



UNITY –THE UDC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – October 2019

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- UDC hold its founding Congress
- In its 1st Regular meeting, the UDC Central Council elects its Speaker and the Chairman of the UDC Executive Committee
- UDC Executive Committee holds its first regular meeting

Frankfurt hosts the UDC Founding Congress

Members of three different organizations who had previously dissolved their respective organizations meet in Frankfurt, Germany between 23-25 August 2019 to hold a founding congress during which the Organization of Unity for Democratic Change was formally launched. During the three day congress, participants, ratified the new organization's bylaws, the vision & mission as well a document that would serve as a roadmap to a smooth and peaceful transition toward democracy in Eritrea. They also elected 21 member Central Council. Congress Press statement on page 2

The Central Council (CC) holds its first ordinary meeting.

During two successive sessions held on 08 September and 14 September 2019, the newly elected UDC Central Council elected, the CC Speaker, the Chairman of the Executive Committee as well



as the six remaining members of the Executive Committee.

UDC NEWS

24 August 2019

Following the successful founding congress held at the end of last month and the first ordinary meeting of the central council held earlier this month, the UDC Executive Committee held its first ordinary meeting on 22 September 2019.

During the meeting which lasted nearly three hours, members of the executive committee discussed a number of issues such as the Executive Committee's internal structure, the finalisation of the organisational structure in accordance to the by-laws ratified during the founding congress, membership affairs, the budget, building working relations with sister organisations etc.

To this effect, members of the Executive Committee agreed on a number of steps to be taken during the coming weeks and months in order for the UDC to strengthen its internal structure, make use of the available resources within the organisation.

A quarterly Newsletter published by the UDC
Information & Mobilisation Department



UDC Executive Committee

1. Tesfamichael Yohannes—Chairman
2. Suleiman Hussein—Foreign Affairs & Public Relations
3. Kubrom Ghrenet—Secretary
4. Gleway saeed—Organisational & Political Affairs
5. Antonio Tesfay—Information & Mobilisation
6. Alem Yohannes—Economic Affairs
7. Saba Fessehaye—Social & Cultural



PRESS STATEMENT

25 August 2019

We, who were originally members of three different organizations, the EPDP, the EMJ and the FND; we decided to be dissolved in order to pave the way for the creation of a brand new broad-based national organization, held our founding congress between 23-25 August 2019 in Frankfurt, Germany.

It is worth mentioning that the historic decision to dissolve our respective organizations was the outcome of a year-long internal discussions and the reflection of our strong belief that at this critical stage of our struggle, the way forward lies in the unity of purpose among all Eritrean pro - democracy forces. We also believe that whether an organization calls itself a political or civil society organization, the most important objective and the raison d'être of these organizations to work towards the mobilization of Eritreans inside Eritrea and in the diaspora in favor of the struggle to achieve the objective of the Eritrean people which consists of bringing the 28 year old dictatorship to an end and to replace it with a democratic form of government that would be put in place by the Eritrean people through free and fair elections.

During the three days, participants discussed several draft documents, including the organization's by-laws, vision and mission that would be used as guide in ensuring a smooth and peaceful transitional period once the current regime has been brought down. These were prepared by a team of experts and after thorough discussions, amending when necessary, they were ratified and will serve as the foundation our new organization now called: Unity for Democratic Change (UDC).

Participants also elected the organization's new leadership **formed** of a twenty-one members of the Central Council and four reserve members that will elect the Speaker of the Council and seven members, the Executive Committee.

On this occasion, we in the Unity for Democratic Change (UDC) call on all Eritrean pro- democracy forces, inside Eritrea and in the diaspora, to realize that only unity of purpose would ensure that we rise up to our responsibilities and the challenges facing our country. This is not the time for power struggle and competing political agendas. Peaceful competition among political forces is indeed necessary for democracy but can only happen once a peaceful and smooth transition towards democratic order has been achieved and **the** constitution becomes the supreme law of the country. In light of this, we in the Unity for Democratic Change (UDC) express our readiness to work with all Eritrean pro -democracy forces towards achieving this goal. In this regard, we express our support to the ongoing popular movement of YiAkI and call on the Eritrean people to abort all attempts of sawing division, rise up in unison and escalate the popular resistance against the dictatorship in our country.

