Oslo marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the now notorious national service and the establishment of the military camp of Sawa. Needless to say, Norway and many other European countries have accepted Eritrean refugees who claimed to have been abused by that open-ended “national service”. Those celebrating anniversaries of the national service and similar regime events with Eritrean officials can only blame themselves for having risked their refugee status.*

*Dear EU President and Excellencies,*

*While reiterating the gratefulness of my party and many Eritreans for the kindness and support given to Eritrean refugees by several European countries, my party takes the liberty of calling on the EU and other non-EU European countries receiving this humble message to give more attention and help to the endless suffering of Eritreans stranded in Libya, Israel and those hundreds of thousands living in the squalor of refugee camps. At the same time, we have no sympathy for any appropriate action taken by Norway and hopefully also by other European countries against Eritrean regime agents or refugees who forfeit the political protection they obtained by collaborating with the abuser regime in Asmara.*



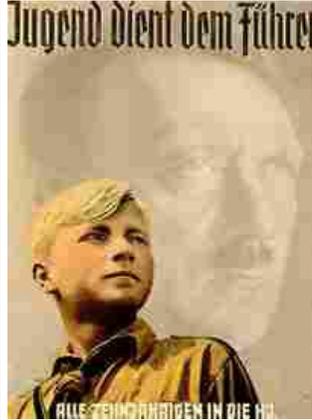
*Respectfully yours,*

*Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), Chairman*

*The Eritrean People’s Democratic Party (EPDP)*

### Annex to the EPDP Memo:

The repressive Eritrean regime has a party called the PFDJ (the misnamed Popular Front for Democracy and Justice). A youth wing of that party, called the Y-PFDJ, has been in existence for



about 15 years in Europe. Known to many Eritreans as reminder of the hated Hitler Youth (**Hitlerjugend**) of the last century, the Y-PFDJ has been organizing annual festivals in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and several other

European countries. Their topmost organizer and annual keynote speaker has always been Mr. Yemane Ghebream, that same presidential advisor and the second-man of the Eritrean regime. The Y-PFDJ has a gang of young men who wish to call themselves as **Eri-Blood** (see picture above). The gangs threatened and sometimes take action against peaceful refugees opposed to the regime and their friends and supporters of the just cause for democratic change.

### **PROTEST LETTER OF FOUR ERITREAN ORGANIZATIONS TO ETHIOPIAN PM**

(Contd. from p. 2)

The Eritrean people value their freedom as well as a good relationship with Ethiopia based on mutual trust and respect. We, the Eritrean Opposition organizations and justice seekers underscore that Eritrea's fate is decided by its own people and not by a dictator in Asmara. We stand therefore, firm to defend our hard-won independence which we see being gradually eroded and our social fabric destroyed by the dictator in Eritrea. We note and alert all concerned that the patience of our people is wearing thin and they are getting angrier by the day.

Your Excellency,

The world knows the extremely disquieting political, social, economic and human rights situation in Eritrea. It is a country without constitution, no election or elected president, no rule of law and no free press-a country where people are denied to peruse a normal life. Ethiopia and Ethiopians are a living witness of the flooding of thousands of Eritrean refugees including unaccompanied underage children entering your country every day.

The denial of our people's sovereign and inalienable rights to elect a representative government cannot continue for too long. Until that day, no foreign leader has the legal and moral right to speak on behalf of the Eritrean people.

As we continue to struggle to ameliorate the suffering of our people, we remain certain that the hurdles we as a people face today will be history tomorrow. Peace based on the will and the power the people will flourish and be asserted. Taking side with the Eritrean people will always be the right path for healthy and good future relations. Those who aspire for a lasting peace in the region should avoid allying with evil forces of tyranny and destruction.

We, once again, express our gratitude to the people and Government of Ethiopia for hosting thousands of Eritrean refugees and the support rendered to them in this difficult time of our history. We call upon Your Excellency, today a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to seriously reconsider your stance on Eritrea, increase your endeavors of support and solidarity with the Eritrean people and strive at creating lasting peace in the region based on legal framework and institutional relationship between our countries.

Sincerely yours,

1. Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change (ENCDC)
2. Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP)
3. United Eritreans for Justice (UEJ)
4. Baito Yiaki, North America

15 October, 2019

## **ERITREA AGAIN HOLDS THE 2019 RECORD FOR WORLD'S MOST CENSORED COUNTRY**

The Committee to Protect Journalists has been, at least since the blatant crack down on Eritrea's private media on 18 September 2001, and the arrest of journalists, the leading advocate of those prisoners in a hidden location. No one knows if they are still alive although the bad news has been around.



On their 18<sup>th</sup> year of imprisonment, the same advocacy committee issued a special report listing 10 countries in the world considered to be the worst of the worst in press censorship. Eritrea tops also this record of infamy.

It was reported that the list is based on CPJ's research into the use of tactics ranging from imprisonment and repressive laws to surveillance of journalists and restrictions on internet and social media access.

