



Draft Resolution

Unity for Democratic Change (UDC) North America (NA) 1th Congress

28 March 2020

Via Online Video Conferencing

On the Home Country Safety from COVID-19

Deeply concerned that with the global Pandemic of COVID-19, the spread of the virus to Eritrea will lead to the loss of many Eritrean lives,

Recognizing that public goods provision in general and public health provision in particular is almost nonexistent in Eritrea under the dictatorial regime,

Further recognizing that the virus is very infectious and without the necessary protection, the Eritrean people will be exposed to this killer virus without the tools to fight back,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Calls upon all Eritreans, particularly those in the Diaspora, to stand with the Eritrean people and do what it takes to minimize the loss of Eritrean lives to COVID-19;

Further calls upon Eritrean health experts and Eritrean media organization to provide the Eritrean people with necessary information and safeguards – correct and right information is power;

Encourages the Eritrean Opposition Camp to engage in an international campaign to solicit medical and logistical supports from the international community to the Eritrean people;

Further encourages all Eritrean of different persuasions to engage in preach for unity and solidarity among the Eritrean people at this difficult time;

Urges the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant international organization to pay close attention to the situation in Eritrea and to give special considerations to the condition under which the Eritrean people is finding itself so that they can give the Eritrean people the necessary support that it deserves;

Appeals to Dr. Teodros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in his capacity as the Director General of WHO to do his best to support the Eritrean people at this difficult time.

On Safeguarding the Eritrean Common National Heritage

Understanding that the Eritrean Nation-State is a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that the Eritrean people have made in the past and those that the Eritrean people are prepared to make in the future,

Recognizing the fact that Eritrea is a plural society characterized by diverse social cleavages that go along linguistic, religious, cultural and regional/geographic divisions,

Further recognizing the fact that during the long political evolution of Eritrea as a nation-state, the diverse Eritrean social groups coalesced into one entity in search of freedom, liberty and national sovereignty,

Mindful of the fact that the Eritrean Nation-State is the ultimate realization of the sacrifices of generation of Eritreans in search of nationhood and national identity,

Noting that 1991 is a watershed in the long history of the Eritrean struggle in search of nationhood and sovereignty that should have laid the ground work for the struggle for socioeconomic and political development to ensue,

Further noting that instead of reconciliation, the dictatorial regime has been promoting a process of political and economic exclusion and elimination and as a

result chaos and degree of entropy has been increasing with lasting and drastic impacts on the inner-societal stability and the fabric of the Eritrean society,

Cognizant of the fact that the vitality of the people and the nation has been compromised with a dire consequences to the integrity of Eritrea as a sovereign country and people by the evil designs of the dictatorial regime,

Realizing that the regime has been using **Economic decay, political instability, and social anomie** as lethal tools/weapons to hunt on the Eritrean people and as a result, the **“Eritrean Nuclear Family”**, which is the unit of function and structure of the Eritrean society, has been disintegrating and dispersing out in every direction,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Declares that The root cause for the decadence of the Eritrean society as a sovereign entity is systemic and it requires a system approach to reverse the course and address the fundamental problem;

Further declares that the ultimate solution to the Eritrean quagmire is to dismantle the dictatorial regime and to replace its absolutist and extractive political and economic institutions by pluralistic and inclusive political and economic institutions with a **united front of the democratic forces of Eritrea**, both inside the country and in the Diaspora.

Urges the Eritrean people to coalesce on the side of the democratic forces of Eritrea and hasten the demise of the ruthless dictatorial regime in Eritrea so as to safeguard the **sovereignty and national Identity of Eritrea**;

Calls upon all elements of the Eritrean society – all Eritrean civil societies, youth groups and political organization as well as prominent individuals, both academicians and religious personalities- to protect, maintain and promote the **Eritrean Common National Heritage**;

On the Mass Exodus of the Eritrean Youth and Refugees’ Conditions

Realizing the fact that the youth is most vital and dynamic force of the Eritrean society,

Noting the critical roles that the young play in any socio-economic and political development of Eritrea,

Cognizant of the fact that the youth is the most betrayed and the one, which endures the brunt of the injustices of the dictatorship in post-independent Eritrea,

Further cognizant of the fact that forced labor and indefinite national service are imposed with detrimental effect to its future upon this group,

Recognizing the fact that fleeing the country in droves has become the last resort of the Eritrean youth and yet at the expense of risking its life and in the face of the “shoot-to-kill” policy of the regime;