We also call on:

The Eritrean Defense Forces who we value their sacrifices to stand on the side of the Eritrean people in their struggle to reclaim their country;

The international community to shoulder its responsibilities by exerting pressure on the Eritrean government to implement the rule of law, to respect the rights and dignity of the Eritrean people and to end the open -ended nature of the national service which has been the root cause of the youth exodus during the past decades.

Victory to the Eritrean people!

Unity for Democratic Change (UDC)

Frankfurt 25 August 2019

UDC delegation speech of solidarity at the Eritrean Mothers Initiative Conference in Frankfurt/Germany



On August 23, 2019, Mr. Hamid Drar participated in the Eritrean Mothers Conference in Frankfurt as the representative of the Organization for

Unity for Democratic Change (UDC).

Respected organizers of today's event!

Dear members of the Eritrean Mothers Initiative to save the people and the homeland!

Respectable Eritreans seeking justice!

Distinguished guests!

How happy I am to have the opportunity to participate in the activities of Eritrean mothers for the second time, which makes me feel very proud.

Eritrean women in general, and mothers in particular, in the history of our struggle have played a very important role. Not only did their role in the struggle for the liberation of Eritrea and achieving its national independence, but they also went on to defend the country at a stage where its sovereignty was in danger by the post-independence Ethiopian invasion, with many Eritrean women martyred on the battlefield with an unprecedented heroism.

Accordingly, the mothers' initiative today is undoubtedly a continuation of historical pre-independence glorious deeds. Our victory was confirmed in the past by the par-

ticipation of Eritrean women in the struggle that the whole Eritrean people have fought for more than half a century. Today, too, it is impossible for us to defeat the dictatorship and get rid our people of without the effective role of Eritrean mothers.

These three organizations opened an hour before their unification and founding congress in a place not far from where we are now. After prolonged deliberations and joint action for quite some time and taking into account the country's internal situation, which is worsening every day, everyone has come to the conclusion that facing the dangers that threaten Eritrea and the continuity of its existence through the unity and the formation of a single organization.

Taking lesson from the previous experiences of the Eritrean opposition, the unity of our three current organizations does not depend on quotas and proportional representation of each party. Not only that, but after the dissolution of the three parties their own organizations, felt that there is no use in the establishment of political parties with ideological reference, for people live far from their homeland in diaspora.

Consequently, everyone agreed on the need to create an organisational framework within which all political spectrums embrace a wide-ranging national base and leave the issue of establishing political parties until after the overthrow of the regime in Eritrea.

Before concluding my message of solidarity, I would like to emphasise, on behalf of the three organisations, that we support the sincere hard work of the Eritrean Mothers Initiative to unite the Eritrean opposition and at the same time look forward to see their good offices to achieve the desired objectives. From our part, we will spare no effort to make this important initiative a success.

Despite our firm desire to participate, as I have pointed out, being involved in the sessions of our congress, we will not be able to attend tomorrow and after tomorrow's sessions for this important event, which makes me apologise for that absence.

Success for the Eritrean Mothers Initiative!

Victory for our struggle for democratic change!

Defeat the tyrannical regime in our country!

September the 1st the National Pride Day



Today, we celebrate the 58th anniversary of the start of our armed revolution. When the Eritrean people realized that the international community was not paying any attention to their aspirations for independence and deafening their ears without hearing their legitimate demands for self determination, on Sep-

tember 1, 1961, they declared their armed revolt led by hero martyr Hamid Idris Awate.

Because the Eritreans with their various components were with the demands of the revolution, they rallied around it and made great sacrifices in a tenacious struggle that lasted for thirty years at the end of which the country gained its independence on the 24th of May 1991.

It is true that the PFDJ regime did not live up to the aspirations of the people and did not move towards building a state of democratic institutions that guarantee the participation of all citizens in the stage of the country's reconstruction. By adopting dangerous policies PFDJ jeopardizes Eritrea and pushes young people and talents to migrate and displace in a way that endangers the lives of many.

