

EriPN (UK) Perspective on Human Rights Issues in Eritrea

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Introduction

The Eritrean Professionals Network (EriPN) is an organisation created by professional Eritreans in the UK to serve the Eritrean community in diaspora as well as promoting and enhancing technology and knowledge transfer between Eritrea and the host country with the view to making tangible contribution towards the long and complex nation building process. EriPN identifies a real structural economic transformation as being the most critical factor in raising living standards of Eritreans and through its direct involvement, EriPN strives towards making positive contribution to the economic and social development of the nation and thus creating an environment where basic human values and human rights are respected in Eritrea from within and without .

EriPN would like to thank the HRC Special Rapporteur (SR) on Eritrea for her swift reply to our willingness to engage with the work that the SR is mandated to carry out in relation to Eritrea. In light of the short time frame and available window between now and the SR submitting the report, we elect to use this opportunity to share the information we would like reflected in your report in the true spirit of balanced and fair reporting. We believe that the mandate given to you carries with it a responsibility which calls for unbiased and fair representation of the views of all Eritrean stakeholders. We trust that this will be the case and would like to add that EriPN maintains its readiness to remain engaged in this matter with the SR through any communication channel available.

In this 10 page short statement, EriPN would like to register its strong objection and disappointment at the fact that Eritrea has been falsely targeted as a country where gross violation of human rights is prevalent. To the contrary, through this statement, EriPN will demonstrate the human rights violations historically committed/being committed against Eritrea by external actors as being unjust, unfair and thus **calls upon the HRC to give careful attention** to this fact and highlight it in this and subsequent reporting on human rights issues on Eritrea.

Historical Perspective

The land known as modern day Eritrea was established by the Kingdom of Italy at the end of the nineteenth century (1885) and officially lasted as an Italian colony for about 60 years. While the Italian administration of Eritrea brought about improvements in the medical and agricultural sectors of the Eritrean society and later developed light manufacturing and thus urbanisation, which helped improve living standards, the rise of Benito Mussolini and thus fascism to power in Italy in 1922

brought about some undesirable changes in Eritrea. The fascists imposed harsh rule that stressed the political and racial superiority of Italians. Eritreans were racially discriminated severely – ***a start of the long history of basic human rights violations and disrespect for human values imposed on Eritreans by external actors.***

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Italians were defeated by the British and the Commonwealth forces at the battle of Keren (a town in Eritrea) which was fought from 5th of February to 1st of April 1941. This placed the then Italian colony, Eritrea, under British military administration until the allied forces could *determine its fate* – ***a clear violation of the right for freedom and thus human rights violation.***

In the absence of agreement amongst the allies concerning the status of Eritrea, British administration continued until 1950. One of the many unjust violations the British did was to remove the Eritrean industries and railway lines to Kenya and other British colonies of the time, as war compensation. During this time the British also proposed that Eritrea be divided into two along religious lines and be handed over to Sudan and Ethiopia. Several other countries also weighed-in in deciding the fate of Eritrea with their own interests in mind, the Soviet Union, anticipating a communist victory in the Italian polls, initially supported returning Eritrea to Italy. Arab states, seeing Eritrea and its large Muslim population as an extension of the Arab world, sought the establishment of an independent state. In the absence of common consensus among the powers at the time, and in the face of clear and unequivocal Eritrean demands for ***self-determination and full independence***, a UN commission was dispatched to the former colony in February 1950. It is of high note-worthy that at this juncture, the US Ambassador to the UN, **John Foster Dulles**, said,

“From the point of view of justice, the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless the strategic interest of the United States in the Red Sea basin and the considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that the country has to be linked with our ally Ethiopia” [1].

In a clear **violation of human rights and against the wishes of Eritreans** for their rights for self-determination, the UN commission proposed the establishment of some form of association with Ethiopia - amounting to institutional rape at a national level with devastating consequences as shown in history. As a result, in 1952 the United Nations resolution to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia went into effect terminating the British military administration. It should be stressed here that while the British exploited the issue of religious divisions between Moslems and Christians (which they unsuccessfully attempted to ferment divisions earlier), almost all Eritreans were united in their goal for freedom and independence. The resolution, even though it ignored the basic human rights of Eritreans for self-determination, there were some guarantees for democratic rights and a measure of autonomy (Eritrea was to have its own administrative and judicial structure, its own flag, and control over its domestic affairs, including police, local administration, and taxation while the imperial Ethiopian government controlled foreign affairs (including commerce), defence, finance, and transportation), however these rights began to be violated almost immediately by the Ethiopians under Emperor Haile Selassie. This undermined the relative independence status of federated Eritrea - a policy that alienated many Eritreans. In a bid to finally annex Eritrea and subjugate its people under its backward feudalist administration and thus fulfilling its imperialist

