

**The Official Organ of The
Eritrean Democratic Alliance**



DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

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CONTENTS

PAGE

- **ESSAY** 1-6
The Plight of Eritrean Refugees in the Diaspora and
The Fate of Deported and Repatriated Refugees
- **COMMENTARY** 7-9
Politics and Polemics: The Impotence of Blame-Game
- **NEWS BRIEFS** 10-12
 - State of Eritrean Refugees in Libya and Italy
 - State Vs Church Conflict
 - Extensive Abduction in Eritrea: Amnesty Int'l.
Expresses Grave Concern
 - PFDJ Shuts Down USIDA Office in Asmara
- **BROTHER SEYOUM O/MICHAEL PASSED AWAY** 13-14
The Opposition loses a Committed Patriot: Obituary and
Message of Condolence
- **EPILOGUE** 15-16
The Capsizing Flagship

ESSAY

THE PLIGHT OF ERITREANS IN THE DIASPORA AND THE FATE OF DEPORTED AND REPATRIATED REFUGEES

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English Desk**

PART TWO

This article, part two, is a continuation of part one under the same title captioned above. It attempts at portraying an expose of:

- The plight of voluntary returnees from the Sudan,
- The predicament of forced deportees from the island of Malta and Libya
- The meaning and applicability of the motto “There is no place like home” to the Eritrean voluntary returnee or forced deportee, and
- The position of UNHCR and PFDJ as regards returnees or deportees.

2.1. The plight of voluntary returnees from the Sudan, Malta and Libya

2.1.1. The Sudan:- Upon agreement reached between the UNHCR, the government of the Sudan and Eritrea about 5,000 citizens were made to voluntarily return to their country. The huge finance allocated by UNHCR for settling the returnees was embezzled by the irresponsible PFDJ regime. Tents erected for the purpose were overcrowded and filthy. Provision of food and water was kept to the minimum. Blankets or bed sheets were not made available to them. Many were exposed to cholera, dysentery and other infectious diseases as a consequence with some dying and others on the verge of death.

No rehabilitation programs were designed in light of encouraging returnees to support themselves in the process of their resettlement. Appallingly, the security men of the ruthless system began in earnest, handpicking many of the returnees. Their whereabouts has not yet been traced. Though no charges of crime were filed “to incriminate” the victims, it is widely believed that the regime is vying to incriminate those individuals or groups which it accuse of “accomplices or informers of the opposition forces” or “collaborators with foreign agents”.

The UNHCR is more than aware of those harsh realities. Nevertheless, it has in no time ventured to condemn the brutalities of the dictatorial system. Rather than improvising the conduct and manners of dispensing its humanitarian provisions in settlement camps pursuant to its international obligations, it heavily relies on

forged financial statements and on falsified reports submitted to it by the anti-human system.

The passive mood of the Organization in dealing with the cruel treatment of returnees has encouraged the system to “settle scores” against those whom it alleges “enemies” by employing sadistic inflictions to innocent citizens and with absolute impunity. The world at large is however green on the matter in as far as the plight of Eritrean returnees is concerned. A “U-turn” is eagerly awaited from the Commission to boldly voice out present returnee conditions in Eritrea to the world community. The Eritrean people deserve justice and fair treatment. The Commission has to rally itself with the disgruntled, impoverished and maltreated returnees and not with the oppressive regime.

2.1.2. **Malta**:- Fifty to sixty Eritreans on their voyage to seek asylum in European countries had to embark on the island of Malta, a gate way to their respective destinies. Against the persistent advise of some Maltese well-versed in the appalling social and political conditions in Eritrea, government officials were too adamant to receive their pledges. The UNHCR, rather than consulting with such celebrities to convince the government until such time the refugees decide on their destinies, it collaborated with the government in stating “Eritrea is an independent and a peaceful state. There is no ground for these people to grant them asylum or refugee status”. And were thus forcibly deported. Upon their arrival in Eritrea, the wretched returnees were immediately loaded on to heavily guarded military vehicles and driven away to unknown location far away from Asmara, the capital. Parents, families, relatives or friends have so far not been able to trace the whereabouts of the returnees. The regime has kept the location of its victims secret. Neither has it announced the reasons for their detention nor about their conditions or the treatment they receive.