Noting that the predatory regime in Eritrea is the root cause for the continued influx and displacement of our people, which is resulting in the loss of hundreds and thousands of Eritrean lives across the world,

Recalling that many Eritrean young perished while crossing borders, great deserts, and deep and wide seas and oceans and at the hands of human traffickers and organ harvesters;

Further recalling the fact that many Eritrean young are languishing in refugee camps of their host countries without access to education, training, adequate basic life necessities as well as physical and mental health services,

Deeply concerned that the recent unfortunate decision by the Ethiopian Federal Government to close the Eritrean Refugee Camps in Northern Ethiopia has created a dire situation which has endangered the lives and safety of the tens of thousands of Eritrean refugees, including women and children refugees,

Appreciating The people of Tigray and the Tigrian State/Regional Government’s hospitality, efforts and commitments to the cause of Eritrean refugees,

Recognizing the efforts taken by a number of Eritrean organized groups and individuals to address the problem Eritrean refugees are facing, and mainly Eritrean refugees in the Horn of Africa, Middle East, and in the Mediterranean Sea rim countries who are becoming the victim of human traffickers,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Urges the Ethiopian Federal Government to reverse its decision to close the Eritrean Refugee Camps in Northern Ethiopia and open them with immediate effect, to uphold and respect its international Treaty obligation, and to protect the rights of Eritrean refugees,

Encourages UDC to continue to support the Eritrean refugees and defend the Eritrean refugees' rights in international forums, including assisting them to obtain political asylum in their host countries or to resettle to a third-party country;

Urges all Eritrean civil societies, youth groups and political organization as well as prominent individuals, both academicians and religious personalities in the Diaspora to understand the uniqueness of the "Eritrean Refugee" and to work to promote the welfare, the humanity and dignity of the Eritrean refugees in their host countries;

Calls upon the host countries, including Ethiopia, to provide the Eritrean refugees with the necessary physical and mental health services, psychological counseling, education and training services as well as legal and communities services;

Further Calls upon the international community, the United Nations refugee agencies, and the host countries to protect and assist Eritrean refugees according to the provisions established in the various refugee conventions and protocols;

Urges the Eritrean opposition forces and civil society organizations to work in unison to get rid of the root cause of the unspeakable plight of Eritrean refugees – removing the Eritrean dictatorial regime from political power.

On the Integrity of Eritrea as a Sovereignty Nation-State

Recognizing that today, Eritrea lacks a legitimate, legal and honest national government to defend and protect its legitimate sovereign rights and its national interest in the regional and global geopolitical forums,

Further recognizing that Issaias and his regime have been [undermining the integrity of Eritrea as a nation-state](#) – undermining its institutions, norms, culture, rule of law, way of life and livelihood,

Noting that, as if Eritrean sovereignty does not reside in the Eritrean people, Issaias has been making secret agreements with the leaders of Ethiopia without the expressed consent and knowledge of the Eritrean people since July 2018,

Further noting that the recent events and developments concerning the relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia are redolent of the history of Eritrea during the federation era in that there are concrete evidences that show the slow process of transferring the jurisdiction of key sovereign functions pertaining to international (foreign) affairs, national defense, and international economic agreements, just to mention but a few cases, of the State of Eritrea to Ethiopia,

Reaffirming the preservation and maintenance of Eritrea's sovereignty and territorial integrity is fundamental for the Eritrean people,

Recalling that the Eritrean people paid heavy sacrifices against successive foreign occupiers for their self-determination, national identity, and national sovereignty that was achieved after a long armed struggle in 1991,

Opposing all threats or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Eritrea, or intervening in its domestic affairs,

Reaffirming the respect of the principles of international law regarding the conduct of relations carried out among states is crucial for the maintenance of peace and security of countries,

Opposing any foreign military or the conduct of foreign political coercion against Eritrea's political independence and territorial integrity, or its political unity as a country,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Declares that, given now that Issaias and his regime have betrayed Eritrea and its people and are in the process of surrendering Eritrean sovereignty to Ethiopia, getting rid of Issaias and his regime is not only a legitimate action but also a

necessary and the only way forward for the survival of Eritrea as a sovereign country and people;

Calls upon those who have been supporting the dictatorial regime in general and to those Diaspora regime supporters in particular to have the courage and join *the voices of reason and justice to win over the voices of evil and injustice and subsequently safeguard the sovereignty and national identity of Eritrea through a “united front” of the Eritrean people;*

