



ENCDC



EUNF



EPDP



RSADO

April 6, 2023

To: His Excellency Mr. Filippo Grandi
High Commissioner, UNHCR, Geneva, Switzerland

Subject: An Appeal for the Protection of Eritrean Refugees in Sudan

The Eritrean Political Forces (EPF) are deeply concerned of the wellbeing and safety of the Eritrean refugees in Sudan due to the unprecedented level of extortion and harassment that has been unleashed on them by the Sudanese authorities. As it has been widely reported in the media, Eritreans in Sudan are being put in great danger with a cruel scheme to extort money from them. Eritreans are being rounded up, jailed, and kept hostage, supposedly for not possessing residence or refugee cards, and demanded to pay extraordinary amount of fees, up to \$1000 or more, to be released from jail and holding cells. Often, they are repeatedly rounded up and jailed for more harassment and extortions. It is reported that these are extrajudicial and corrupt actions perpetrated by Sudanese police and security personnel, and their collaborators. Failure to pay the fees results in more torture, extended jail time, and may lead to forced return to Eritrea.

The great people of Sudan have been hosting and protecting Eritrean refugees for years, going back six decades to the Eritrean struggle for independence, and continued during the last three decades of the dictatorial regime of Isaias Afewerki. According to the UNHCR, there are over 200,000 Eritreans registered as refugees in Sudan, with over 90,000 of them in refugee camps. This number excludes the hundreds of thousands that have been there for decades, and those that have been already assimilated to the greater Sudanese society. Eritreans are grateful for the noble hospitality and support they have received and continue to receive from the people and governments of Sudan during these difficult periods. The recent events, however, are unbecoming of the character of the people of Sudan and are driven by small number of people with greed and lack of human decency. There is a great chance that these recent events are instigated by the agents of the dictatorial regime in Eritrea to force the refugees to return home.

Your Excellency, we are particularly concerned about a substantial number of very venerable women, children, and advanced age individuals, and the many already impoverished refugees, who do not have the means to pay the extortion money and are under immense danger of forced repatriation to Eritrea. We urge UNHCR and the international community to find a way to immediately halt these inhuman actions. A statement condemning these actions by UNHCR will be a good start followed with concrete steps to stop the practice and take appropriate measures on the criminal elements that are perpetuating these corrupt actions.

We hope and trust that Your Excellency will do everything within your powers to help secure full protection for the Eritrean refugees in Sudan.

EPF Diplomacy Coordination Committee