As indicated above in the case of returnees from the Sudan, the predicament of these latter returnees could be more brutal. Though the former voluntary returnee and the latter forcibly repatriated, one could not draw a line that would determine a parameter differentiating the degree and extent of the mechanism and tools of torture used to cajole and dehumanize each respective case of returnees. A citizen who has left the country is meant to be “an enemy of the regime”, whether or not he returns on his own accord or repatriated by force against his will. Both cases are maltreated indiscriminately.

The tyrannical system has kept its lips tight from informing the Eritrean public as to the location and condition of repatriated citizens from the island of Malta for the same reasons mentioned above. Obviously, by now the secret service could have completed its devious assignment of dehumanizing, torturing, disfiguring and mutilating its victims, possibly with some dying of their wounds. More disgusting, remnants of the victims will not be allowed medication. They are left to die the hard way. Even if they were to be able to survive by the skin of their teeth, they will remain locked in their cells. They will not see day light again lest they expose the barbaric criminal acts of the regime.

2.2. "There Is No Place Like Home" A Controversial Motto Embraced By UNHCR

In yearly conferences convened in ECA to mark June 20, Refugee Day, delegates from UNHCR and their counterparts from AU make key note addresses to commemorate the pledges enshrined in their respective charters. Heads of state and governments from Africa attend the conferences. The rest of the countries are represented by their respective embassies and senior ministers. President Isayas has not participated in the previous two successive conferences.

The virtues of freedom, peace, justice, equality and democracy are highlighted by a delegate after delegate. As if democracy and genuine government were being widely practiced in the continent, the response from all attending the conference to the speeches so made culminate in an outstanding ovation. The mood of participants is elated. Other delegates who address the conferences emphatically under score that Africa is heavily burdened by an overflow of refugees migrating from within the continent. They reason out that the influx of refugees is a result of internal conflicts, lack of trustworthy governance, denial of freedom, equality, justice and democracy of citizens under oppressive systems.

High ranking officials from UNHCR and AU responsible for refugees reiterate that some African states have started striving for democracy with marked impact on the decrease in the number of their peoples who would have otherwise migrated to other countries. We are of the opinion that their contentions do not extend beyond wishful thinking. It would have been worthwhile and more credible had the officials been bold enough to mention those states who had and had not as yet embarked on democracy and good and legitimate governance.

It is highly impossible to conceive that Commissioners of both the UN and AU are not apprehensive or cognizant of gross human rights abuses in Eritrea. In all the conferences that have so far been conducted, their speeches, though short of mentioning of dictatorial systems, have been explicit in cautiously and tacitly referring to regimes like Isayas' one-man dictatorial systems. Nonetheless, their timid position on such critical issues is perceived by many as a "blessing in disguise" to many tyrannical leaders.

Whatever, the substance and tones of their speeches, the saying, "there is no place like home" which both Commissions have embraced as a motto or a rallying cry in their efforts to contain and manage the influx and predicament of refugees has not as yet proven practical especially in Eritrea, an Eritrea condemned by the region and the world community for its inconceivable records on humanity.

Even to the citizens living in Eritrea, the inspiring motto "There is no place like home: is a far-fetched dream, let alone to the disenchanting and bewildering returnee. The anti-human system has fully endorsed the ruinous, anti-peace, anti-democratic, anti-freedom and anti-development legacies of the former colonial

regime, the outlawed police-state, the Dergue, now dismantled from power. Eritrea is an inferno where its peoples are in constant fear, intimidation, humiliation, mutilation and death. In actual fact, all Eritreans living in the country are captives of the totalitarian state. Eritrea is virtually becoming an inhabitable state, like the once Somalia.