Demands that the Ethiopian Federal Government to immediately stop violating the sovereignty of Eritrea and the integrity of the Eritrean people as sovereign people;

Further demands that the Ethiopian Federal Government and its agents to immediately stop threatening Eritrea and its people and to refrain from making hostile gestures in words and actions towards Eritreans and their sovereign country;

Understands that the preservation of Eritrean sovereignty is a pre-condition to a democratic and prosperous Eritrea;

Declares that Eritrea’s territorial integrity and political independence is inviolable and that Eritrean people have the duty to protect it under any circumstances;

Further Declares that no part of Eritrea or its regions or its ports is to be split from the sovereign and territorial State of Eritrea;

Reiterates support of *UDC policy of decentralization system of government in Eritrea within the sovereign State of Eritrea.*

On Unity of the Eritrean Diaspora-based Opposition forces for change

Cognizant of the fact that many of the opposition groups which constitute the opposition camp have roots in the era of the liberation struggle with a legacy of constant splitting and internal feuds and consequently not only are they weak and divided but also they have divergent political and policy orientations,

Convinced that forging unity amongst all Eritrean opposition forces for change is an essential national foundation, which will enable us to remove the dictatorial regime

in the immediate term and provides us an opportunity to create a ground conducive for establishing a united and democratic Eritrea in the long term,

Recognizing that unity amongst Eritrean opposition forces for change fosters and lays the foundation for peace and reconciliation among the Eritrean people in post Dictatorial Regime Eritrea,

Noting that the primary responsibility of achieving unity rests with all Eritrean opposition forces for change and civil society organizations, including the Eritrean public at large,

Emphasizing the significance of taking action now to fulfill our obligation and responsibility on the question of unity is more urgent than ever before, given the deteriorating situation of our country,

Reaffirming once again the political determination and commitment of UDC on national unity, and the efforts and contributions it has so far made to advance the cause of unity as a fundamental national project is recognizable and on a record,

Further reaffirming UDC's stand on unity is consistent with our national principles and values that promote peaceful coexistence amongst our diverse cultures, religions, and faiths, as well as a crucial position that ensures and safeguards our independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Calls upon UDC to continue doubling its effort on achieving unity by establishing a framework that reflects the current state of affairs of the Eritrean opposition forces for change in line to its Roadmap;

Encourages UDC to continue maintaining mutual understanding and relationships, discussions, and confidence building between Eritrean opposition forces for change in an effort to alleviate the challenges and obstacles we face regarding unity;

Supports the stated principle of UDC relating to unity which calls for the establishment of a unified Eritrean National Force for Change;

Calls upon the Eritrean opposition members, civil society organizations, media organizations, and the Eritrean people at large to consider and address unity as a

priority in our struggle and work transparently with a view to playing a positive role and strengthening the pillars of unity;

Urges Eritrean experts and scholars, especially those who have expertise in the field of conflict resolution and reconciliation, to play their professional roles - actively engaging and providing expertise advice through seminars and conferences to Eritreans.

On the Eritrean Diaspora Yiakil/Grass-Root Movement

Recognizing that grass roots movements at the local levels can promote effective leadership and can act as incubators of democracy,

Convinced that the Eritrean Diaspora grass roots movement that became more active during the last four-Five years ago is a turning point in the democratic struggle Eritrean people are waging,

Noting that the mushrooming of world-wide grass roots movement is unequivocal demonstration and a strong rejection of the tyrannical system in Eritrea,

Stressing the importance of establishing and creating a world-wide leadership and organization of the grass roots movement,

Conscious that a world-wide leadership and coordination of grass roots movement would contribute positively to a common understanding, and coordinated mobilization and campaign against the predatory regime,

Keeping in mind that the measurable success so far registered by Eritrean grass root movements and the evidence of an increase in public support presents an imminent opportunity for boosting the democratic struggle,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Reaffirms that UDC should continue strengthening, supporting and enhancing Eritrean Diaspora grass root movements, particularly in support of establishing local, regional, and international leadership and organization;

Calls upon Eritrean political groups, civil society organizations, experts, and others to give particular and timely attention to the development, cooperation, and guidance of the Eritrean Diaspora grass root movements;

Stresses the importance of mending the intergenerational gap (between the liberation era and the present generation) that exists among Eritreans by learning from each other and acknowledging the diversity of each other's experience, perspective, and values, and embracing our common values, beliefs and expectations so as to create a culture of inclusion and understanding on how to work together against the tyrannical system of the predatory regime and how to ensure the continuity of our country through cultivating the current and future Eritrean generations;

Further stresses that each generation has a lot to offer to our country's future, but this would only be productive if each generation engages in a positive discussion and debate aimed at solidifying the struggle against the PFDJ regime and securing the destiny of future generations.