Eritrea and the other 9 countries in the list are known for flouting the international standard by banning or severely restricting independent media and intimidating journalists into silence with imprisonment, digital and physical surveillance, and other forms of harassment.

In the list, Eritrea is followed by North Korea; Turkmenistan is the third. The media serves as a mouthpiece of the state. The very, very few foreign journalists permitted to enter Eritrea are closely monitored.



## Swiss Lawmakers Speak at Eritrean Demo at UN Geneva

A demonstration organized in Geneva on Friday, 4 October, in support of Eritrean and other refugees and migrants stranded in dangerous Libya was addressed by two leading Swiss politicians who expressed “unreserved support” to the calls of the demonstrators on Europe to stop shutting its gates to people in distress and also cease complicity with traffickers, Libyan criminal gangs, including the authorities.



Both Mr. Carlo Sommaruga, President of the Foreign Relations Commission for social democrats in the Swiss National Assembly in Bern, and Ms Jocelyn Haller, renowned social justice activist and member of Parliament representing the Left Alliance of Geneva, pledged to convey the message of Eritrean justice seekers to higher decision-making bodies in Switzerland.



The demonstrators handed over strongly-worded 4-page letter to the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Ms Michele Bachelet, telling her the humanly intolerable conditions under which the refugees in Libya, including those in the insecure UNHCR camps, are living and urged the Commissioner to ask the UN Human Rights Council, currently in session in Geneva, to recommend an action at international level. The letter further revealed that the stranded refugees in Libya

are living with “corpses” and that social media messages from the camps show profoundly distressing images of brutality including extreme forms of torture and rape.

They demonstrators asked European countries to review and change their resettlement strategies and, most urgently, to reactivate the Search and Rescue Operations that were started soon after the Lampedusa tragedy of 3 October 2013 that claimed over 360 Eritrean lives.

Taking part in the quickly organized demonstration were over 300 persons, mostly young, who came from several regions of Germany, Italy and Swiss cantons. EPDP Central Council member Feven Gideon was among the most active leaders of the event.

## Eritrean Regime Confiscates

### Faith-Run High Schools

On 3 September, the Eritrean authorities seized seven high schools run by religious institutions in the country. Four of the high schools belonged to the Catholic Church whose health facilities located in different parts of the country were also confiscated by the state last June.

The usually vocal Eritrean Catholic bishops issued an immediate statement on 4 September condemning the seizure and describing it as “hatred of faith” in a country where the majority of the people are devoted worshippers. It again called for dialogue and the participation of everyone for finding an end to what is going on in the country before it gets too late.



### ‘Yiakil’ Movement Gathers Momentum

And as Asmara regime continues unabated its abuses and untold suppression of every aspect of life in the country, Eritreans in the diaspora kept intensifying their democratic struggle for change and their loud cries to be heard by the world.

In particular, the one-year old Enough is Enough awakening in diaspora, commonly known as the Yiakil/Kifaya Movement, is gradually but surely bringing together Eritreans in exile, including former regime sympathizers. Picture shows one such recent gathering in London which adopted a working plan and elected a transitional council for the estimated 40,000 Eritreans in the United Kingdom. The aim is to form a global umbrella that could give weight to the disparate groupings and their calls to be heard by the international community and to pressure the callous regime to change its ways.

### Eritrea at Gothenburg Book Symposium

Three Eritrean writers and representatives of Amnesty International and Reporters without Borders seized the opportunity to speak about what is going in Eritrea to visitors of the annual Book and Media Symposium in Gothenburg, Sweden, that took place during 26-29 September. Aron Berhane from Canada, the founder of **Setit**, one of Eritrea’s banned newspaper; Amanuel Ghirmai of the Paris-based **Radio Erena**, and author Ms Yirgalem Fisseha from Germany were among the speakers who tried to carry disturbing messages about what is going on in Eritrea. Tzehaie Keleta broadcaster of EPDP’s **Radio Dimtsi Harnet (Voice of Liberty)** in Gothenburg and Yohannes T/Mariam of the Erena Radio staff member were among the thousands at the major book and media event in Swedish city of Gothenburg.



# EPDP IN ACTION

## The EPDP Chair Office:

September 1, 2019 was marked as the 58<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Eritrean struggle for national liberation. Thus, the new Chairman of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP), Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), took the opportunity of this historic date to address through the electric media the entire party membership spread all over the globe.



At the meeting, he explained process of the successful the 3<sup>rd</sup> and unity congress and its outcome; outlined the party program for the four years till the 4<sup>th</sup> party congress, and the priority tasks of the year ahead. All the other eight heads of the executive offices also make interventions to briefly explain their plans for the coming year. Party members at the meeting renewed their commitments to realize the long list of objectives adopted at the congress held in Germany this summer.



Other than this, the party chairman conducted multiple interviews with major Eritrea media outlets to explain the vision of his party and the current situation of the struggle for democratic change.