In a police state where social mobility including labor is severely restricted, military regimentation is scrupulously implemented, educations and training of youth abandoned in favor of military service; - - - and where arbitrary abduction, detention has evolved into an institutional norm; freedom, justice, equality and all forms of human rights are grossly uprooted, no Eritrean national could ever think of the significance of the motto, “there is no place like home”. Neither timely nor conditionally is the motto applicable to the current Eritrean situation. As described afore, the root causes for migration are the appalling social, economic and political conditions in the country. The threat of war and news of war which the bloodshedding system propagates add more coal to the fire haunting and shivering not only the Eritrean people but also those in the region. War is frightening, destabilizing, destructive, life threatening, impoverishing, maiming and a killer. The Eritrean people have throughout their 30 years of bloody war for independence paid enormous sacrifices. Upon achieving independence their aspirations to democracy, freedom and justice, are to the contrary violently being oppressed and there seems no end to it. Bloodshed of another sort, this time by an indigenous dictatorial regime: horror, annihilation, torture and killing is being fomented. These barbaric acts of terrorism are not of course confined against ordinary citizens in Eritrea. Voluntary returnees and forced deportees share the same predicament of the systems vice and brutality. Could “there is no place like home” bear any significance to an “inhabitable place like in Eritrea”? The UNHCR and AU need an urgent AFTER-THOUGHT and CHANGE OF HEART!

2.3. UNHCR’s blind eye on the PFDJ system

President Isayas and his entourage in the leadership “do not abuse power,” since they possess no power founded on constitutionality from which they could claim legitimacy of power. Even if “abuse of power” were to be exercised, it assumes the existence of legality or constitutionality in place. It is only then that one could accuse or blame leaders for “abusing power”. And as such there is no legal or constitutional framework for one to claim that the leadership of the dictatorial system is “abusing power”. It possesses an absolute power devoid of “abuse of power”.

“Abuse of power” could be challenged, resolved, monitored and controlled through due process of law where a democratic constitution and fair governance is practiced. In states like Eritrea, where absolute power prevails by the might of the gun, talking about “abuse of power” is either an expression of denial of truth or sheer ignorance, or utter absence of human conscience in ones ego.

President Isayas’ one-man oppressive system, has been and remains ruling by ever changing “laws and decrees” meticulously tailored to suit its sinister motives.

“Spontaneity” is a strategy the system adopts to guarantee its absolute power. “Directives”, rules and “regulations” are consistently formulated and flawlessly but recklessly improvised and implemented to warrant its ruinous designs. Lamentably, laws, decrees, directives, rules or regulations formulated by the system are all geared against peace, stability, justice, equality, freedom and human rights, manifestation of undemocratic system and hence credible evidences of irresponsible governance.

As stated above, the war-mongering system is bent on terrorizing the Eritrean people and has for a long period of time been condemned by international human rights organizations and the international community at large. Influential mass media organizations have relentlessly, been reporting on the repugnant anti-human records of the tyrannical system. Contrary to these concrete evidences that justify the anti-human and anti-democratic crimes of the belligerent system however, the UNHCR has resorted to indifference or passivity rather than condemning the system.

There could be no convincing reason whatever, to believe that the commission is not more than aware of the over-all plight of the Eritrean people in general and that of the refugees who had either been voluntarily repatriated or who had been forcibly deported in particular. As a UN organization responsible for the voluntary repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees, it has failed to accomplish its humanitarian obligations as regards the fate of Eritrean refugees. It has not only

abandoned the refugees, but also its responsibilities in relinquishing its mission albeit the hope cherished by all refugees the world over. The two incidents pertaining to the plight of Eritrean refugees in Malta and the Sudan mentioned above, attest to the negligence or inadequacy of the UNHCR in its total failure in managing those crisis.

It could as well be assumed that the UNHCR considers that Eritreans who seek refuge in other countries as “apt for economic benefits” or as “vying for employment”. If that were the contention of the Commission, it would only mean that the esteemed international organization is totally blind on the issue in question which is hard to believe. That belief could have been perceived as trust worthy had the exodus of migrants taken place in a stable, peaceful and development-striving Eritrea.

