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حزب النهضة الإرتري

**Eritrean Renaissance party**

## **The Eritrean Renaissance Party condemns religious interventions of Eritrean government and the blasphemous misdeed in a church**

### **Attack on an Eritrean clergyman in Israel**

In these days the Eritreans mourn the brutal attack on a deacon inside a church in Tel Aviv. We are deeply shocked and unable to understand how this violent act could happen inside a church which should be respected as a spiritual place. The Eritrean Renaissance Party condemns this savage act of inflicting harm to an innocent Eritrean deacon while praying.

Eritreans have never before experienced violence inside sacred site as a church or a mosque, for these have always been respected by all members of society regardless of their own religious convictions. This incident is a unique act of transgression and violation of the rules of decency and respect. At the same time, it raises serious questions on the state of our self-conception as Eritreans who have always upheld the values of the peaceful co-existence of different faiths and ethnic affiliations in our country. This and similar behaviours threaten our dignity as a nation and our social cohesion. And as we all know, a nation without values is unable to survive.

This incident is only one of many alarming occurrences regarding religious instrumentalisation. Religious institutions have never before in Eritrean history intervened in state affairs or aligned themselves with a brutal dictator and his government to suppress their own people. Unfortunately nowadays, there seems to be evidence that high ranking religious leaders in Eritrea conspire with the government and the chief of intelligence office. However, it should neither be the task of the mufti of Eritrea to give orders to the police to detain innocent Muslims many of whom have since then disappeared or been killed by the government. Nor is it the duty of church leaders to place a Christian bishop under house arrest

pretending to protect him – a protection he has never asked for or he is in need of. After all, these abuses are not only a matter of religion but of human rights violation.

As a party we urge all religious leaders and institutions to stop being accomplices of this regime. We ask them to live and behave according to the spirit of the Grand Mufti Sheik Ibrahim Mukhtar and his Excellency Abune Antonios. Religious leaders must be subordinates of their followers and preach peace. We, the people are the Churches and the Mosques.

Eritreans must be attentive and on alert. We should not allow anyone to betray us and our values. Isayas Afeworki is since Nihnan Elamanan in the tradition of splitting the Eritrean society along religious and regional lines. He has never stopped stirring up interreligious and intrareligious cleavages, thus creating suspicion among the different religious and ethnic entities.

The shocking incident of Tel Aviv is the immediate consequence of a perfectly designed policy of maintaining power through division and hatred. We all need to resist the temptation of referring it to any societal or religious group. The perpetrators are criminals and should be dealt with accordingly. Their action must not be connected with any ethnic background.

Committing a crime at a religious site is violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as such crime against humanity. This barbaric act should hold us tightly together. In times of sorrow and humiliation, it was exactly this solidarity between us Eritreans standing up as one irrespective of our religion, social and ethnic background which made us strong and resist our enemies. It should not be any different today. Tolerance and commitment to our country stipulate the salvage of our people's unity, our integrity and Sovereignty.

**Eritrean values are invincible**

**Victory of the Eritrean people is indispensable**

**Deacon Alazar is an Eritrean. We are all Deacon Alazar**

**Eritrean Renaissance Party**

**16 December 2019**