Faced with the intransigence of the PFDJ regime and its determina-

Faced with the intransigence of the PFDJ regime and its determination to move in the wrong direction, the Eritrean people have chosen to confront it in a visible way. In the Diaspora, the refusal finally has reached its limit, as large sections of Eritreans gathered around the initiative, known as “Yakil”, which bothered the regime’s cadres and ministers to the point where their fear and anxiety began to appear in the media. We at the Unity for Democratic Change (UDC) are pleased that the 58th anniversary of the Eritrean Armed Struggle coincides with the conclusion of our Founding Congress, which emerged from the unity of three Eritrean democratic forces, the Democratic Movement for Justice, the National Forum for Dialogue and the Eritrean Democratic People’s Party. As the principles of the September Revolution and our armed struggle were, our priority interim goals are the removal of the tyrannical regime and the establishment of a constitutional system that inspires the Eritrean people and achieves equality and justice on the basis of citizenship.

Long live the Anniversary of the Eritrean Armed struggle! The fall of the authoritarian regime in Asmara!

Unity for Democratic Change (UDC)

September 1, 2019



UDC STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF 18 SEPTEMBER

WESHALL NEVER FORGET YOU



On this day, the 18th of September, it has been exactly 18 years since the leaders of the reform movement, who are generally known as the G15 and dozens of journalists have been arrested, the political process was halted and the entire independent media was shut down. Not only the G15 movement leaders and the journalists were arrested but to this date, they have

neither been charged nor brought to court. During the 18 years, while many are believed to have died in prison, those who may be still be alive, are believed to be in dire conditions and remain incommunicado to this date. There are denied even the most basic rights of family visits.

We in the organisation of the Unity for Democratic Change (UDC) remain deeply concerned about the fate of these prisoners and many others who have been arrested before and after 18 September 2001 and the Eritrean government's continued violation of its human rights obligations under international law to which it is signatory.

While it known that there have never been any charges against the G15 prisoners or any other political prisoners for that matter, one thing that was constantly been repeated by a number of high ranking government officials is that they were arrested and detained on grounds of national security and in particular, in relation to the conflict with neighbouring Ethiopia.

While we do not believe that this in itself does not justify the manner in which they were arrested or denying them of their basic rights to defend themselves in a court of law, the recent peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia more than a year ago must have been enough of a reason to bring this continued and unlawful imprisonment of Eritrean citizens to an end.

We in the organisation of the Unity for Democratic Change strongly believe that the issue of political prisoners is a very serious issue that primarily emanates from the lack of the rule of law in our country which in turn is the root cause of all sorts of gross human rights violations that characterised the post-independence Eritrea for the past three decades.

On this occasion, we in the organisation of Unity for Democratic Change (UDC):

- Express our utmost solidarity with all Eritrean political prisoners, prisoners of conscience as well as their families;
- Call for the immediate disclosure of the whereabouts of all political prisoners in Eritrea;
- Take the necessary steps to release all prisoners of conscience and bring the state of the lawlessness to an immediate end;
- Call on the international community and particularly the UN and international human rights bodies to put pressure on the Eritrean government to respect its obligations under international law and disclose the whereabouts of those who have disappeared, release or bring all political prisoners to a court of law

As an organisation whose primary objective is to bring about democracy and the rule of law in Eritrea, we will not leave any stone unturned until the objectives of the Eritrean people are fully achieved.

Victory to the Eritrean people

UDC Executive Committee

Wednesday 18 September 2019

Reportage about the UDC Founding Congress

From 23 to 25 August 2019, the city of Frankfurt- Germany, hosted the Founding Congress of the Unity for Democratic Change “UDC”. Yes, UDC was the result of more than a year of long-running dialogues among three Eritrean parties in the opposition arena, which are struggling for a national goal of ending authoritarianism and establishing an alternative constitutional government on the basis of multi-party system and in light of free elections in which the Eritrean people are engaged as they are the first stakeholders and beneficiaries in bringing about the desired democratic change.

As a result of ongoing and meaningful dialogues, the Eritrean People's



Democratic Party, the Eritrean Movement of Justice and the Forum of Dialogue have decided to dissolve their respective organizations and to establish a new organization with the participation of their members individually. The affiliation of the nascent organization was determined to be based on the members' choice of the agreed principles, which were simply as the following: I. working to put an end to the existing dictatorship; 2. Cooperating, in the transitional phase, together with other forces of change, to lay the prerequisite political foundations upon which Eritrea will be a multi-party place

in the post-transitional period; 3. In the final stage, after paving the required structures for the political exercise, the Eritrean parties can act and participate in free elections with close participation and active control of the people at home.