On the Condition of the Eritrean “Mother-Sister-Daughter” and the Eritrean Women's Organizations for Change

Understanding that Eritrean women ultimately uphold the moral fabric of the Eritrean society,

Further understanding that Eritrean women shape the vitality and integrity of the Eritrean Nuclear Families by life-long dedicating themselves towards transmission of cultural values, principles and beliefs to their children, which is a societal duty very fundamental to the continuity of Eritrea as cultured and civilized society,

Recognizing that NOT ONLY are Eritrean women the primary caretakers of children, the sick and the elderly but also the main bread winners; and they take the lead in helping the Eritrean families adjust to the realities and challenges of wars (liberation and border), recurrent droughts and famines, economic mismanagement (non-ending National Services which resulted in families with absentee husbands and fathers), and the exodus of the Young and the able to foreign lands,

Further recognizing that Eritrean women raised arms and fought revolutionary wars during the liberation struggle era and border wars after the independent of Eritrea on the sides of their brothers and paid enormous sacrifices both in lives, limbs, reproductive ages, psycho-physiological health,

Cognizant of the fact that, despite their huge sacrifices and their critical societal roles, Eritrean women have become the prime targets of the abuses and neglects that have been perpetuated by the evil dictatorial regime,

Deeply concerned about the wellbeing of the Eritrean women who gave everything, including their progenies, to Eritrea (ኣሓት ተጋደልቲ ዝሰንከላ፣ ብዘይ ናብራን ብዘይ ውላድን ዝተረፉ፣ ኣዴታት ዓዲ ጥልያን፣ ማእከላይ ምብራቕ፣ ው.ዘ.ተ.) who are left by the evil tyrant without any safety nets and supports (no retirement insurance, no accumulated wealth, no children or grandchildren who can support them in their old ages),

Deeply feeling the pains of the Eritrean Mother-Sister-Daughter who is subjected to sexual violence and gender-based discriminations and abuses in the evil dictatorial regime run military camps, prisons, and the work places,

Further deeply feeling the pains and sufferings of the Eritrean women-refugees who have been subjected to rapes, sexual violence and who have been exposed to communicable diseases, including incurable and killer diseases, at the hands of human-traffickers such as Bedouins, Rashaidas, ISIS, and their accompanying refugee-countrymen,

Deeply Angered by the sufferings and continuous loss of Eritrean lives in refugee camps, during the treacherous journeys and treks, including vast deserts and deep seas and oceans, of Eritrean refugees in general and Eritrean women refugees in particular to safe lands (Europe, North America, etc.),

Further deeply angered by the Psychological Traumas befallen on Eritrean women refugees who have been subjected to rapes and sexual violence and consequently conceived and who have children of known and unknown unwanted fathers,

Noting the lack of the provision of reproductive and sanitary tool-kits, and maternity counseling services for Eritrean women refugees,

Strongly Supporting the Eritrean Women's Organization for Change in their all rounded efforts to self-organize, empower and run their powerful feminine inner engines, and to unleash their untapped energy and drive that can play critical roles in the struggle for democratic transition in Eritrea,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Encourages UDC to continue spearheading its national and international campaign to create awareness about the plight of Eritrean women in general and Eritrean women refugees in particular among the international communities so that the necessary material, psychological and spiritual supports could be mobilized to help alleviate their problems;

Further encourages UDC to support and work with Eritrean Women's Organization to create a unified Eritrea National Resistance Force in order to effect a democratic transition in Eritrea,

Declares that Eritrean women's issue is the Reason D'etre for the struggle for self-determination, for justice, democracy and rule of law in Eritrea – no democracy without fully solving and addressing Eritrean women's issues;

Calls upon Eritrean political groups, civil society organizations, experts, and others to give particular and timely attention to the unique and untenable circumstances that Eritrean women in general and Eritrean women refugees in particular are found themselves and give their unconditional supports to Eritrean Women's Organization for Change to self-organize, empower, and harness their immense untapped ingenuities;