It is very true that soon after independence, thousands of Eritreans from various corners of the world, were beginning to return to Eritrea to contribute their share in the nation-building of their war-ravaged country. All were eager to provide financial, material and expertise support to that effect. Many hundreds of them deposited large amounts of foreign currencies eager to invest in manufacturing construction, agriculture and other projects they deemed necessary to alleviate the socioeconomic backwardness of the country, but it was short-lived. In effect such

compatriots were harassed, accused and detained as “accomplices” “conspirators”, “informers” - - - etc. During their stay in the country, they were under constant surveillance by the moles of the system. Frustrated by these harsh measures they went back to their host countries. Since conditions in Eritrea are progressing from bad to worse, few of them have shown the eagerness to come again. Those who would venture to take any risk upon coming to the country are children below the ages of ten, or adults above 50. Any Eritrean between the age brackets 18-45 years, is by law of the regime obliged to undergo military training ranging from 3-6 months and an indefinite number of years of compulsory military service.

While the reality on the ground, i.e. refugees versus the rogue regime is more than horrendous and repugnant which is consistently being reported and commented on the media the world over, to the dismay and frustration of all Eritreans in general and those in the Diaspora in particular, UNHCR remains tight-lipped concerning the brutalities of the tyrannical system. For how long will the UNHCR consider the menacing system as angelic or Devine Samaritan!

COMMENTARY

POLITICS AND POLEMICS

The Impotence of Blame-Game

Many of the Eritrean nationalist parties have for the last ten years or so been, in most instances engaged at incriminating each other. All sorts of war of words have perpetrated suspicion, rancor and feuds in the interplay of these alleged accusations in an already fragile relation between the parties.

Acute shortage of diligence abound and with a passive committal to national issues with the perspective of "national unity of opposition forces", they lavishly spend their time in responding "tit for tat" as a small child would dare slap the face of his peer in an automatic reflex, an emotions-driven conflict. Infants however are in a better position to forgive and forget-soon after their quarrels, you see them playing together as usual. With the national parties it is true to the contrary. Rather than scrutinizing their differences diligently and responsibly as would be expected of them, they dwell on at length, and for years for that matter, on vigorous allegation geared towards character assassination.

Their indulgence in such benign accusations and counter accusations demonstrates their impotence to deal with critical issues prevailing in Eritrea. In most cases they seem to ignore their fundamental reasons of their establishment as opposition forces to the dictatorial system. One could therefore fairly say that intra-party relations are infested

with grudges and "revenge" worth settling their accounts against the other, with the dictatorial system in the periphery or background sidelined as an issue of less significance.

What frustrates more is the fact that they exchange their blame game via internet and in a sequence which all the more discourage their website visitor from reading their consistent ill-fated message. "Sacrificing of political desires for the common good of all" is absolutely non-existent to say the least, clear evidence witnessing that a broad political vision with defined strategies to dismantle the dictatorial system is not as yet insight. It is widely believed that "lust for power" even at grass-root levels of party formation dominates any agenda of national importance. Amalgamation or formation of coalition parties is thus scaring for some party leaders, lest they lose top executive positions in the hierarchy of the structure of leadership.

In the interplay between such events, there come the interventionists, usually individual affiliates with either one of the parties. Rather than squarely and fairly scrutinizing and analyzing the contentious issues of conflicts between the parties, their judgment is pre-determined, they cast their lot along their party in which they are members or supporters.

Bias or prejudice so relayed via internet or other literature by individuals without any regard to spot and articulate facts or motives behind issues of conflict is not only erroneous but unsubstantiated, unqualified and therefore without any contribution to narrow down the gap that impels either of the parties to resolve the root causes of their conflicts. Any citizen committed to Eritrean national politics should Judge the merit or weakness of any party from the point of view of its political charters and the strategies it has set up and the tactics it deploys in the struggle which is going on to crush the dictatorial system. Lack of clarity of guiding principals, indifference to detrimental national issue; double standards in the process of struggle; disregard to universal consensus adopted by the majority of parties are for example some of the key points website visitors have to dwell on when criticizing or commenting the positions of the various nationalist parties. An attempt at striking the balance between two extreme ends, contradictions and controversies is worthy of inviting the right decision in expressing one's opinion, criticism or comment before aligning one self arbitrarily devoid of truth and objective reality. Undue sentiments and emotions could in no way serve to promote mutual respect and understanding between and among divergent parties.

Such an undertaking pre-supposes immunity from bias or prejudice. A blind fore-gone conclusion supporting or opposing this or that party would never-ever be of any significance in ameliorating or upgrading the already evolving serious conflicts between Eritrean national parties.