ambitions, the Emperor pressured Eritrea's elected chief executive to resign, made Amharic the official language in place of Arabic and Tigrinya, terminated the use of the Eritrean flag and moved many businesses out of Eritrea. Finally, in 1962 Haile Selassie forced the Eritrean Assembly at gun point (armed soldiers surrounded the assembly in Asmara) to abolish the federation and join the Imperial Ethiopian fold, much to the dismay of those in Eritrea who favoured a more liberal political order. It is to be noted that at this point in history, while Eritrea was much more advanced not only socially and economically, but also had a matured political and liberal system unseen in nearly all of Africa with religious and ethnic tolerance, in Ethiopia there existed a feudalist state under Emperor Haile Selassie. This marked the beginning of organised armed resistance against the occupying forces of Ethiopia and thus war for independence. This long and expensive war was fought by all Eritreans for freedom and self-determination - **the most basic human right**, denied to them by collective superpowers of the time.

The Long War for Independence

Following the annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia after unilaterally dissolving the Eritrean parliament, Eritreans waged a long war of independence (1960-1991) without any outside help, against the Emperor Haile Selassie, who continued to suppress Eritrean independence struggle and commit **gross human rights abuses** with full support of the UN and western powers – in particular the USA and Britain. The war continued after Haile Selassie was ousted by a military coup in 1974. The new military government (the Derg), Marxist in its ideological alignment was to receive significant moral and material support from the Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Cuba among others. This direct foreign intervention was a huge setback to the Eritrean struggle for independence. The above countries contributed significant military hardware and personnel which was used against Eritreans in the cruellest way ever imagined under foreign occupation – unseen under previous colonial powers. These **violations took human rights abuses in Eritrea to new heights**. Time and space does not allow for these atrocities to be accounted for in detail here and we realise no amount justice can be done by a mere list given below, neither to the victims of abuse nor to the country as a whole, nevertheless we feel its right to make the reader aware some historical facts.

- Freedom of speech was categorically denied
- Summary execution was common practice, Eritreans endured random kidnap, rape, torture and imprisonment, the Red Terror campaign which lasted from 1977 to 1978 is one example of the mass executions where tens of thousands of Eritreans and Ethiopians were massacred.
- Burning Mosques, Churches and in some cases whole villages were burnt to the ground (Horrible acts of massacre in Weki Duba, Ona etc. during 1967 to 1970 can be mentioned)
- Burned villages, crushed lives with tanks – (in 1988, 400 inhabitants of the village Shieb were run over by tanks, those who escaped were shot and houses burned)
- The horrific air raids of Masawa in 1990 after its liberation (deliberate targeting of civilians with cluster and napalm bombs) [2]

By end of the 1980s, through active participation of the Eritrean populace, the Eritrean armed struggle began to gain the upper hand on the occupying Ethiopian forces against all odds and was nearing achieving its ultimate goal of self-determination and independence. Indeed, the Eritrean forces drove a numerically much larger Ethiopian army from all Eritrean territories by 1991.

Following liberation, independence was fully legitimised by UN sponsored referendum (April 23- 25 1993) in which over 99% of Eritreans elected independence with a turnout of around 93.9%. It should be stressed here that while liberation was achieved by force, the referendum was conducted by choice of the Eritrean people as a basic respect for their right for self-determination, demonstrating adherence to a democratic principles and as an extension to what the EPLF (Eritrean People's Liberation Front) believed and proposed in 1982 as the only legal solution to the Eritrean question for self-determination which the Ethiopians rejected at the time.

The victory of the armed struggle for self-determination, independence and the subsequent legitimisation by referendum brought about a new nation out of the ashes of a **struggle for basic human rights** which was unjustly and unfairly denied to it since the end of colonisation in most of Africa. The long struggle claimed the lives of over 65,000 Eritreans and came at a cost of huge destruction. The atrocities committed by the Ethiopians over the period of the independence struggle also claimed much higher civilian lives and destruction. With such a huge disadvantage, in terms of devastated economy and destroyed infrastructure, the Government of Eritrea (GOE) embarked upon rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country by mobilising the nation through national service, a practice no different from what many countries across the globe go through over different periods in their history. In parallel to this, the GOE through full participation of the people of Eritrea in every walk of life and every corner of the country and including those in diaspora embarked on drafting the first ever national constitution of Eritrea. The constitution was debated by the people between 1994 and 1997 and subsequently ratified on 23rd May 1997 as a framework for democratic governance.

