

**WHERE WOULD THE ERITREAN PEOPLE LIKE
THE COUNTRY TO BE BY DECEMBER 31, 2019?**

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A New Year is the time when we, as individuals, businesses, nations, communities, parties, organizations or movements take a look back at things (our lives, careers, businesses, targets in politics, social, economic, cultural ...spheres) and resolve to change things for the better, pledging that the new year should be different. If, as an individual, I want to improve my work-life balance, stop smoking, read more, get more organized, reduce weight, give more time for my kids, improve my income, pay a debt, or acquire a skill, I have to set an objective and work on it. These are the basic life skills lessons many teachers focus on in December every year in many schools and adult educational programs in the West, where many of us live. We will dive deeper into the issue in connection to others.

The introductory paragraph above takes us to the issue of the process of objective setting. No matter whether we have in mind an individual, a nation, a community, a party, an organization or a movement, he/she/it needs to go through this process before the year ends and a new year begins. Some would say this is the Western way of doing things. However, instead of oversimplifying it that way, we need to consider the process of objective setting as the rational and the logical way of doing things for those determined to see results, regardless of geography, type of civilization, or socio-economic level a human society belongs to.

Before we talk about the rationale, we need to stress that objective setting is not the formulation of a wish list. It is a process which allows one to create the recipes for success. Maybe it would be helpful to raise the question: ***Why do we refer to it as a process?*** It is a process in the following sense:

- It starts with careful consideration of what we want to accomplish and ends with investing our energies to achieve that.
- Between the two (the start and the end) come well-defined steps that will allow us to formulate what we want to accomplish.
- When we talk about an objective we are not talking about the work performed, but the outcome expected, once we complete the work.

As to the rationale, experience has confirmed the validity of a couple of reasons regarding the significance of objective setting. It helps us control the direction of our lives, or businesses whatever they are, and provides us a benchmark to determine whether we are actually succeeding or not. This is true not only for individuals, but for businesses, nations, communities, parties, organizations or movements too. If I am beating around the bush, to come back to my theme, as Eritreans struggling for regime change, we need to ask: ***Where do we want Eritrea to be by December 31, 2019?***

All of us, as individuals, have dreams (other than our personal dreams or those directly related to our own lives) as to where we want to see Eritrea a year from now, but these are wishes. For wishes to turn into objectives, in our case, there should be a national umbrella to do the objective setting on our behalf, or based on its knowledge as to what we (the people) want, then harvesting our energies in accomplishing the set objectives. In order to answer the question as to where we want to be by December 31, 2019, taking the objective setting into account, we need to establish: ***Where are we at present in terms of having a national umbrella that represents all national contingents struggling to bring change in Eritrea?*** The Arabs say:

“ هذا هو رِبَطُ الفرس ”

(This is the stud of the horse). We will see the issue in detail below.

We did not hear much about the Bayto after the Kunama controversy. Now it is good news that we recently see an indicator that it has started waking up from a

comma, after hearing about a conference of its North American branch a couple of weeks ago. Though we know that some North American cities have already announced the schedules for their conferences, we are not satisfied, but ask: ***How about other regions?*** No word heard yet, until the day this piece was sent to the websites to be posted, a matter which makes the observer speculate that we did not see a full wake up yet, unless a certain miracle happens and breathes soul in it. The Bayto members should know that they will be assessed on the demands of the time: learning from their past failures and missed opportunities to mobilize the people, realizing that they missed the honour to score their crowning achievement. I do not want to break it down, but put it in a short, comprehensive, frank, and honest presentation below.

The Bayto, as individual member organizations and as an institution, have to realize that they only represent their own members (constituting a small portion) and that non-members are the bulk of the Eritrean population, whose imprints and influence on the coming change will be more remarkable and critical than theirs, for many reasons they need to soberly and objectively assess in order to remain relevant and go along with others. In a nutshell, Eritrean politics is not the monopoly of the Bayto, as it not the monopoly of any other specific political grouping, but the Bayto can play a part together with others, provided that its member organizations understand their size, their level of competence in terms of tenacity, skills and vision, the current circumstances in which they are operating (the situation in Ethiopia has changed and left them without any relative support), and have actual devotion (not rhetorical claim), modesty (not arrogance) and the knowledge of what the tasks of the current phase of the movement for change demand. Consequently, we wish the Bayto good luck to play its role to the fullest, which our people had been waiting for since the day of its establishment, emphasizing that it is not only the relations of its members with each other that matters, but their relations as individual organizations and as an institution with other justice seekers, who are not members, is remarkable in the struggle for democratic change too. Acting like “political tribes” did not help us at all. It rather put us in a state of a collective suicide.

