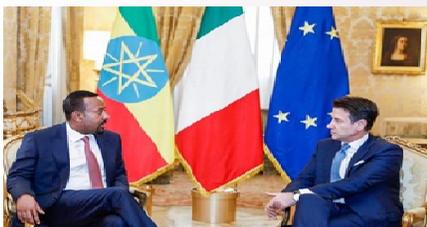


Liberty

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

Eritrea's Hard-won Sovereignty : Under A Looming Threat?

Deep suspicions and anxieties are growing among Eritreans, including former regime supporters at home and abroad. It is eight months now since a "peace accord" was signed between the one-man dictatorship in Eritrea and the new Ethiopian Prime Minister. Ethiopia started quite promising reforms while nothing happened in Eritrea. The six millions Eritreans remain totally uninformed of what is going on about what others call a new phase of "good" relations between the two governments. Even the shocking language of betrayal by the Eritrean dictator and the puzzling acts and pronouncements of the Ethiopian leadership reach Eritreans only via Ethiopian media networks. Our unfortunate region of Horn of Africa may again repeat its sad past. But so far, Eritrean pro-democracy forces like the EPDP have been limiting their responses to simple expressions of shock and deep concerns of the hidden dangers behind this unclear Ethiopian rapprochement with a unelected leader who is trying to escape accountability at any cost for crimes against humanity. (Full story on p. 3)



Eritrea was absent when Ethiopian PM Dr. Abiy Ahmed concluded agreements affecting Eritrea: an accord with Italy for a 736km railway from Massawa to Addis Ababa; construction of Assab-Addis pipeline with UAE; and an agreement with the EU for connecting the Eritrean ports of Assab and Massawa with Ethiopia. So far, angry Eritreans are just watching what the Ethiopian side is saying and doing as part of their secret deals with the Eritrean tyrant now willingly adding his name to the list of traitors in world history.



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Potash from Dankalia:

More Revenue for Sustaining Dictatorship in Eritrea?

If Eritrea's pro-democracy strugglers continue to fail in removing on time the one-man dictatorship in the country, huge revenues from potash mines in the Red Sea province of Dankalia may soon join the gold, silver and zinc mines of Bisha of western Eritrea in sustaining the evil regime in Asmara.



The Australian potash developer, Danakali, recently took steps towards starting actual work in its 50-50 joint venture with the government of Eritrea at the Colluli project. On the business front, Danakali has signed a sales agreement with Russian-controlled EuroChem for up to 100% of the potash produced in the first stage of Colluli. The mine area contains an estimated 1.1 billion tonnes of potash, enough for at least 200 years of production. The first phase, Module I, is expected to produce 472,000 tonnes per annum. Module II will increase total

production to 944,000 tonnes per year.

It is the shallowest evaporite deposit in the world, with mineralisation starting at just 16 metres allowing open-cut mining and only 75 kilometres from the Red Sea coast.

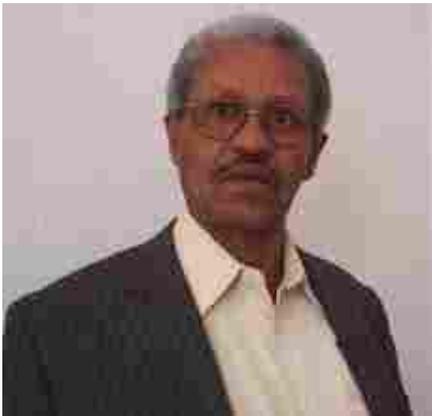
There is no budget or any statistics from Eritrea but it is estimated that the Eritrean regime obtains hundreds of millions of dollars a year from the sale of gold, silver and zinc from the Bisha mine alone in western Eritrea.



Eritrea' Hard-won Sovereignty Could Be Under a Real Threat!