Affirms its confidence in the capacities of Eritrean Women's Organizations to create harmony and build trust among the different cleavages and elements of the Eritrean society, and to spearhead the struggle for democratic transition in Eritrea,

Internal Resistance and Struggle for Democratic Change and Justice in Eritrea

Referring to UDC's strategy that the decisive force for change comes from inside Eritrea,

Noting the fact that the internal struggle suffered from an exceptionalism narrative, a political culture dominated by the reminiscences of the liberation era that dilutes the present reality inside Eritrea,

Deeply convinced that the internal struggle is established by sharing and focusing on the attributes of the values and political culture of the internal forces in relation to the type of change they desire,

Further deeply convinced that establishing an organized resistance and leadership inside Eritrea is crucial with a view to expediting the defeat of the predatory regime, as well as to adopting measures that would ensure unity and peaceful democratic transition in post Dictatorial Regime Eritrea,

Fully believing that the majority partners in the internal struggle are ex-EPLF freedom fighters, Eritrean Defense forces, and PFDJ members, including the general Eritrean populace, and **emphasizing** that the overall influence the internal forces have over the struggle for democracy is critical and decisive,

Noting that the rampant disunity that exists in the Diaspora-based opposition camp erodes the relationship between the internal resistance and the Diaspora opposition,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Encourages that UDC adopts a policy statement on how to establish and connect the internal struggle to the outside opposition;

Endorses that the policy statement to identify partners of the internal opposition forces and empower them in a targeted and strategic manner against the repressive regime;

Further Endorses that the policy statement to promote the principle of peaceful and democratic resistance that UDC advocates for as this guarantees a strong national unity and sustainable democratization process in Eritrea;

Decides that UDC to invest in communication, mobilization, and media that exposes and challenges all facets of tyranny, repression, injustice, and corruption of the predatory regime in collaboration with the internal opposition forces.

On Synchronizing the Inside Eritrea and the Diaspora Struggle for Democratic Change and Justice

Reaffirming UDC's position on the establishment of a solid connection between the struggles of the inside and outside Eritrea as its fundamental strategy to effect democratic change in Eritrea,

Further reaffirming that employing different approaches and means of engagement on how to coalesce these two fronts into the same page should be one of the underpinning strategies of the opposition,

Believing that establishing an organized resistance and leadership inside Eritrea is crucial with a view to expediting the defeat of the predatory regime, as well as to adopting measures that would ensure unity and peaceful democratic transition in post Dictatorial Regime Eritrea,

Further believing that the key and critical force for democratic change in Eritrea is a home-based democratic forces that can partner with junior Diaspora-based democratic forces,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Calls upon Eritrean opposition forces for change to formulate and implement a comprehensive action plan, indentifying steps and measures to connect the homeland and Diaspora struggles;

Urges Eritrean opposition forces for change to design and establish comprehensive news and media regime that will enhance, broaden, and raise awareness of Eritrean people on democracy and constitutional governance;

Further urges Eritrean opposition forces for change to use news and media as an instrument for integrated information campaign to expose and undermine the gross and systematic practice of terrorism and intimidation, violence and brutality, and repression being perpetuated by the predatory regime on our people while safeguarding the unity, political independence, and territorial integrity of Eritrea;

Emphasizes once again that the defeat of the Dictatorial Regime is dependent upon founding a strong resistance organization inside Eritrea, which should be tied and work hand in hand with the Diaspora opposition in order to defeat the regime, in addition to laying ground for a smooth transition to democracy in post Dictatorial Regime Eritrea

On the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF)

Acknowledging that the only organized institution in Eritrea is the EDF,

Further acknowledging that the duty and defense of the country falls under the responsibility of the EDF,

Strongly Supporting the EDF for its continued service in defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Eritrea,

Acknowledging that the EDF bears the brunt of the Dictatorial Regime's repression and injustice, and that it continues to be deprived of its fundamental political and civil rights like the rest of Eritrean people, and that it is among the most impoverished sector of the Eritrean society,

Further reminding that the EDF is part of the oppressed Eritrean society under the dictatorial regime, and that it has a national obligation to play its decisive role in the struggle for democracy in Eritrea against the repressive regime,

The North America (NA) UDC 1th Congress,

Affirms its confidence on the EDF to continue defending the country's territorial integrity and its political and national unity;

Declares its Solidarity with the EDF in the struggle against the predatory regime;

Calls once more upon the EDF to organize itself and engage in the struggle against the predatory regime.