Another initiative we need to see where it stands is MEDREK. We saw it as a ray of hope when MEDREK started devoting time and effort to bring all national contingents together, a couple of years ago. Even that initiative dwindled and we do not know if MEDREK still exists or died out as a passing fad, which is the Eritrean way. It is sad that we do not know where those personalities we had respected as Eritrean patriots are, except a couple of them or one, whom we see continuing their struggle as individuals. Many people are asking: ***Are they hiding under the rock, went back home to serve the regime, have flipped to the side of the regime and are serving it from where they are, neutralized by the regime to remain silent, or that is the real face of what Eritrea is?***

Our people deserve an explanation. The organization, MEDREK, together with its members, are the ones that have opened the door for all these speculations by suddenly and silently disappearing from the forum, without giving any explanation as to what has happened to the joint committee(s) formed together with the Bayto member organizations and EPDP. At the same time, the Bayto or the organizations elected in the joint committee (s), to be exact, and EPDP are equally responsible for not informing the public as to what had happened. ***Where are the credibility, accountability and transparency we sing for, if we do not inform the public what had happened to the joint committee(s) announced?*** As long as no explanation has been given, none of the participant organizations is released from the responsibility of informing the public. This is a matter of credibility. ***If we criticize Atse Isias and hold him responsible for not informing the Eritrean people about the mysterious peace agreement with Ethiopia, why do these organizations expect not to be held responsible for lack of accountability and transparency?*** We have held judgment until now concerning this issue, but it did not do the struggle any good. ***How about our media outlets? Where are they from informing the public about this issue? Can't they figure it out and let the public know?*** Though it is becoming clearer everyday that not calling a spade a spade, and on time, is costing the cause we identify ourselves with so high, it is unfortunate that we still insist to continue in this path.

Further, numerous proposals had been presented by different contingents at different times to create a national structure that would represent all (of course, without interfering with their organizational independence), but as usual, they have been killed by the hidden forces, picking them one by one like a sniper. It is sad that we neither have the courage and the caliber to present our own proposals nor the willingness to add refinements to those presented by others. Instead, our expertise remained to be fighting proposals and killing them secretly. The matter which needs clarity is: ***Which one really matters for the cause: the presenter or the presented proposal?***

To complete the picture about the issue where we stand, few remarks on the opposition activities inside Eritrea would be necessary. As it is very difficult to distinguish a fact from a rumour, and the intelligence of the regime is out to confuse, mislead, distort and misinform by way of blackmail, nothing could be said except raising questions that hopefully some would be generous enough to enlighten us on. These questions are:

- Is there really an opposition inside Eritrea?
- How does it express itself?
- What activities does it carry out?
- What does it show and what it does not?

With the above detailed picture in mind, it is fair to conclude that no national structure exists to do the objective setting for the New Year, though the conspiracy of the Atse with the Ethiopian expansionist forces against the Eritrean sovereignty is daily increasing steam, and the Atse's free hand to consummate the ultimate phase of his evil agenda has never been undermined. It seems we are waiting until Traitor Isias consummates the last phase of his evil agenda so that we finally wake up, raise up arms and go back to a thirty-year armed struggle to re-liberate Eritrea from the Ethiopian occupation rather than having race against time and use the available opportunities, though limited, to foil the conspiracy and control the future of the country.

Before we see where we want to be at the end of the year 2019, another issue we need to address could be raised in the form of the question: ***What did the year 2018 look like from the perspective of the Eritrean people?*** As I do not want to bore the readers with all stories we had seen together happen, read or wrote about previously, it would be helpful to focus on the following two questions:

- ***What was the best thing that happened to Eritrea this year?***
- ***What was the worst thing that happened to Eritrea this year?***

As I believe both questions are inter-connected as cause and effect, to begin with the second question (the worst thing that happened to Eritrea) would ensure a logical order. As the implementation of the evil agenda of the butcher kept expanding rather than contracting every coming year, the year 2018 was the worst for the Eritrean people who had to go through many things laughable, lamentable and others in between. Here the mother of all evils our country has to go through in 2018 was the mysterious “peace agreement” between the Devil from the Eritrean side and the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed. Showing the negative impacts of the agreement on our country and the dangers hovering over its head is unnecessary and time-consuming because a lot has been said and written about them. Accordingly, it would be enough to limit ourselves to the act of raising the “peace agreement” as the worst thing that happened to our country in the year 2018.