We are again in times of disquiet and consternation. Deep suspicions and anxieties are growing among Eritreans of all walks of life. It is eight months now since the "peace accord" was signed between the one-man dictatorship in Eritrea and the new Ethiopian Prime Minister. Promising reforms are started in Ethiopia while nothing happened in Eritrea where the people remain totally uninformed of what is going on about what others call a new phase of "good" relations between the two governments. Even the shocking language of betrayal by the Eritrean dictator and the puzzling acts and pronouncements of the Ethiopians reach Eritreans only via Ethiopian media networks. Our unfortunate region of Horn of Africa may again repeat its sad past. But so far, Eritrean pro-democracy forces like the EPDP are limiting their calls and actions to expressing surprises and deep concerns of the hidden dangers behind this unclear Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement.

For instance, in a public statement released on 3 February, **Mr. Menghsteab Asmerom**, chairman of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP), expressed his party's and the general Eritrean people's deepening concerns about the ongoing murky relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which in their face-value appear to be grossly violating the right of a say to the Eritrean people and their hard-won territorial sovereignty. In this regard, he made a sharp call on all fraternal forces in the Eritrean opposition camp to rise up to their patriotic responsibility by most immediately arranging to meet in one place and see what they can do to face the challenges hanging over the nation.



Entitled "EPDP's reading of current developments in the region and calls for action", the statement noted the hopes and anxieties that followed the declaration of peace accord between Eritrea and Ethiopia, while highly appreciating the major reforms that continued to unfold in Ethiopia since the coming to power of Ethiopian Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

The statement underlined the significance of those reforms that kindled hopes in Eritrea for similar reforms. Alas, the great expectations disappeared in the thin air when there was action from the side of the Eritrean regime.

Adding insult to injury, the language of both the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea were unclear and controversial and none of them came forward to clarify to the general public of what was going on. The EPDP Chairman's statement gave a good number of examples that showed Eritrean sovereign decision being sidelined by statements and some actions of the Ethiopian leader like the signing of an accord between Ethiopia and Italy on the plan of constructing Massawa-Addis Ababa railway line.

EPDP Chairman Menghsteab Asmerom's statement explained in great length that the measures being taken between Eritrea and Ethiopia are not firmly grounded on existing realities in both today's Eritrea and Ethiopia, and further underlined his regret that even the pledge of implementing border demarcation has not moved an inch.

Alluding to past events, the EPDP chairman even felt "dumbfounded" to learn that Isaias Afewerki

was even bent at ruling both Eritrea and Ethiopia as one country when Eritrea was liberated 28 years ago. He noted that it will be wise to learn from “past intrigues”, otherwise one can be forced to repeat history, and that both Eritreans and Ethiopians should better watch out to never again go to war when the two top leaders disagree.

The EPDP Chairman summed up his 1108-word statement (so far in Tigrigna) by listing the following calls to all concerned, in particular the Eritrean people:

1. We [the EPDP and compatriots in the opposition camp] vehemently oppose presence of any foreign forces in the Eritrea, and strongly reject and oppose any accords and alliances that compromise Eritrean sovereignty.
2. We call the immediate implementation of the Algiers Agreement as well as the ruling of the border commission.
3. The Eritrean people have the right to know full transparency the details of any accord reached between Eritrea and other governments.
4. We see the urgency of establishing an independent civilian watchdog group of professionals to defend and protect Eritrean sovereignty, and we reaffirm our commitment for cooperation in this endeavor.
5. We call upon the Eritrean armed forces to stand on the side of their oppressed people and defend national sovereignty.
6. We remind all fraternal members of the Eritrean opposition camp in general to rise up to the call for their responsibility in this aspect, and therefore arrange soon to meet in one place to review the current situation and see what they can do to address the challenges of the hour.
7. Needless to say, we call for the most immediate release without pre-conditions of Eritrean political prisoners and the prisoners of conscience.



ERITREANS BELIEVE AFRICAN UNION IS NOT GIVING THE DESERVED ATTENTION TO ERITREA

During Eritrea's prolonged armed struggle (1961-1991) against Ethiopian annexation army, African leaders were blamed for not showing interest to help address the problem. They simply ignored the stories of horrible massacres inflicted by the armies of Emperor Haile Selassie and his successor, Col. Mengistu Hailemariam. Again during the last 28 years of "liberated" Eritrea, human suffering inflicted by a repressive tyrant continued in the country. Needless to say, African leaders chose silence, as the news item below hints at.