On 12 October, the EPDP Chairman convened a regular meeting of the Executive Committee at which draft programs of the offices were reviewed and adopted before their final scrutiny and approval by the 37-member Central Council which is scheduled to meet on 2 November 2019. The Executive Committee meeting also formed dialogue committees to discuss joint work with the Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change (ENCDC), a coalition of 18 sister organizations, and the Eritrean National Front (ENF), an umbrella for four organizations.

Also in October, the EPDP Chairman sent a congratulatory message to Dr. Ahmed Saleh, the newly elected Chairman of the Eritrean Democratic Homeland (EDHP) which, at its recent 6<sup>th</sup> congress, adopted a political program committed to non-violent democratic struggle for change in Eritrea and pledged to enter into unity with likeminded parties in the Eritrean arena. Until its recent congress, the EDHP was known by its old name of Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development (EIPJD). The EPDP Chairman hailed the bold decisions of the party and expressed readiness for close relations with the new EDHP.

## Foreign Office:

The various executive offices of the unified EPDP have been restructuring their respective administrative offices and drafting short and long-term work schedules. For instance, the EPDP International Relations Office, headed by Mr. Berhane Debessu, on 21 September held its first meeting for the international committee which coordinates work of regional committees representing zones and countries. The head of Foreign Relations also held a meeting on 3 October for his North America teams. At both meetings, the draft program of the office for the year ahead was discussed together with other issues related to future tasks in the diplomatic sphere.



## Organizational Office:

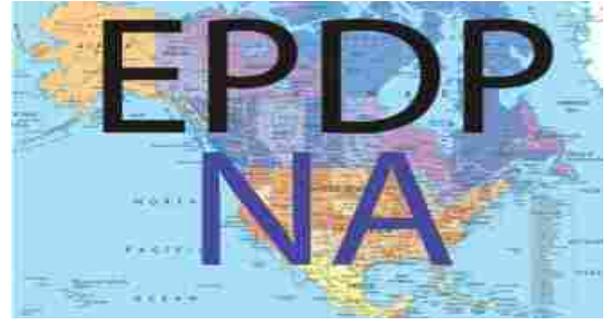
On 27 October, the head of the Organizational Affairs Office, Menghsteab Asmerom, held a meeting for the EPDP branches in Australia and briefed participants on the outcome of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and unity congress of the party. Attending the electric meeting were EPDP branch members in Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane.

Discussed and explained in great detail were the successful processes that led to the unity of the sister organizations, the structural changes in the party documents as well as the political resolutions adopted at the end of the party congress held in Germany this summer.



## Other EPDP Zonal and Branch Activities

**North America:** Women party members in North America held their first post-congress meeting on 16 September and expressed great satisfaction on the fact that the current EPDP leadership now includes eight women members compared with only five in the previous party Central Council. The meeting, held via electronic network, also entered the commitment of working hard to redouble the number of women in the party and their full participation in the day-to-day of all party organs.



On 22 September, the unified and energized EPDP North America Zone held an all-membership meeting at which the process and outcomes of the 3rd and unification congress in Germany were reviewed in great detail. Also discussed at the general meeting were work plans put down for immediate and long-term actions.

**Branch in Israel Holds Congress:** Following the successful third and unification congress in Germany, members of the two unified sister organizations on their part held a branch congress integrating their respective branches. One of the leading branch activists and newly elected EPDP Central Council member, Tsegai Tesfai, welcomed congress delegates and pledged that the branch in Israel shall play a significant role in building the unified EPDP into a stronger party. Another newly elected EPDP Central Council member, Ghebrehiwet Meles, spoke the vision; mission and objectives of the party adopted at its recent congress and explained the various party structures and their functions. Discussions were pursued after the final statement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Unity Congress was read by young Mebrahtu.



At the end of the session the branch congress elected its leadership members who were Adhanom Neguse, chairman; Medhanie Teame, general secretary, and Desbele Berhane, treasurer. Fissehazion Abraham and Abraha Ghirmai were elected as reserve members.

**Frankfurt Branch Holds 2 Meetings:** Some of the hardworking and tireless members of the EPDP Frankfurt branch so far met two times since the unity congress—one on 29 September and again on 27 October. In both meetings the branch members continued to discuss first the successes and possible shortcomings of Eritrea Festival 2019 that they organized in cooperation with the other Europe Zone branches of the party. At the October meeting, they discussed the congress and expressed profound satisfaction with the successes. Some of the meeting participants were congress delegates and recounted details about it.



**Norway Branch Congress:** The Norway branch, which never fails to hold its congresses regularly, was again on 19 October. This was the 9<sup>th</sup> branch congress since the first EPDP congress in 2011. Outgoing branch chairman, Mahder Ugbazhi, opened the congress explaining the duties of congresses and the importance of holding leaderships into accountable at such events.



EPDP Central Council member Medhanie Habtzghi spoke on the process and the outcomes of the unity congress this year as well as on significant party activities and the promising actions of justice seekers this year. Norway branch general secretary, Khalifa Abdalla, and branch treasurer, Mussie ammar, presented and explained reports of the branch and spoke on other general political developments in the arena. The congress was concluded after the election branch leadership.