Therefore, as the discussions of the three parties started earlier and were continued in the congress hall during the three days of its sessions, the only priority for the participants was to change the abnormal situation that exists in the country. And for that reason was acceptable to postpone the issue of forming ideological or partisan organizations for the post transition



organizations to the post-transition period, at which point the UDC members can, if they wish, become a well-defined political party or begin to establish their own political forms.

The documents presented for discussion and approval, such as the Road Map, the political program and other internal regulations, were all in line

with the new struggle framework chosen by the three unified organisations to walk through it to reach the stage that political exercise with the participation of all the colours of the Eritrean political spectrum is allowed after the demise of PFDJ regime.

Considering the papers mentioned and following up the discussions during the three days of the congress, it is clear, on the one hand, that the new-born organization has left its door open to join every Eritrean whose convictions are consistent with the political vision adopted by it. On the other hand, as a result of the outcomes of its members' deliberations, that UDC has pledged to work with all national forces in terms of coordination, unity and integration of those who hold the same political vision that accommodates all citizens on the basis of citizenship.



Opening session on Friday 23 August 2019 The members of the congress arrived at the conference hall at 7 pm and after the registration process and the verification of attendance and the quorum, the opening day of the meeting was devoted to acquaintance between the members coming from Europe and America, where many of them met each other face to face for the first time. Other members from the Middle East, Australia and the USA also participated via Skype and Zoom communication. Truly, the opening ceremony was an intimate evening that paved the way for the next two days.

Saturday, August 24, 2019 As the second day's sessions were long and full of thoughtful debates, the deliberations lasted for more than 12 hours. The following three people were elected as members of the Secretariat:

1. Berih Melake;
2. Suleiman Hussein
3. Hamid Drar.

Following the adoption of the rules governing the conduct of the meetings the participants engaged in the discussion of the papers submitted by the Preparatory Committee, which had been distributed in advance to the members few months ago to aiming at they go through all the documents and prepare for the congress. As noted above, the most important papers were: (A) By-laws and other internal rules of UCD; (B) The Road Map; (C) The political program.

With regard to the name of the nascent organization and after deep discussions of the connotations of that name and in line with the vision centred around the three short-term objectives mentioned above, as evidenced by the totality of deliberations, the congress preferred to move away, at this stage, which requires the need for a rally inclusive embrace all those who seek for the change in Eritrea.

As a result, everyone preferred to stay away from adopting partisan or organizational titles that created only to attract members of a specific political or ideological orientation. The priority does not reflect the interim and immediate priorities of getting rid of the tyrannical regime in the country. Hence, the UDC was selected from eight names proposed for the new organization. Accordingly, by discussing the three papers above and making the necessary amendments and additions, the sessions of the second day ended.

Sunday 25 August 2019 The participants continued to discuss the different topics in the agenda for the third day. Amongst those issues were: (A) The internal situation of Eritrea; B. Regional and neighbouring countries developments; C - The international situation and its impact on the Eritrea. On the internal situation, the discussions centred on two main aspects. The first one was the situation inside the country and the agony of the people. The second aspect dealt and discussed the opposition camp and the challenges that hindered it yet from eradicating the dictator at home.

In their discussions, the participants assessed that the situation of the regime is poor by all standards, but that this does not mean that it suffers from the weakness that prevents the continuation of its oppression. Deliberations on the opposition camp have also taken place in the context of the ineffectiveness of the methods used by the opposition factions to bring about democratic change, which was characterized by narrow organizational thinking and the aspiration to the conflict of power prematurely. All participants have stressed the need to get rid of the old tools by adopting policies that put the highest priority to postpone the power struggle to a stage where the Eritrean people are able to choose in the light of free and fair elections and atmosphere of stability.

The presence of many veteran activists in the congress, including the two great activists Mohammad Brhan Blata and Mesfin Hagos, gave the readings related to the above three topics and other issues to which the participants were exposed more deeply. Both activists have analysed the objective regional and international developments in a way that helped the members to extrapolate the future and define its features to avoid the difficulties facing the opposition in light of the intertwined and conflicting interests of regional and international powers.