In a memorandum addressed to the 32nd African Summit in Addis Ababa, EPDP Chairman Menghesteab Asmerom once more appealed to African leaders who are meeting under the



theme of "2019, Year of African Refugees, Returnees and IDPs", to give a "deserved attention" to the plight of the Eritrean people at home and in forced exile having fled from the most repressive regime in Africa. The African Summit was scheduled to end Monday, 11 February, with a declaration on a number of hot issues including ways of how

to address the problems of African refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees. Eritrea is one of the major refugee-producing countries in Africa. It also has a good number of IDPs although no "returnees", because no refugee dares to return to the hell that Eritrea is under the current regime.

EPDP Chairman's message, addressed to H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamt, the African Union Commission Chairman, and copied to all attending African Heads of State and Government and their envoys in Addis Ababa, wished the summit success in delivering "peace, prosperity and integrated future for Africa". Most importantly, the message urged African leaders "to squarely look at the painful African problems like the disastrous situation in Eritrea.

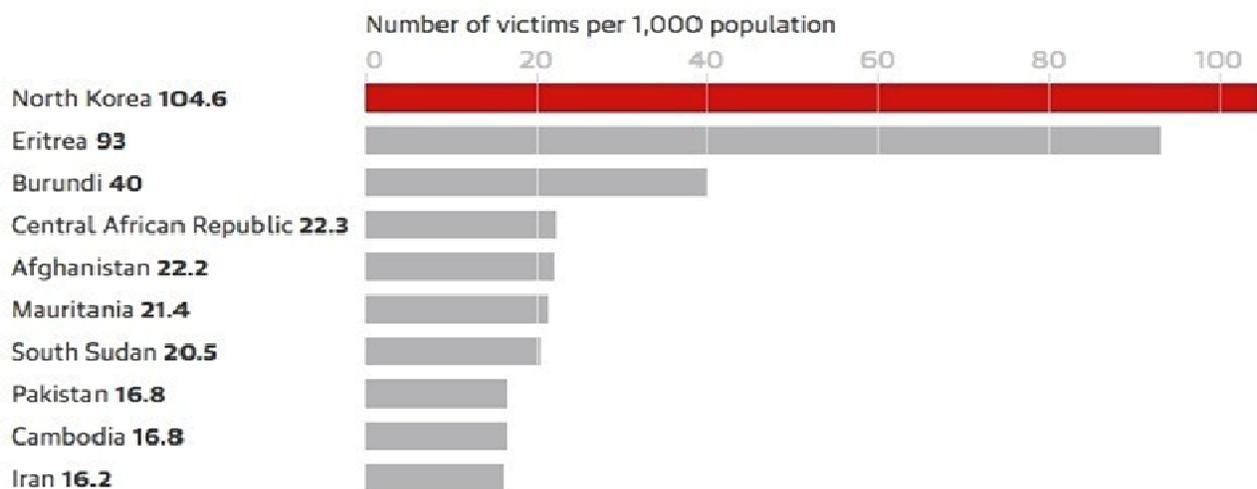
The memorandum welcomed the "declaration of peace" between Ethiopia and Eritrea but regretted the continued absence of change in Eritrea which will not become "a place of hope and peace without its people and good governance". Mr. Menghesteab Asmerom further lamented adding: "We say there cannot be peace, prosperity and integration in our region unless the burning issues of human and political rights in Eritrea are addressed soon with the cooperation of Africa and others".

Sent on 10 February, the EPDP Chairman's memorandum reiterated the appeal for concrete action for the sake of lasting peace in the troubled region, and concluded with these strong words:

"This is an SOS message, an alarm call to you at the AU Summit. We say it is time to pay attention to the prolonged problems of the Eritrean people at home and the huge number of its refugees. Eritreans are scattered all over the region and the globe mainly because of the misdeeds of their own regime and the silence of the AU and other actors to what is going on in the country".

Eritrea Has “Second Highest Number of People Living in Slave-Like Conditions”

More than 40m people are working in slave-like conditions



Guardian Graphic | Source: Global Slavery Index

As shown in the above chart, Eritrea is second only to North Korea in enslaving biggest number of its own people. Out of every 1,000 Eritreans, 93 live in slave-like condition.