There are also the haunting verbal skirmishes among parties within themselves. These sad incidents take place as soon they split into contending factions. After having been secretive in their internal affairs for many years, each faction starts at sniffing "mistakes" or "pitfalls" of the other. They get absorbed by "blame-game" on who was the villain that caused the split. They spill off on the beans that had once been considered sacrosanct in their disciplinary directives and often times strictly adhered to.

War of nerves continues to overwhelm political personalities as regards the charters and the programs other parties have pledged to perform. In the exchange of their “blame game” they become so preoccupied with it to the extent of ignoring or forgetting the fundamental objectives for which their respective parties had been organized. President Issays’ dictatorial system is side-lined because of such semantic for months on end, until another cycle of “burying the hatchet” is agreed upon for a while but in reality a make shift tempo to brood over listing additional accusations not mentioned during previous confrontations; a chronic sickness for which remedy has not as yet been found. We are well aware that freedom of expression is one of the virtues of democracy, and we appreciate that this virtue in combination with other human rights are fully voiced out by all citizens. But freedom of expression of thought, print or electronic, should not connote “freedom of blame-game”. Comments, criticisms, views and opinions could strictly adhere to precise, realistic, justified and substantiated premises without regard to being a member or a supporter of any party. Any criticism, comment, view or opinion in search of truth is commendable since it features some of the essentials of democracy. If such contentions are taken for granted, those parties for whom comments, criticisms are addressed to could find it appropriate to appraise and appreciate their pitfalls in realistic and constructive terms. That could encourage them correct and ameliorate their approaches and strategies in the struggle being waged to hasten the downfall of the tyrannical system.

Democracy pre-supposes open dialogue founded on crystal clear objectives, in this case the objectives and ultimate goal of emancipating the Eritrean people from the yokes of the one-man dictatorial system. That is the only and only agenda second to none every and each party should commit itself . Any breach of that detrimental agenda could not whatsoever be pertinent to politics but would only be confined to polemics and semantics or flagrant blame-game for that matter.

Objectivity, rationale, substantiation, qualification and quantification of prevailing realities should prelude any debate with open mindedness to avoid controversies or contradictions in dealing with hectic issues. Diversity, modesty and transparency should be exercised to guarantee that the issue in question is treated diligently and genuinely at least to the satisfaction of the majority of participating parties. Anything less would only perpetrate the blame-game cycle that has proven over the years the impotence of the parties who claim themselves “democratic”!

We wish all the Eritrean People:

Merry Christmas
And



Happy New Year!

Department of Information (EDA)

NEWS BRIEFS

State of Eritrean Refugees in Libya and Italy

Libya

Sources from Libya disclosed that among the Eritrean refugees in that country, more than 200 youth are bound to be deported by forceful means. Apart from being too scared lest they return to Eritrea, they are facing harsh conditions in their prison cells.

Upon receiving the disgusting news of the plight of the Eritrean refugees in that country, Eritrean and other International human rights organizations have called upon the world community for support to avert their precarious situation.

It is to be recalled that Eritreans seeking asylum on their voyage to Europe were intercepted in Libya. They were forced on board a Libyan military plane for deportation to their county of origin. However, by hijacking the plane to land in the Sudan, they were able to save themselves from the scourges of the dictatorial system in Asmara.

The Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA) takes this incidental opportunity to appeal to all Eritreans to contribute their share in the efforts being made to resolve the plight of the refugees.

Italy

On 4 August 2004 sources from Italy have unfolded the news that a vessel with 130 women and children on board; most of whom believed to be Eritreans, has been lost in an area around the gulf of Sicily. Relentless search is being made to track down the whereabouts of the vessel.

The news of the incidence was made public after a passenger on board the vessel requested support from his relatives in Italy by satellite telephone.

The same sources in their news reports added that the passengers are exposed to dangerous conditions as a consequence of bad weather and turbulent waves. For the same reason, the dispatch dissolved, board guards of Sicily have abandoned searching for the

vessel. However, endeavors are being made by air planes and helicopter to salvage the lives of the passengers.

In a related news dispatched by “Harrrenet” a few days after that incidence, about 24 people out of the 130 were saved from drowning.