It has become fashionable to accuse the Eritrean government of failing to implement the constitution having been ratified in 1997. Those who level this accusation should realise that Constitution as demonstrated over history in many countries **cannot be implemented by decree**. There are a number of essential prerequisites for its implementation in its true spirit of the written word as a basis for guaranteeing the citizens' rights and the government's responsibilities. The existence of **functioning legal institutions and institutionalised organisations** is essential. The Eritrean government has been investing significant resources in this so as to create an environment for a functioning democratic system and the measurable achievements registered in social and economic developments are testament to this fact. Admittedly the political dimension has not progressed as well as we would like and there are several factors which have affected this, not least of course the war that was declared on Eritrea soon after the constitution was ratified. It is also worth mentioning that the constitution was drafted and debated by all Eritrean citizens inside and outside the country. Of course the constitution could have been drafted and finalised by few selected experts, or could have been written using other countries' with long constitutional history as a template. This was never the case, and the fact that the process was done through popular participation is **not a behaviour of a government that violates human rights, is it?** Rather it is consistent with a government that believes in democratic popular participation and freedom of expression.

Ethiopian Aggression of 1998-2000

In 1998, a border dispute with Ethiopia flared up into unnecessary full scale war following unilateral declaration of war on Eritrea by the Ethiopian parliament. The war caused significant economic and

social stress on Eritrea, including massive population displacement, wanton destruction of economic infrastructure by the invading Ethiopian army. In this period, **incalculable destruction and gross human rights abuses were suffered by innocent Eritrean civilians** at the hands of the **occupying Ethiopians**. It is well documented fact that the destruction was so calculated in that not only civilian and economic infrastructure were targeted, but in an act of despicable barbarism, **even grave yards were not spared from deliberate destruction**.

The war ended (after a loss of over 19,000 Eritrean service men and women) through a UN negotiated and guaranteed peace agreement in 2000 (Alger's Agreement) in which a 25Km demilitarized buffer zone was created inside Eritrea for UN peace keeping operation. The Algiers agreement called for a final demarcation of the disputed border between Eritrea and Ethiopia by an independent, Hague based, UN sanctioned body known as the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), whose task was to clearly identify the border between the two countries and issue a final and binding ruling. Prior to the ruling, both countries had agreed to accept the outcome of the ruling as **final and binding**. After extensive study, the Commission issued a final border ruling in April 2002, which awarded some territory to each side, but Badme (the largest and the flash point of the conflict) was established to be part of Eritrea as corroborated by historical facts dating back to the era of colonisation. However the Commission's efforts to demarcate the border was met with **Ethiopian intransigence** and to date the common border is **only virtually demarcated on maps**, while **physical demarcation on the ground has not been possible with Ethiopia refusing to withdraw its military from Eritrean territories** which it captured by force including Badme.

While large parts of Eritrea still remain occupied by Ethiopia to this date, thousands of Eritreans remain displaced and in makeshift camps with **their basic human rights to safety and security violated**. Their right to live in their own home land denied. The guarantors of the Alger's agreement, namely the EU, UN, AU, USA and others have remained silent while over 10 years have passed since the final and legally binding ruling was passed. These bodies have not only failed in holding Ethiopia accountable and pressurise it to abide by international rule of law, but have encouraged it to terrorise both Eritrea and Somalia through open armed incursions and invasions, **violating the rights of the respective peoples to live in peace**. Shouldn't the guarantors of the Alger's agreement advocate for the human rights of the thousands of **Eritreans displaced and disposed** because of Ethiopia's refusal to withdraw its troops from the occupied Eritrean territories? What about those serving in the Eritrean army forced to defend their country from ever present USA sponsored hostilities from Ethiopia, shouldn't the guarantors be advocating for **their right to return home** and live in peace by shouldering their legal responsibility as guarantors of the agreement? Don't Eritreans have the right to live in peace within their own borders without worrying about invasion?

Unjust Sanctions (Resolutions 1907/2009 and 2023/2011)

In December 2009 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), on the false pretext and unfounded accusation that "Eritrea had provided support to armed groups undermining peace and reconciliation in Somalia and that it had not withdrawn its forces following clashes with Djibouti in June 2008", adopted UNSCR 1907/2009 which imposed an arms embargo on Eritrea. This was later adopted by the EU on 26 July 2010. It is a known fact that the chaos and destruction in Somalia is created and is allowed to continue by active involvement of the USA and its proxy ally Ethiopia. Eritrea which has no land bordering to Somalia is accused of providing arms and other material support to various armed groups in that country. It is not beyond anyone's realm of imagination to