When we talk about the Devil, Traitor Isias, in connection to the worst thing that happened to our country in the year 2018, it is impossible to refrain from saying few things about the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed. I do not want to be as friendly as I used to be to the Ethiopian Prime Minister, to whom the pains and the misery of our people meant nothing and who remotely looked like a believer in freedom, human rights, justice, and equality, contrary to his rhetoric for which we had gone to a great length to support him with an open mind, at the initial time he was negatively received by most Ethiopians. The worst explicit behavior we have to observe was that he went one step further (from what are listed above) through his direct involvement in strengthening the regime, painting

the butcher up as a saint, and helping the fascist regime get out of isolation, preparing the ground for a gradual political integration of the country, with ugly indicators too many to cite. The thing that bothers us as Eritreans most is that the Ethiopians want to swallow us in one mouthful as a whole (in Tigre: “Ab Kububna Luwhatuna Hazolaw”). Though he has decided not to listen to anything coming from the Eritrean public and has treated all messages with contempt-filled silence and arrogance, we still see the flow of open messages from some Eritrean citizens to the Prime Minister continues, thinking that finally some common sense could come out of him. This looks extraordinarily unlikely. Nonetheless, we do not tell anybody what to do. At the same time, we do not surrender our decency and fall back on name calling, as the vagabonds who are the supporters of his friend (honey moons of partners of unholy alliances are always short-lived), but we tell him that the respect we had for him will be impossible to win back, and that our people would not mind for another 30 years of armed struggle to defend their sovereignty and teach the harshest lesson possible to occupiers.

As to the first question (the best thing that happened in 2018), it is the weakening of the herd mentality within the camp of the brutal regime and the breaking of the ice of fear, resulting from the magnitude of the national treason Traitor Isias has been committing since the day of the rapprochement with the Ethiopian Government. The consequences of the treacherous path of the Atse are fully detailed in two of my articles that I do not want to recycle. Please refer to the following links for these articles:

- ***TRAITOR ISIAS AS PAWN OF ETHIOPIAN EXPANSIONIST ASPIRATIONS AND GULF HEGEMONY: AN EFFECTIVE CATALYST FOR THE WEAKENING OF HERD MENTALITY*** (www.togoruba.org, October 8, 2018)
- ***TRAITOR ISIAS VOWS TO DIE FOR ETHIOPIA REDEFYINING HIS ALLEGIANCE TO ERITREA: WHAT WOULD OUR SILENCE MEAN EXCEPT TACIT CONSENT?*** (www.togoruba.org, November 20, 2018)

To come back to the major question as to where our people like the country to be by December 2019, in few words, we can say with certainty that they want to see

Eritrea taken back from the clutches of the Ethiopian Trojan horse, reconstructed, and re-emerge in the world of sovereign states as a proud, stable, and democratic nation, in the real sense of the word, while protecting our sovereignty from the Ethiopian expansionist aspirations, but showing genuine readiness to co-exist peacefully and cooperate with our neighbors for the common good on equal footing. This is what our people aspire to see by December 31, 2019. But how to get there will depend on our ability and commitment to work together, hand and glove, putting the national salvation above all other considerations. I hope we are intelligent enough to do the soul searching and ensure the correctness of the course of action that could get us to what our people aspire to achieve in the New Year.

Time is passing and things are terribly changing for us, Eritreans. I have a zero question in my mind that there is nobody who loses sight of the significance of the time for Eritrea. If we do not realize that Eritrea is living in a different time and that the country has entered a period of total uncertainty, we should be accused of naivety, to say the least. We cannot sit back and wait for a savior. It is here that urgent measures to bring us together are needed, for the sake of our children and for the sake of the nation. We are not talking about ordinary crimes committed by Traitor Isias (these are in thousands) but about selling the country out. ***Doesn't this bother us all, no matter we support r oppose the regime?***

Before winding up this piece, let me raise the key question: ***Did we fail as Eritreans to bring about change? I would say a big "NO"***. This is only where we are in the unfinished business. Though all destructions and catastrophes in all spheres of the life of our people and country were evitable and we are partially responsible for that, it is by no means too late, if there is the desire to do something urgent to save the country from the unknown. We cannot give up saying we have failed. The reason is that we do not have another alternative, except to succeed. What ought to be done, has to be done, before we are caught by surprise. No time for the strife among ourselves and no time for unjustified postponements of the holy duties. Some of us had the dubious "pleasure" of listening to reports about lame excuses saying, "Give us some time to prepare for

the conference.” forgetting that a serious danger is hovering over the country. ***Why do they need time when they hear the alarm? Where is that time they want to have?*** Imagine a firefighter saying that.

I doubt if there is any Eritrean who is not excited to see the day an Eritrean judge tells Atse Isias in an Eritrean courtroom, “Arguably you sold your country out.”, pointing his/her finger to the Eritrean flag. This is what the DC federal Judge, Emmet Sullivan, said to Michael Flynn, Trump’s former National Security Advisor on December 18, 2018, though his crimes were nothing compared to that of the Atse. We should work day and night, hand and glove, to hear the same words in an Eritrean courtroom from “an Eritrean Emmet Sullivan”, though we know the Ethiopian Air Force is always on standby to whisk the butcher away to Ethiopia, in case their Trojan horse faces a threat. We welcome the New Year, wishing it would be a year to get the nightmare over with. We are breathless with anticipation of something good to happen in our country in 2019, but we have to be a part of that hope in terms of stand and active participation.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!