

TO **ALL MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

FROM **Fissheha-Tsion Menghistu (LL.B LL.M Ph.D.)**
Email Fisseha@planet.nl
Remark: (on behalf of Hadish-Tesfa Network*)

Re **AN APPEAL TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO STOP ERITREAN REFUGEES FROM BEING DEPORTED TO THEIR DEATHS IN ERITREA**

Dear All members of the International Community,

Much to our deep shock and regret, it has come to our attention that many innocent Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Libya are facing a serious threat of forceful deportation and expulsion to Eritrea. This is neither legal nor right and just.

In order to have a good understanding of the tragic plight of the Eritrean asylum seekers in Libya and other countries, it is important to briefly highlight the international community about the massive and systematic violations of human rights by the regime in Eritrea. For all intents of purposes, the regime in Asmara is one of the worst regimes on earth.

1 Brief Background on human right violations in Eritrea

The current state of Eritrea is depressing.

- 1 In Eritrea today, there is neither freedom nor liberty nor anything good for our people. All the preconditions that will ensure freedom, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance are manifestly absent. There had never been any genuine, free and fair election in Eritrea and there will never be free and fair election as long as the brutal dictator is in power. In Eritrea today, there is a country and society dominated by one brutal and inhuman man who do not care about the right to life of the people and the future of its youth. A country that offers no future for its youth could have no future itself.
- 2 There are no way even independent minded individuals let alone organized local NGOs and civil movements can organize meetings inside Eritrea. Peaceful demonstration against the regime is not tolerated. Eritreans are not even supposed to think anything other than blindly supporting the regime. They simply have no life at all. Eritrea is now left with a living dead consisting of old men, women and children suffering from mal nutrition, lack of clean water and basic medical care. In short, there are many things going wrong in Eritrea.
- 3 The Eritrean people and the civil society have no control over the behaviours, decisions and actions of the brutal dictatorship in Eritrea. The leaders do what they like. Accountability and transparency is non-existent. In fact, the brutal regime tries to control and manipulate even many Eritreans in Diaspora. This is a regime that is no less brutal and totalitarian than the worst regimes on earth and than the very countries whose circumstances warrant international humanitarian intervention or the US invasion.
- 4 **Eritrea under the Isayas Afewerki regime is simply hell except for those who do not benefit from his rule and few opportunist intellectuals and scholars.**
- 5 The vast majority of Eritreans inside Eritrea are living like in prison terrorized by the regime in power. There are more than 10,000 Eritrean refugees in Northern Ethiopia alone

and still are fleeing. The tragedy faced by Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Libya is just another concrete example. They have been forced to flee to Libya in order to save their lives. One of the main underlying root causes to leave their beloved country and parents is because Eritreans are terrorized and being brutalized by mafia thugs who have no understanding of what Governments are for? And about international laws, norms and behaviours. That is why Eritrea has become hell on earth.

6 **The European Parliament has passed two important documents against the regime in Eritrea. These are Resolution of 7/2/2002 and the Document on The Human Right Situation in Eritrea, which was submitted for a debate to the Development Committee of the European Parliament on 15 March 2005.**

7 For all intents and purposes the brutal dictator in Asmara is a menace to peace not only for the Eritrean people but also for the people of the Horn and the rest of Africa as a whole. This is a man who does not care about the life and future of the people of Eritrea and the region. The irony is while the brutal dictator in Eritrea is only exporting refugees to other countries, he keeps on meddling in the affairs of his neighboring countries. He has now unashamedly sent his troops to fight a proxy war against Ethiopia and to support some Islamic fundamentalists in Somalia.

In short, **in Eritrea today all the ingredients and preconditions for peace, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance, transparency and accountability are manifestly absent.** That is the main reason why Eritreans are abandoning their country.

2 **AN APPEAL TO THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT TO STOP THE DEPORTATION AND EXPULSION OF ERITREAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Given the above-mentioned tragedy of our people, it is neither right nor fair for the Libyan Government to seek the deportation of the innocent Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers to their deaths in Eritrea. This is un-African.

Our people are aware of the positive and constructive role of Libya in Africa in the past. Hence, we believe it is neither wise nor consistent with the spirit of African Unity and solidarity to support the brutal dictator in Eritrea who has no regard for the life of the Eritrean people. We like to stress that African leaders deserve to be rulers only if and when they treat their own people with dignity as well as meet their people's aspirations to live in freedom, democracy, peace and prosperity. It is essential that Africans must be seen to treat each other with decency and dignity as well. As far as we are concerned, the brutal and brutal regime in Eritrea is much worse than the worst brutal mafia on earth. That is precisely why the Eritrean youth are escaping to any place where they can save their lives.

We therefore **appeal to the Libyan Government and people** to support the Eritrean people and not the brutal dictator in Eritrea who has become a liability to the dignity and image of the African Continent. Leaders come and go but the brotherly relations and solidarity of the people of the African Continent must continue forever. That is Africa's destiny.

There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Eritreans now admit that the President of Eritrea is a menace to peace and stability for the people of Eritrea and that of the Horn of Africa. EriTV, which is viewed not only in Eritrea but also in the rest of the world, has become not only the propaganda and lies for the brutal dictator and his inhuman policies but also the voice of the ideology

of hatred, incitement and glorification of war and violence. One has to view the Wednesday and Friday evening programs of EriTV. The tragic irony is the regime sees such propaganda machine as "serving the truth and peace" while the reality is quite to the contrary.

3 AN APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO STOP THE DEPORTATION AND EXPULSION OF ERITREAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM LIBYA

By now thanks to the global and alternative medias, the people of the world are witnessing with their own eyes and within their living rooms on what is going on in the world? How the UN works and decides on important security issues? Who is right and wrong? Who is lying and who is speaking the truth and who is pro poor and who is committed for peace as well as for war and destruction?

The world community and ourselves have heard **President Bush and his Administration Officials** many times talking of their commitment and mission **to spread freedom and democracy to the rest of the world**. But the Eritrean people have none of it. They are enslaved, brutalized and victimized by the very man who claimed to have taken up arms to liberate them. Ironically, our people are faced with a brutal dictator unleashing state terrorism against his own people. The brutal dictator continues to cheat the international community and particularly the United States and Britain that he is "a partner on war against global terrorism" while his main aim is to get arms and support to kill our people and eliminate any democratic opposition whom he describes as "terrorists" and supporters of Bin Laden or Al Qaidia". The tragic irony is he is also one of those actively involved supporting the fundamentalist Islamic factions of Somalia that are alleged to have links with Al Qaida.

In the name of the vast majority of Eritrean people and the asylum seekers in Libya **we kindly appeal President Bush and his Administration as well as the British, French, German and many other Governments of the world including African Governments and the AU to put pressure to bear on all concerned in ways that would ensure the protection of fundamental human rights not only of the people inside Eritrea, but also the rights of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Libya and in other countries.**

Since the European Parliament, particularly the Development Committee is already aware of the behaviours and practices of regime in Asmara and have passed resolutions against it, what we now can kindly appeal to the Development Committee of the European Parliament is to take concrete measures and actions along the lines we have already suggested in the past.

4 AN APPEAL TO THE UN AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES SUCH AS THE UNHCR TO LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATION OF THOSE WHO NEED THEIR PROTECTION

The world is witnessing that increasingly the UN is seen or perceived as an instrument of some foreign powers and not as a collective universal organization that implements the wishes and aspiration of the concept of "We the People of the United Nations". Moreover it does not in practice implement all its resolutions equally and fairly and for the benefit of mankind and all humanity. One of the tragic ironies and practices of the international community is at times the international laws are applied in selective, biased and subjective manner. **Equality of treatment and consistency within the UN system seem more of a myth than reality.** This is a bad image for the future of the UN. The United

Nations must be seen to promote the interest of **all humanity** than particular interest groups. It should be stressed that the people of the world cannot develop by slogans, resolutions and declarations and organizing many UN conferences alone. Selling false illusions and new false hopes and promises must stop. The people of Eritrea and Eritrean refugees cannot believe what they do not see. The Eritrean and African refugees in concrete terms deserve the protection of the UN and its specialized Agencies such as the UNHCR. This is one taste case on whether the UN is living up to the expectations of the very people it claims to protect.

It should be stressed that the people of the world are more interested on what is happening to them and to their lives on the ground and not what some UN Agencies claim to inform the world via their expensive advertisement industry and via the global media such as the CNN. Such behaviours and practices continue to undermine the trust and confidence of the concept of "We the people of the United Nations" enshrined in the preamble of the UN Charter. Similarly, the **UNHCR is not delivering what it claims to be**. That is the conclusion we have reached from our past experiences. The lack of protection of Eritrean refugees in Libya is also one concrete case in point. We also have other concrete evidence in many other countries where some of the staff of the UNHCR continue to mistreat and degrade the very people whom they are supposed to help and protect. The problem is the gap between what the UN claims and what many of its staff do on the ground is too wide. There is also too much redundancy and duplication of many activities of the UN Agencies.

At any rate, on behalf of the people of the world in general and the African and Eritrean peoples in particular, we appeal the UN and the UNHCR authorities to uphold the very noble principles that are enshrined in the UN Charter and other Instruments related to other UN Agencies such as the UNHCR. Protecting Eritrean and African refugees and asylum seekers not only in Libya, but also in other countries is just one taste case.

We also kindly appeal to the UN Secretary General and other UN authorities to live up to the expectations of the people of the world in general and that of Eritrean refugees in Libya and elsewhere in particular. Finally, we kindly appeal the national and international NGOs, civil society and human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, Human rights Watch and all men and women of good will of the world to speak out and show their solidarity with the people of Eritrea in general and to stop the forced deportation of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers from Libya.

19 August 2006

For contacts please kindly use: Fisseha@planet.nl or Hadish_tesfa2006@yahoo.com