As a result, Mr Mesfin Hagos and Mr M. Brhan Blata recommended that the participants to avoid rushing in adopting final immature readings to understand the paths of international relations as a reflection of the state of engagement in the interests of more than one party towards our region. At the end of the discus-



sions, the new leadership was urged to work in more than one angle to build bridges of communication with all to accelerate change in Eritrea.

On the other hand, the conference stopped at length on the suffering of Eritreans in refugee camps in neighbouring countries and the tragedy experienced by young Eritrean fugitives from the regime in Eritrea. The congress urged the leadership to give the suffering of the refugees the utmost importance and intensify communication with international organizations working in that field to help those refugees and alleviate

their agony.

Within the resolutions and recommendations adopted by today's Congress, UDC affirmed that it is ready to work and coordinate until unity with all Eritrean opposition organisations active in the arena in order to strengthen work with everyone without exception and for the interest of Eritrea and the unity of its territory and people. The Congress called on the elected leadership to do everything necessary to implement the resolutions in various fields on the ground. With the adoption of political resolutions, issuing the final statement and electing of 21 members of UDC Legislative Council, (which will be going to elect the Executive Body composes of 7 members), the congress concluded its sessions in the early hours of Monday 26 August 2019.

Members of the elected legislative leadership are the following:

1. Freweini Ghebretsadik;
2. Mesfin Hagos;
3. Hamid Drar;
4. Mohammed Brhan Blalat;
5. Suleiman Hussein;
6. Tsighehannes Kidane;

7. Alem Yohannes;
8. Gallaway Saeed;
9. Yasin Ibrahim;
10. Tesfamichael Yohannes;



11. Saba Fsehaye;
12. Brhane Ghebrekrstos;
13. Antonio Tesfai;
14. Taklesenbet Teklai;
15. Dr. Asefaw Tekeste;
16. Efrem Taffere;
17. Suleiman Sediq;
18. Kbrom Grenet;
19. Desbele Ghebrehiwet;
20. Hanetse Kahsai;

21. Dr. Bahlbi.

The following are the reserve members:

22. Ahmed al-Kaisi;
23. Menghisteab Gobezei;
24. Woldu Neghasi;
25. Medhanie Andehaimanot.

UDC Department of Information

26 August 2019





Press Statement

Today, Saturday 14 September 2018, the Central Council (CC), the legislative body of the Organisation of the Unity for Democratic Change (UDC), composed of 21 members and 4 reserves, that was elected during the founding congress held between the 23rd and 25th August in Frankfurt, concluded the second session of its first regular meeting.

The first session that was held on the 8th of September 2019, was adjourned after the CC had elected Mr. Hamid Drar as its Speaker and Mr. Tesfamichael Yohannes as the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

During the session held today, the CC continued its deliberations on the agenda items left from its previous session. Among these were the election of the remaining six members of the Executive Committee, the organisation's general Auditor and other organisational matters.

List of elected members:

The Speaker of the UDC Central Council;

Mr. Hamid Drar

The UDC Executive Committee:

Mr. Tesfamichael Youhannes: Chairman
Mr. Suleiman Hussein: Foreign & Public Relation
Mr. Kebrom Ghrenet: Secretary
Mr. Gallaway Saeed: Political & Organisational Affairs
Mr. Antonio Tesfay: Information & Mobilisation
Mr. Alem Yohannes: Economic Affairs
Mrs Saba Fessehaye: Social Affairs

General auditor: Mrs Bizu Butignoli

Victory to the Eritrean People

14 September 2019



UDC NEWS

24 August 2019

Following the successful founding congress held at the end of last month and the first ordinary meeting of the central council held earlier this month, the UDC Executive Committee held its first ordinary meeting on 22 September 2019.

During the meeting which lasted nearly three hours, members of the executive committee discussed a number of issues such as the Executive Committee's internal structure, the finalisation of the organisational structure in accordance to the bylaws ratified during the founding congress, membership affairs, the budget, building working relations with sister organisations etc.

To this effect, members of the Executive Committee agreed on a number of steps to be taken during the coming weeks and months in order for the UDC to strengthen its internal structure.

make use of the available resources within the organisation.

The Executive committee will hold its next meeting on 05 October 2019 to discuss detailed work plans expected to be presented by its chairman as well as heads of the various offices.

UDC DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION