

We Condemn Ambassador Dina Mufti's Insidious Statement regarding Eritrea's Independence.

The Eritrean political Forces (EPF) strongly condemn the dangerous statement made **on March 29, 2021**, by the Ethiopian Ambassador Dina Mufti, the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. In his press conference, Mr. Mufti asserted the following, "The Eritrean people do not respect [honor] / they do not like the day they were separated from Ethiopia, and we do not have a different feeling than theirs." He added that Eritreans in the diaspora as well agree with his baseless statement. His false assertion is very dangerous and will further drive the countries apart into a new war. Eritreans waged 30 years of armed struggle to become independent from Ethiopia after the federal agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was unilaterally terminated by Emperor Haile Selassie, and Eritrea was forcefully annexed to Ethiopia in 1962.

Eritrea won the war, gaining *de facto independence* from Ethiopia on May 24, 1991; May 24 is the **most celebrated holiday** in Eritrea. In April 1993, Eritrea held a referendum, observed by the United Nations, where 99.83% of Eritreans voted in favor of independence through a popular vote with 98.5% turnout. Eritrea then became the 193rd state to join the United Nations as an independent state in 1993.

Eritreans hold close to heart and guard their hard won independence vigilantly, despite the fact that they have yet another hurdle to overcome, get rid of a dictatorship. As most of the world knows by now, after independence, the Eritrean people were betrayed by their own "liberators" who denied the people the right to constitutional Government. Eritrea fell into an authoritarian rule of Isaias Afewerki, who dreamt and worked for a failed state by subjecting its youth into indefinite military service, invading neighboring countries, impoverishing the people by suspending economic investments, closing businesses, indefinitely halting construction of buildings and infrastructure, ruining Eritrea's factories, and substituting its only university with small career colleges administered by military officers.

Besides his regressive political, social, and economic policies of enslaving the youth into endless military services, his long-rumored mission of reuniting Eritrea throughout the liberation times was declared, in a dream come true moment, when he officially and publicly transferred power to Prime Minister of a neighboring country Ethiopia in 2018. In his speech addressing the Ethiopian people, Isaias Afewerki said, "From now on you-PM, Abiye Ahmed will lead us"....from now on, I don't need permission to travel and tour to any part of Ethiopia, and you vice versa." That announcement was followed by the Nobel Peace Prize award to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia while opening a wide range of accesses to Isaias Afewerki to the most important Ethiopian strategic, military, security, and economic assets. Through Ethiopia's extensive diplomatic efforts, the economic sanctions that were put on the ruling party leaders were also lifted.

We are saddened to see that the Government of Ethiopia transform from a regional peacekeeping into a partnership of regional conflict as a result of the unholy relationship it established with the authoritarian Government of Eritrea. The Eritrean people have been going through enough misery under Isaias Afewerki's regime, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). Eritreans, in unison, will inevitably rise up to the challenge of removing PFDJ's rule building a democratic constitutional government in its place.

Mr. Mufti, and the Government of Ethiopia as a whole, will witness the Eritrean people celebrating their 30-year anniversary of independence this coming May 24 with flair as they have done year after year for the past 29 years.

For lasting peace in the region, we urge the Ethiopian people and Government to refrain from making insidious statements towards Eritrea and its independence to respect the sovereignty of Eritrea and its people which is the only way to achieve and sustain peace, cooperation, and prosperity of both nations.

Eritrea for Eritreans!

Eritrean Political Forces
Diplomatic task Force

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