



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 YiAkl and call on the Eritrean people to abort all attempts of sowing 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