State vs Church conflict

Reports have disclosed that unabated tension has ensued within the Orthodox Church establishment. Following the instruction by the PFDJ regime ordering the demotion of Pope Antonios, Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church from his position.

According to the source, the PFDJ system has appointed Yoftahe Dimetros as patriarch of the church, replacing the former. The indulgence of the system in the internal affairs of the church is politically motivated, and as such it has taken that measure to force the church to succumb to its jurisdiction.

To that end, the appointed patriarch, as soon as he took over his new position, made himself busy trying to collect signature of popes in a petition incriminating the former pope of various crimes. Nevertheless, followers of the faith close to the establishment in their dispatch to “Asmarino” said, they have witnessed that the new incumbent’s endeavors to that effect were rendered useless, since the majority of the clergy is the Church structure did not agree to his sinister intentions.

Meanwhile, Pope Anatonios is being kept in solitary confinement and is strictly prohibited from meetings or conversing with anyone else including visitors.

Extensive Abduction Going-on in Eritrea Amnesty International Expresses Grave concern

The Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA) has strongly condemned the extensive abduction and imprisonment which has been under taken by the rogue regime since 15 Hamle 2005, of parents and relatives of youth accused of evading or escaping from military conscription.

Quoting an announcement made public 25 July 2005, by Amnesty International, EDA has come to confirm that detained members of parents and relatives of the youth are exposed to unbearable hardships, and are denied access to visitors. Scared lest they be tortured, some of the detainees have opted for hunger strike. The detainees are agonizing in prison cells at Addi Keih and other locations. Those who have gone on hunger strike in that town have been transferred to a prison in Maiseraw. Gravely concerned of the anti-human measures taken by the regime in Asmara, Amnesty International has submitted an application to president Issayas , Fozia Hashim (Minister of Justice), and Brigadier General Abraham Andom , appealing to tell concerned to do the same.

PFDJ to shut down USIDA office in Asmara

The PEDJ regime has ordered the United States International Development Agency to close off its office in Asmara and leave the county. According to information received from "AWATE", the regime has so far not made any official announcement concerning the measure it has taken, but the international agency is knowledgeable of the decision of the regime.

USIDA has been operating in Eritrea since 1992. Operating as a humanitarian and developmental agency, it also serves as one of the major component parts of the UN. It provides its humanitarian and developmental support through World Food Program and has been supervising such provisions during rehabilitative programs immediately after the independence of Eritrea.

The regime in Eritrea has been and is still imposing harsh rules and regulations on NGO's operating in the country. As of recent months it has started disseminating incriminating propaganda to discredit NGO's roles in the rehabilitative and developmental schemes being implemented in the country. Beginning 1.1 May, the regime has proclaimed that NGO's have the obligation to pay taxes and levies and to deposit undefined amount of money in Eritrean banks as a collateral to warrant their presence. USIDA is an NGO that has extensively been providing food aid, supporting in the construction of the health delivery system and in the prevention of communicable diseases.

A cross-section of the Eritrean population is currently suffering from extended famine. The regime's decision to shut down USDIA's office at this point in time demonstrates disregard and rejection of the plight of the people on the hand; and its devious designs to enslave the subjugated people by shutting down NGO's and expelling their officials out of the country who would have otherwise witnessed the brutalities of its system.

"If the Rubicon should cost the neck, be it !"

Hannibal Hamilcar

"Heroes are not borne, they make it!"

Samora Machel

BROTHER SEYOUM O/MICHAEL PASSED AWAY
THE OPPOSITION LOSES A COMMITTED PATRIOT

OBITUARY AND MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE



The Late Brother Seyoum O/Michael (1946-2005)

It was with deep sorrow and traumatic shock that we in EDA have heard of the sudden death of Brother Seyoum Okbamichael. Seyoum has spent almost his entire life time in the more than 30 years of the armed struggle that had been waged to liberate Eritrea from colonial rule. After independence, he was among the rare far sighted compatriots who was soon to condemn the EPLF (PFDJ) for its claim of absolute power by the muzzle of the gun and its heinous leadership by the rule of the thumb; depriving the war ravaged country and the wretched people their aspirations to peace, justice, freedom and democracy. With that embittered bruise in mind, Seyoum detrimentally committed himself, as he did during the arduous war for independence, to struggle for the downfall of the dictatorial system with the vision of enhancing what the Eritrean people had been yearning for almost half a century. To that end, he grew struggling and died struggling. "Struggle to the bitter end!". Was his rallying cry and died with that goal oriented motto is his soul and mind.

Brother Seyoum O/Michael was born in 1946 in Hasser Yelbo, near Mendefera, Serae. He completed elementary education at Setawyan, Asmara. He continued his middle school education at the Italian Botego and at the Leul Mekonnen Secondary Schools respectively. Apart from being academically brilliant, Seyoum have had strong affection for his country deeply entrenched in his personal being and had therefore overtime internalized that passion as a driving force to liberate Eritrea from colonial subjugation. Upon deciding to actualize that lofty mission, he discontinued his secondary school education and started involving himself in political activities. He was thus, one of the first figure head pioneers among Eritrean student youths who commenced organizing underground political movements in the country. Among those who with Seyoum formed the underground political cells, to mention only a few, include Wolde Dawit Temesghen, Michael Gabir. Halle Wolde Tensae (Dirrul), Woldeyesus Amar, Mussie Tekle Michael and Tesfay Gebre Selassie.

After offering his services in various structures of the newly-founded cells, Seyoum set off to the bush and joined the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1965. ELF was gaining wide-spread popularity at the time though in its formative stages of development. There too, Seyoum was more than competent to discharge his duties with profound dedication, effectiveness and unquestionable dilligence. In full recognition of his efficiency and in appreciation of his resolute commitment in relinquishing his duties, he was together with his compatriot Wolde Dawit Temesghen given new directives and instructions aimed at structuring and systematizing work of the political organization and were thus secretly transferred back to Asmara to effectuate that decisive mission.

The new task assigned to him tough and dangerously secretive though, Seyoum who had been equipped with unflinching determination and robust energy was to prove himself yet again that he was more than able to actualize that mission as it had been expected of him. It was during those hectic days that Brothers Seyoum and Wolde Dawith were apprehended by the security forces of the enemy for their underground activities and eventually put behind bars.

Though in prison cells in Asmara and AddiQualla, Seyoum while under such an ordeal had no the slightest tendency to scale down his vigor and dynamism so as to buy favor from his reckless captors. He was as he had ever been more ardent and vigilant even under heavily guarded prisons and haunting conditions. Judging that his stout disposition, unwavering and irreversible position as regards the Eritrean cause, the authorities of the enemy concluded that he should be locked behind bars and so was he sentenced to ten years term in prison.

For Seyoum, ten years in prison was neither the end of his political struggle nor the termination of his gut and stamina. Through secretly contacting compatriot prisoners who were under the same duress, he persistently continued on implementing his tasks. He was of strong conviction that he would one day be set free from his ordeal by his invincible combatants.

His dream came true when in February 1975, two contingents of the commando forces of ELF penetrated deep into the prisons in Asmara and Adequalla simultaneously within the same hour and set the prisoners free including the indomitable Seyoum.

The infatigable Seyoum was not to resort for leisure even after his bitter experience in prison. Both his determination to continue the struggle nor his devotion to his country has diminished, and as such immediately after the convening of the 2nd conference of ELF he was assigned to the No. 10 administrative region in Akele Guzai as a political representative of the organization where he accomplished his work satisfactorily. Seyoum was well-versed in the art of politics. Soon after his assignment as a political representative in Akele Guzai, he served as chairman of the National Association of Eritrean Farmers, where as usual, he accomplished his duties flawlessly and successfully. Rightly to his credit, he earned the name "Seyoum the Farmer".

Pursuant to new political developments that ensued, and consistent with his resolute determination to struggle on, he offered his services in various responsible positions of the ELF-Revolutionary Council. From then on he has worked for ELF-RC at various levels of the structure; from head of organizational set-ups to operational systems to head of foreign affairs. From 2003 up to his sudden death he was the chairman of ELF-RC.

As head of Regional Office in particular, Seyoum was the chief architect, improviser and exponent of ELF-RC's objectives and goals. His endeavors to that end were not confined to familiarize his organization with the outside world but also was he relentlessly exposing the dictatorial system's brutalities by laying bare the appalling crimes it commits and its aggressive human rights violations against international law. As chairman of ELF-RC, Seyoum devoted most of his time and energy in ameliorating and strengthening the solidarity of his organization on the one hand and doing his level best in order for the opposition camp's voice to be heard in the international community.

In 23 November 2005, Seyoum leading a delegation of high executives of ELF-RC came to Ethiopia on mission related to organizational matters. It was during this time, in 17 December that he had a sudden heart attack and then taken to Bethzeta Hospital for medication, and it was there that he passed away.

The sudden death of Brother Seyoum is not a traumatic shock only to ELF-RC, the Eritrean Democratic Alliance or the opposition camp in general, but also to all Eritreans aspiring to see changes in the country. And as such we have received Seyoum Okbamichael's death with silent grief and deep sorrow. We take this opportunity though, to call upon all opposition forces, the oppressed people, and all Eritrean in the Diaspora to vigilantly keep in mind the long and arduous journey of struggle Seyoum has begun since his youth and to vow in unison and commit themselves to complete the ultimate goal he was not able to see during his life time – a stable, peaceful, free and democratic Eritrea.

At this juncture, we express our deep sorrow at the sudden death of brother Seyoum and hence convey this message of condolence to his family and parents.

Dignity and honor to our martyrs!

The struggle heroes have begun shall end up in victory!

Eritrean Democratic Alliance

Dept. of Information

EPILOGUE

The Capsizing Flagship

By: Sennay Habtezghi

**With wood and metal, rotting in the mast,
The flagship is drowning, at long last!
Staggering with inert pistons,
It is capsizing fast, below Plimson's!**

**It never visited the docks for repair,
The docks being idle and in utter despair!
With no spares, to replace its gadget,
And with no cash or available budget,
And engines, lacking greasing and oiling.
The flagship is failing and ailing!**

**Alerted by cracking sound,
Sea-gulls - - - hover around!**

**Also is unusually thick, the salt,
Rendering the ship, to an abrupt halt!**

**Relatively young, in its mid-teens,
It is decomposing itself, like abandoned canteens!**

**Peculiar and alien, since its birth,
It is a blood-bath, inflated with curse!
One might not appreciate the scene,
Nonetheless, it is a flagship, laden with crime and sin!**

**Frustrated and in virtual solicitude,
So far away; from longitude and latitude,
From the very people it has subjected to serfdom,
It seems to wither away albeit their freedom!
Hopefully, it may not exhale its arsenic smoke,
Lest the impoverished inhale a haunting shock!**

**Like the Nazi ship, Graft, it is vomiting tremors,
Attesting its inherent evils and terrors,
Nonetheless, reminding its captives, their bitter horrors!**

**Vanishing is the flagship, the mass killer
Like in the Hispaniola's a devilish thriller!
Capsizing whole, without any trace,
Just before liquidating the Eritrean race!**

**Earlier on, all crew obeyed to the letter,
But these days frustrated and bitter,
And with a captain so cruel and crude,
Sailors are untamed and rude,
And so leave the ship to capsize,**



As if it had not been their priceless prize!

**And with an engine failing, no thrust.
Captain is alone, with no one to trust!**

**Though “sink or swim!”, is the ship’s destiny,
Crew is indignant, resorting to mutiny!
Alone yells the captain,
And without his orders for certain,
- - - Alas!!**

**Sailors brandishing their cutlass,
Squeeze themselves into life- boats
By camouflaging their coats!**

**Obviously, the ship will sink deep,
An inevitable voyage, a deadly trip,
With remaining stooges and captain, aboard,
Head- over heels, down the dark road!**

**However, “no love lost” to say the least,
If it were to get lost, far beyond the mist!**

**Be as it may, and as always,
EDA welcomes red-coats and stow-aways!
It receives them, with pleasure,
It is committed to UNITY, an invaluable treasure!
We say, NATIONAL UNITY is our irrevocable concern,
We welcome all, for their “U-turn”!**

