

## Celebrating Eritrean Independence Day, May 24, 2015?

Literally speaking, celebration of An Independence Day means honoring the birthday of a country, which has a written national constitution that provides the legal framework of a representative government. Independence Celebration isn't only a day on which citizens of the subject country and their friends go to a parade, and sing the national anthem, have drinks together, dance; barbeque; or watch fireworks, but it is also the celebration for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Declaration of Independence tells us that we are all "created equal with guaranteed Liberty and Justice for all as written in its national constitution. Unfortunately, the state of Eritrea, after 24 years of independence doesn't have the constitution yet. Eritrean Independence has remained only in a name, just from the day of Independence, May 24, 1991, Isayas Afeworki, the self-proclaimed president for life, and a handful of collaborators, defiantly took power by betraying the Trust and Promise of their martyred colleagues and they have ended up destroying the country beyond repair, politically, socio-economically and diplomatically.

At this time, there is no functional system of government in Eritrea. Nor is the social-fabric of the society in a viable state. Those who claim to be rulers are ruling the country by brute force and leading by intuition, letting the citizens suffer from an endemic poverty, without enough food to eat, running water, electricity or medical related services. Crime in Eritrea is now aberrantly high, which is a clear indication that Isayas has either lost his control or he is intentionally letting it happen in wanton disregard.

Historically speaking, the tidiness of the capital city of Eritrea's streets have been the envy of the world with their lined up palm trees providing an added beauty and magnification. To the contrary, the whole city's streets are now full of filth and piles of garbage, with nobody assuming any responsibilities to lead and manage the sanitation, because there is no municipality system in existence.

A significant percentage of the Eritrean people are living in prisons throughout the country and in underground silos, or are systematically forced out to leave their country, by leaving their beloved families behind, only to end up perishing in the Mediterranean Sea, and also to face untold tortures, murders, and even rapes in the Egyptian desert of Sinai on their journeys to Israel.

The shining example of the horror stories of the displaced Eritreans is the last month's annihilation of about 350 Eritreans from a sinking ship on The Mediterranean Sea, which is only a one Journey's report of the many such incidences of the last five years. The beheadings of the about 30 Eritrean and Ethiopian Christians in Libya of last month, by the fanatic Islamists known under the name of ISIS is another vivid example.

The mass Eritrean human loss in both of those two unfortunate incidences have shocked and angered many humanitarian organizations and individuals around the world, while on the contrary, the Eritrean government cynically and callously avoided mentioning about the incidents. But they have been secretly intimidating and threatening arresting the very families who started mourning and conducting a bereavement process for the loss of their loved ones.

As an insult to injury, the state of Eritrea is now being illegally occupied by thousands of heavily armed and funded group of soldiers, under the pretext of an Ethiopian opposition group, when infact, these are paid Ethiopian mercenaries, whose real mission is to militarily protect and defend Isayas Afeworki, if in case, an Eritrean peoples' Might, militarily challenge him. In fact, it has been quite a while since Isayas has lost faith and trust on his security apparatus, and that's why he had to come up with this military arrangement scheme.

On the context of such realities of life in the present day of Eritrea, what does an Eritrean Independence Day mean to us, Eritreans in general? And how should we celebrate our precious Independence Day, on May 24, 2015 ?

Eritrean Independence Day, in general, should mean to Eritreans, a day of reflection and a day of collectively, in unison, enjoy the fruits of a war hard won, by sacrificing very high number of human, material and in kind costs, which should have resulted in fulfilling the intended purposes of attaining full Freedom, Democracy and Liberty for all of its citizens.

And we should celebrate our Independence Day, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015, by acknowledging and honoring the hundreds of thousands of our martyrs, who sacrificed their lives in order for us to fulfill our dreams, and the longed for Free and Democratic Independent Eritrea, that guarantees Liberty, Justice and unqualified Freedom for all its citizens, which hasn't materialized yet. It should, indeed, mean a day of hope and an expression of forward looking messages of advocacy for forming a unified political opposition of national salvation.

By pledging that all Eritreans, without any exclusions, will be united under the banner of one person, one vote principle on our mission of forming a Grass Roots Mass Movement, in order to save Eritrea from its ruins, and the yokes of oppression and human annihilation.

But, we will definitely, not celebrate our Independence Day, 2015, by drinking alcohols, and going to dancing places, at a time when we are still mourning and bereaving, with our teary eyes, for the loss of 100s of our brothers, sisters, sons, fathers and mothers, in the Mediterranean Sea, and Libya, above and beyond all the misery and human sufferings that our people in Eritrea are going through.

In fact, we vehemently oppose and condemn those Eritreans who organize and those who attend any cynical HEGDEF's money making live music

schemes, in the name of celebrating Eritrean Independence Day year 2015.

Long Live our Unity

And May the names of our Martyrs stay in our hearts and minds forever !

Eritreans for Unity, Justice and Salvation

Seattle, Washington, chapter