



**ERITREAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY
(EPDP)**

EPDP in 2019: a Short Profile

The 3rd and Unity Congress of Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) and the Eritrean National Salvation/Hidri, convened between 29 July and 1 August 2019 in Wiesbaden, Germany, adopted political documents which, *inter alia*, agreed to continue calling the unified party as EPDP. This name was first coined during the merger of three organizations put into effect on 1 January 2010. The party held its first and second congresses in 2011 and 2015, respectively. The EPDP, which then and now includes former members of the liberation struggle era organizations (ELF and EPLF), is a mainstream party conducting a non-violent democratic struggle for national salvation, and strives to establish in post-dictatorship Eritrea a state of rule of law, peace, justice and prosperity.

The unified EPDP shall continue to be known for significant lessons that it championed and continues to promote in the Eritrean political landscape. These national issues lessons include the following:

- The effort of reconciling historical and present grudges of Eritrean political formations through awareness and making them indivisible partners in promoting the people's cause;
- Past and present Eritrean symbolisms (like flags), history, experiences etc are shared possessions of the Eritrean people;
- Respecting the rule of law and putting democracy in daily practice;
- Embrace the youth and keep renewing methods of struggle.

This profile introduces readers to:

- The names of the newly elected EPDP leadership members;
- A brief summary of what the EPDP Political Programme envisions to accomplish now and in the post-dictatorship Eritrea;
- Political Resolutions adopted at its 3rd and Unity Congress, 2019;
- The organizational chart of the party.

The Party Leadership

EPDP Executive Committee members:

The EPDP Chairman is head of both the 9-member Executive Committee and the 35-member Central Council. The list of the new Executive Committee, in the order written in the Party Constitution, is as follows:

1. Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), Party Chairman
2. Berhane Debessu, Vice-Chairman and Head of Foreign Office
3. Menghesteab Asmerom, Head of Organizational Office
4. Debessai Beyene, Head of Information Office
5. Habtemichael Tekle/Dr, Head of Financial Affairs
6. Fessehaye Hagos, Head of Social Affairs
7. Kiflezghi Ghebremedhin, Party Secretary
8. Adiam Teferra/ Ms, Head of Women's Affairs
9. Yassin Ibrahim Neberai, Head of Youth Affairs

Members of the EPDP Central Council, in alphabetical order, are:

10. Abdu Hassen
11. Adiam Haile Rufael
12. Akililu Ghirmai/Dr.
13. Alganesh Isaac
14. Amanuel Beraki
15. Asghedet Mehreteab
16. Assefaw Berhe
17. Dirar Mantai
18. Eritrea Alazar
19. Feven Ghideon
20. Ghebar Oqbe
21. Ghebrehiwet Meles
22. Ghirmai Kifle
23. Haile Woldemichael
24. Idris Ismael
25. Medhanie Habtezghi
26. Negasi Hamde
27. Neguse Tseggai
28. Rezene Tesfazion
29. Tekleberhan Haile
30. Tesfagaber Woldegiorghis
31. Tiebe Tekie
32. Tseggai Tesfai
33. Tuku Tesfai
34. Woldesus Ammar
35. Zehaye Araya

Reserve Members

36. Maasho Solomon
37. Humed Mohammed Ahmed
38. Tesfamariam Kibreab
39. Ghenet Habtegergis

40. Ghirmai G. Temesgen (Keshi)

What EPDP Envisions:

- EPDP is a national democratic party envisioning to accomplish the long-delayed aspirations of the Eritrean people for peace, democracy, equality, and social justice in a constitutional system fully respecting the rule of law;
- It strives to promote the unity in diversity of the Eritrean people under a decentralized system of governance, and shall equitably distribute political power and national resources to all citizens;
- EPDP believes in the winning strategy of People Power – the strategy of peaceful and democratic struggle in removing the present dictatorial regime in Eritrea, and in its place establishing a multi-party order and government whose authority is derived from the people;
- The Party envisions building a prosperous Eritrea that guarantees its sovereign existence;
- EPDP shall do its utmost to enhance the performance of the opposition camp by sending correct and clear messages to all Eritreans, and by addressing the current fragmentation of the Eritrean opposition as a matter of urgency;
- EPDP believes in peaceful co-existence with its neighbors and with the rest of the world on the basis of promoting common interests and mutual respect.

To state in greater detail the renewed resolve and central objectives of the unified and more strengthened EPDP, we present below the political resolutions adopted at its 3rd and Unity Congress in Wiesbaden, Germany, 2019:

Political Resolutions of the 3rd and Unity Congress, 2019

1. The Situation in Eritrea

Taking note of the Eritrean regime's total betrayal of both the Eritrean Nation and its own narrow PFDJ clique, the 3rd and Unity Congress assessed that the all-round relationship between the regime and the Eritrean people is at its worst and lowest ever. It was very clear from the outset that the current head of state [Isaias Afewerki] was bent at establishing a dictatorship in Eritrea when he early on [in June 1991] denied participation of others by declaring his intention of creating a one –party system and blatantly uttered the phrase “no marry-go-round of organizations” in independent Eritrea. As intended, Eritrea has become, slowly but surely, one of the worst absolute dictatorships in the world.

Following some political reforms in Ethiopia during the last 12 months, the Eritrean dictator further exposed his national betrayal by shamelessly saying, “Anyone who sees Eritreans and Ethiopians as two separate peoples is ignorant of the reality.” To add insult to injury, the Eritrean dictator put aside the high sacrifice of tens of thousands in the liberation struggle and dared to say, “We have lost none; we recovered everything we lost.” The unity congress thus concluded that the Eritrean dictator is determined to wipe out Eritrea's hard won sovereign existence.

Fully aware of what is going on, the Eritrean nation is determined than ever before to rise up in unison in defence of its threatened rights and its very survival. The significance of expecting victory from inside the homeland and the awareness of people's right to determine its own fate show the inevitability of the regime's fall. Therefore, calling the Eritrean people to forcefully push ahead with current momentum in the struggle to throw the regime and its repression machinery to the dustbin of history, the congress pledges that the unified EPDP will do all what it takes to help in closing the ranks of all Eritrea's internal and diaspora forces for change and appeals to all fraternal forces to join hands in this endeavour for common action.

2. Eritrean Sovereignty

The congress affirmed that the issue of Eritrean sovereignty is fundamental to Eritrean identity and survival. Only in a well defended national sovereignty can Eritreans enjoy the long list of basic rights and freedoms they lack today. Eritrea's land, water and aerial borders that are recognized by international laws are part of the nonnegotiable objects of its sovereignty. Mainly under the shade of renewed relations with Ethiopia, the Eritrean dictator was of late observed taking highly disturbing measures that benefitted alien forces across the sea. These compromises to the country's territorial integrity are apparently being made without any knowledge, let alone consent, of the Eritrean people.

The Ethiopian side is not immune to this sin of challenging the hard-won Eritrean sovereignty. The Congress, therefore, calls on those Ethiopian political entities that deny or oppose Eritrea's sovereign status to review and correct their mistaken positions, and highly commends those forces that continue to recognize and respect Eritrean sovereignty.

3. The Question of Unity

The Unity Congress has underlined the importance of unified action as the sure path to victory against repression in Eritrea. Fortunately, and well aware of this evident truth, the political organizations have already started taking initial steps to come together bilaterally. The Congress observed that, although the past weaknesses caused by objective realities and internal drawbacks delayed victory, the currently growing readiness for joint work in the opposition camp is a hopeful trend that has to be worked upon. In the past, lack of unity no doubt complicated the struggle for change and made the opposition camp till now remained less trustful to the general public. However, the Congress is encouraged to witness a new atmosphere of renewal in the opposition camp which is showing resolve of burying the old narrow attitudes of mistrust and mutual rejection and instead starting an era of give and take and mutual tolerance. To promote this aim:

- 3.1 The Congress mandated the newly elected EPDP Central Council to take all what it takes to consummate within the shortest time possible the unity and joint work processes which have been underway with Eritrean political organizations.
- 3.2 The Congress agreed on the urgency of opening serious dialogues with the rest of Eritrean pro-change organizations, associations and personalities with the aim of forging unity and/or joint work within a working umbrella.

3.3 The Congress tasked the party leadership to take appropriate action in finalizing any unity agreement reached with any other fraternal Eritrean organization/s.

4. On Yiakil/Kafa Movement

The Congress evaluated the ongoing Yiakil/Enough-is-Enough movement as a popular wave ushering in a new era that further advances all the accumulated pro-democracy struggles of the past. This movement, which includes erstwhile members of the regime, shall give a moral boost to the struggle for change inside Eritrea. Thus, to enable the Yiakil Movement to accomplish its objectives after having clear, stable and reassuring relations and organization, the Congress resolved to work closely with this young movement and offer any possible assistance in helping it obtain the required shape to be effective.

5. On External Interferences in Eritrea

Having discovered that the Eritrean dictator is willing to compromise Eritrea's interests at whim, several external forces have of late extended their hands on our country to satisfy their regional self-interests at the cost of Eritrea and its people. Bedecking Dictator Isaias with valueless medals and filling his coffers dollars, external forces and military alliances are competing in buying reckless the dictator's favours and have already succeeded to establish military bases in sovereign Eritrean territory. The Congress recalled and strongly condemned the already confirmed abuses and killings of Eritreans by foreign soldiers in the military bases given them by the one-man dictatorship. In addition, the mass media reports indicate that Ethiopia is bent at installing naval bases in s Eritrea. The Congress therefore asks all foreign forces to stop these illegitimate acts and go away from sovereign Eritrean land.

6. On Eritrean Refugees

Hundreds of thousands of Eritreans [if not millions] are today dispersed all over the globe because of the refugee phenomenon that was started in Eritrea with the wanton killings and property destruction under Ethiopia's formal occupation [1962-1991], followed by the ruthless repression of the so-called Eritrean government installed by the one-man dictatorship with its endless 'national service' programme, usually and rightly dubbed as a slavery project. The entire world is today aware of the humiliating and disturbing suffering faced by Eritreans in exile.

6.1 The Congress calls on the Eritrean people to close its ranks and rise up to remove the repressive regime. On its part, the EPDP shall continue to work very hard to draw the attention of the word community and its institutions to abide by international obligations towards refugees and treat Eritrean refugees appropriately as these are victims of a callous and cruel regime that does not respect the most basic human rights and uses all evil means to push out of home its 'own' people.

6.2 When favourable situation is attained in post-dictatorship Eritrea, the party leadership shall join hands in helping the voluntary return and resettlement of Eritrean refugees at home where they shall enjoy necessary amenities and social services.

6.3 In the meantime, the Congress expressed its profound gratitude to the Sudan and Ethiopia for their understanding of the plight of Eritrean refugees and their generous welcome for extended periods of time. Special gratitude is also due to the Ethiopian regional authorities and peoples of Tigray and Afar where Eritrean refugees have been treated humanely and in a fraternal manner. These are exemplary acts compassionate that shall further cement the friendship and interaction of post-dictatorship Eritrea with these regions and peoples.

7. On Eritrean Defense Forces

The Congress deliberated that the Eritrean Defense Forces are part of the oppressed population. This truth is proven by the fact that most of those who migrate to other countries are deserters evading service in the defense forces. Being fully aware that their interest is best served by regime change, the Congress called on the Eritrean Defense Forces to stand on the side of their people in getting rid of PFDJ so that they will relieve the people and themselves from the unbearable situation in the country.

8. On Eritrea/Ethiopia Relations

The Congress has expressed its support for a relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia that is not based on the whims of their respective leaders but on an institutionalized policy that takes the people's basic interest and peace into account and avoids interference on each other's internal affairs. Being aware that the current hidden treaty made between the two countries can jeopardize the sovereignty of our country; prolong the life of the regime and its oppression of the people, the Congress strongly urges the government of Ethiopia to reconsider its stance on what is going on.

9. On Eritrea/Sudan Relations

The price that the people of Sudan paid for the victory of our struggle and their thoughtfulness and generosity in protecting our people will always be remembered with high gratitude. In this connection, the Congress underscored that future relations with Sudan will be based on a policy that will give no space for intervention in each other's internal affairs and that it will follow a policy of cooperation and complement for mutual benefit.

The Congress assessed that the people of the Sudan are currently in a hopeful political process. The Congress praised the Sudanese people for the measures they took and the steadfastness they showed for their rights. Meanwhile, the Congress confirms its solidarity with the Sudanese people and urges the Sudanese Defense Forces to continue standing for the aspirations and needs of the people of fraternal Sudan.

10. The Political Situation in Ethiopia

It is now more than a year since the reforms that put under measured control the previous three years' political unrest in Ethiopia. However, in the course of time

unexpected turn of events has caused instability resulting in mass killings and displacement. Understanding the influence that changes in Ethiopia can have on Eritrea and vice versa, the Congress expressed its profound good wishes to see peace, justice, progress and development prevailing in neighborly Ethiopia.

At the same time, the Congress denounced the interference of the Eritrean dictatorial regime in the internal affairs of Ethiopia with its divisive policy that exacerbates contradictions among regions and nationalities of Ethiopia. The Congress has also expressed its concerns that secret treaties and agreements that the Ethiopian government could have reached with the Eritrean dictator can take us back to the bitter experiences of the past.

The Third and Unity Congress has therefore urged all Eritreans to firmly stand for their sovereignty. Likewise, the Congress highly commended all Ethiopians who continue to support Eritrean sovereignty and at the same time cautioned those Ethiopians, who still intend to interfere in Eritrea's internal affairs in pursuit of die-hard wishes to re-annex our country, to refrain from such belligerent and misplaced aims policies.

11. Human and Democratic Rights in Eritrea

The world community rightly calls Eritrea "the North Korea of Africa" due to its gross human rights violations which have become the concern of the international community in general and the UN Human Rights Council in particular. The Council is so concerned about the state of human rights in Eritrea that it continues to annually extend the mandate of the UN Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea for over six years now.

However, the Eritrean regime has been and still is denying the Special Rapporteur access to the country. While the Congress applauds the UN Human Rights Council's decision to continue its scrutiny of the violations of the regime, it strongly regrets the unwarranted support some member states showed to the repressive regime. The EPDP therefore appeals to the UN Human Rights Council to see to it that those Eritrean officials who committed gross human rights violations must be brought to justice. On top of that:-

11.1 The Congress strongly calls on all countries that are signatories of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to respect and take measures according to the charter. The Congress on its part affirms that it will put its maximum effort till it is fully implemented in Eritrea.

11.2 The Congress regretted the wrong position of countries that supported the admission of Eritrea to the Human Rights Council ignoring their knowledge of the regime's negative image as a violator of human rights. The Congress also

counters the stand of the countries that oppose the continuation of the mandate of the Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea and requests them to reconsider their stance on the matter.

11.3 It is a clear fact that the PFDJ regime, due to its merciless nature, takes retaliatory action even on remains of dead opponents. Being a pariah state that has no fear of God, the regime has since day one been anti-religion as manifested in its routine action of putting religious leaders in jail every now and then. The world community understands the injustice the Eritrean people are facing in their religious beliefs with some of their religious leaders dying and others languishing in prison. The late patriotic father, Haji Mussa will eternally live in our hearts. Everyone knows the kind of hellish life that the Eritrean Orthodox Church Patriarch, his holiness Abune Anthonios is exposed to. Jehovah's witnesses, Pentecostals and other religious leaders are aging in prison.

As if these abuses are not enough, PFDJ has recently confiscated the Catholic Church Clinics and other health centers that have been serving the public. In the past, the same thing happened to property owned by the Lutheran Church. This is a manifestation of the regime's policy to push Eritrea downwards. The Congress has determined that the oppressive measures that the regime is taking on the religious institutions and their property is not acceptable by any standards and denounced the action. On the other hand, the Congress has appreciated the U.S. government's call for the release of Abune Anthonios.

12. On Eritrean Martyrs

EPDP recognizes as Eritrea's patriotic martyrs all of those, whether armed or unarmed, who paid the ultimate price for national liberation and freedom.. Based on this, the Party shall work towards the erection of a statue in honour and memory of Eritrean martyrs.

In regard to a national cemetery, EPDP shall work to replace discriminatory burial grounds of the PFDJ regime by a more equitable arrangement, and that only parents and families shall be the ones to decide as to where the resting place of every Eritrean martyr shall be.

Death to the dictatorial regime!

We struggle for Democratic Constitutional Governance, peace, justice, progress and development.

EPDP 3rd and Unity Congress

August 1, 2019,

EPDP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