It was stated that according to Anti-Slavery International, people today are considered enslaved if they are forced to work against their will; are owned or controlled by an exploiter or “employer”; have limited freedom of movement; or are dehumanized, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as property.

The article by Kate Hodal of The Guardian, published in Martin Plaut's Eritrea Hub of 26 February 2019, asserts that more people are enslaved today than at any other time in history. According to UN figures, an estimated 40.3 million people are living in some form of modern slavery. Globally, more than half of the 40.3 million victims (24.9 million) are in forced labour, which means they are working against their will and under threat, intimidation or coercion.

EPDP PAYS GRATITUDE TO GERMANY'S CONSISTENT CALL FOR NORMALIZING INTERNAL SITUATION IN ERITREA

In a memorandum addressed to the presidium of the German Bundestag and the Foreign Ministry, the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) expressed its "most profound gratitude for Germany's consistent and correct stance towards the regime in Eritrea". The memorandum was copied to the international secretariats of CDU/CSU; SPD; Alliance 90/The Greens; FDP and the German Left.

Sent on 25 January 2019 to the German Federal Parliament (the Bundestag) via its president, the Hon. Wolfgang Schäuble, and to the German Government through Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, the memorandum stated that all Eritreans opposed to the one-man dictatorship in Asmara have warmly welcomed the 17 January 2019 decision of the German Bundestag that strongly supported not only the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia but also Germany's demand for the urgency of normalization of the alarming situation in Eritrea.



Hon. Wolfgang Schauble

The German Bundestag

FM Heiko Maas

Entitled "Eritrean Message of Gratitude", the memorandum stated that the vast majority of Eritreans are encouraged to note that the German Federal Parliament and Government are committed to never resume "development cooperation with Eritrea" before that rogue regime addresses the "disquieting political, social and human rights issues" that disrupted normal life in the country for quarter of a century.

It further stated that situation in Eritrea is still as it was described by Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. In his address to the German Bundestag last 12 October, Mr. Mass hailed the bold reforms started in Ethiopia that he termed "an African Miracle."

The German also hoped at that time that a "reform euphoria" would influence the rest of the region, but added his disappointment with Eritrea where there is still "no strategy to indicate how an orderly opening up within the country could look".

The EPDP memo also thankfully recalled the August 2018 visit to Eritrea of Mr. Gerd Muller, the German Development Minister, who then sternly told Asmara regime representatives that Germany shall NOT be expected to support Eritrea until the unacceptable situation in the country is changed.

Meanwhile, the memo cited recent official German sources informing that German State Minister Michele Müntefering is due to pay a visit to Eritrea soon and pledged she will ask the authorities in Asmara "to seize the opportunity offered them by developments" in the region.

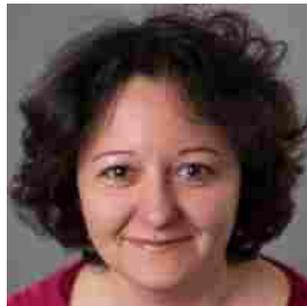


The EPDP memo concluded by hoping that the pressure Germany is putting on the callous Asmara regime will hopefully bear fruit in the near future and alleviate the prolonged and untold suffering in Eritrea.

EPDP Asks UN Eritrea Rapporteur To Keep Asmara Regime 'Under Close Scrutiny'

In a good-wishes memorandum to the new UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur for Eritrea, Ms Daniela Kravetz of Chile, the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) expected her and the UN system to keep under close scrutiny the repressive and inflexible regime in Asmara.

The new UN expert is expected to present her first oral report in a few weeks' time on the human rights situation to the 40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva between 25 February and 22 March 2019.



New UN Special Rapporteur for HR in Eritrea to Present Her First Oral Report in March

The EPDP message, dated 31 January, said it fully appreciated the difficulties ahead for her, difficulties that are compounded by her not having access to Eritrea in addition to the and "the blatant lies of the regime, as witnessed in the laughable contents of the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report the regime representative shamelessly presented to the UN Human Rights Council on 28 January 2019."

The message alluded to the 6-year long hard work of her predecessor, Ms Sheila Keetharuth, who scored successes in recording the excessive abuses of the Eritrean regime in addition to her unachieved work to "encourage and mobilize the international community to push for the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council."

The EPDP memo hoped that Ms Kravetz, who was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council last October, would succeed in helping to stop the ongoing heinous human rights violations in the country by ensuring accountability for those responsible for serious human rights violations in Eritrea.

The message concluded by stating that the EPDP alongside other Eritrean justice seekers are committed to do what is possible to help her mandate succeed in facing the "challenging tasks" of changing to the better the sad human rights situation in Eritrea.

Eritrean Regime Continued its Shameful Lies in Its 3rd UPR Report to UN Human Rights Council

Under a mechanism called UPR (Universal Periodic Review), UN member states report every five years to the UN Human Rights Council on what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their respective countries in fulfilling their human rights obligations. They also mention the challenges they faced while trying to take action. On 28 January, the Eritrean regime – represented by the same old Ambassador Tesfamichael Gerhatu - had no factual achievements to report. Instead, regime representative had to go back to the same old bald lies presented in its previous two UPR reports.



Eritrean regime envoy, Tesfamichael Gerhatu, Misinforming the UN HR Council

If any, what one would call “successes” it had to report included the signing of the Ethiopian Prime Minister’s initiative for peace accord, and the UNDP-UNICEF projects for children and women in Eritrea. That was all. Almost none of previous recommendations were achieved.

Unsatisfied with what Eritrea had to report, member countries listed additional 261 recommendations for the Asmara regime to act towards improving human rights in Eritrea. These were in addition to the myriad recommendations of the Council and the UN Special Rapporteur which were not acted upon.

Many of the 89 member states that made statements during the session, did not find it useful to repeat their old critical viewpoints and strong condemnations of the failures of the Eritrean regime, and instead “praised” the peace accord with Ethiopia and listed their sharp recommendations.

The usual Eritrea supporters like North Korea, Myanmar, China, Russia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Pakistan praised the “Eritrean government for its endeavors despite many challenges.” None of them could mention those non-existent endeavors.

The working group meetings of this 32nd session of the UPR mechanism were held between 21 January and 1 February. The UN Human Rights Council will hold its 40th session between 25 February to 22 March 2019 during which time the new UN Special Rapporteur for Eritrea, Ms. Daniela Kravetz, is expected to report of what she had done since her election to the post last October.

[A Short Profile of New UN HR Rapporteur for Eritrea](#)

Ms Daniela Kravetz was appointed in October 2018 as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea. She is an attorney with extensive experience in human rights, accountability, gender



-based violence and access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings. Her experience covers countries in Latin America, Africa, and the former Yugoslavia.

While serving as a humanitarian law expert on the Security Council mandated Panel of Experts on the Sudan from 2016 to 2018, Ms Kravetz conducted fact-finding missions to the Sudan and regional countries to investigate alleged violations by the parties to the conflict. Previously, she worked for over twelve years at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, first as a law clerk in Chambers and later as a prosecutor in the Office of the Prosecutor. Her prior experience includes working

as a human rights officer in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Ms Kravetz has specialized in providing technical assistance and training to domestic institutions on the promotion of women’s rights, working as a consultant on projects aimed at addressing gender-based violence in several countries. She has served as international human rights and gender expert before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and is currently on the roster of international amicus curiae of the newly established Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia. She is a graduate of the University of Chile (Chile) and the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium). She was called to the bar in Chile in July 1996.

Mandate by the Human Rights Council

Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea and requested the new mandate-holder to continue as appropriate the follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea and the various recommendations of the Council and of Ms Sheila Keetharuth as well as her (Ms Kravetz's) upcoming reports, and to submit oral and written reports to the Council and engage in interactive dialogues with the General Assembly.

As always, the Eritrean regime is highly likely to refuse Ms Kravetz entry to Eritrea, as that regime consistently refused visas for six years to the former UN Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea, Ms Sheila Keetharuth of Mauritius.