ponder how it is possible that a small nation like Eritrea can evade notice and deliver plane loads of weapons to Somalia on a regular basis when in fact there is huge US and French military intelligence presence in Djibouti, which is geographically wedged between Eritrea and Somalia? In addition to this, the USA has a Drone base in southern Ethiopia (Arba Minch airport) which became operational in early 2011 as part of the so called counterterrorism operation, flying regular missions over neighbouring Somalia and the east Africa region as a whole. For anyone who cares to scratch a little beyond the surface, it is clear that there are more arms and armed groups supplied and supported by the USA and its proxies in Somalia than a small nation such as Eritrea can muster. Dumisani Kumalo, chairman of the UN Security Council's Somalia sanctions committee is on record accusing "elements" of the African Union (AU) peacekeeping force in Somalia and Ethiopian and Somali government troops of arms trafficking. **Kumalo said 80% of the ammunition on sale in Somalia's numerous arms markets comes from Ethiopian and Somali troops.** These are USA, not Eritrea, supplied arms to Ethiopia and to the many transitional Somali governments which Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya helped to setup to serve their own interests. This situation is directly helping to fuel the insecurity and instability in East Africa and subjecting the Somali people to **gross human rights violations** by various armed groups and the occupying Ethiopian army.

Eritrea on the other hand has been consistent in its stance on the need to find a Somali solution to a Somali problem without unwanted and unhelpful outside intervention. In 2007, prior to Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, Eritrea was accused of having over 2000 soldiers inside Somalia training and fighting alongside the so called Islamic Jihadists. Once much of the fighting was done with, there was not even a single Eritrean soldier to be found in Somalia - dead or alive. Yet this fabrication claimed by the late Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, was used as a pretext to impose sanctions on Eritrea. While the accusation against Eritrea remains unsubstantiated, on December 06, 2011, Security Council adopted resolution UNSC 2023/2011 reinforcing the sanctions against Eritrea extending to economic dimension. This was aimed at the mining sector and other investments which the UNSC alleges are being used as financial sources to destabilize the Horn of Africa region.

Putting aside the fabricated Eritrean involvement in Somalia, in which country over the history of these so called UN sponsored Economic Sanctions have they produced their stated objective? Economic sanctions as shown in many countries such as in Cuba, Libya, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Syria etc. hurt the ordinary people the hardest and are thus **by design aimed against the people.** In all cases they have invariably created poverty and deprivation, denying innocent civilians of the respective countries **their right to live with their basic necessities fulfilled.** Some of these sanctions are imposed on countries alleged to be human rights violators. Isn't the act of imposing the harshest economic embargo on innocent civilians, denying them of medical supplies, causing shortage of basic necessities including food and thus subjecting them to extreme suffering, **a UN sponsored criminal act of human rights abuse? Isn't access to health care a human right?** Are we to believe there is a distinction in the interpretation of human values in those who are forced to live in deprivation and those who advocate human rights from affluence?

With its limited resources, the Eritrean government has managed to rehabilitate the infrastructure following pragmatic economic programs with active participation of the work force through national service. The diaspora community is also encouraged to fulfil its national duty and actively participates in the development efforts of the nation and their contribution is significant. Unlike in

nearly all developing nations rich with raw commodity export industry, the government, fully aware of what is termed as “resource curse”, has managed to establish an equitable mining industry where the benefits are fairly shared between external investors and the citizens while prioritising human resource development and long term capacity building for sustainable growth. Such commendable policies have enabled the nation to manage its mineral resources responsibly and register promising economic growth despite the harsh sanctions and external aggression.

The development achievements in the social sector is one that has visible impact in the **advancement of the human right of citizens** (the right to social progress, right to development, right of women, right to food, right to clean water & electricity, right to be free from poverty, right to education, right to health care, right to freedom of expression and belief, equality under the law have been promoted). It is not by accident that Eritrea is one of the few countries on track on 6 out of the 8 the Millennium goals set as targets for 2015. The government has actively worked in all social and economic sectors for sustainable development not because they were prescribed to it as Millennium goals, but because it believes in sustainable development and the Millennium goals fall in that bracket.

To put this into perspective it is worth mentioning that Eritrea with its limited resources stands out as a success story in controlling malaria (malaria kills around 800,000 people a year and is second only to tuberculosis in its impact on world health). The number of people dying from malaria has dropped by up to 65% since 1999. Mortality of children under five years of age dropped by 53%, while there was a 64% drop in the death rate for older children and adults. Similar stats of success can be listed here on education at all levels. If one was to do the sums on how many lives are saved through such programs, it is easy to conclude that **imposing sanctions on success stories such as these in Eritrea is nothing short of criminal, as it denies thousands of innocent civilians of their right to life.**

Resolution A/HRC/20L.19/Rev 1.

Under this resolution, the Human Rights Council accused Eritrea of systematic violations of human rights, the severe restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, and the forced conscription of citizens for indefinite periods. On this basis, the council decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea.

From the point of view of Eritreans, this resolution adopted by human rights council is just another extension of the historical injustice we have endured under this unjust world order and is merely designed to tighten the two previously passed sanctions (1907/2009 & 2023/2011), which have proven unsuccessful so far due to the resilience and steadfastness of the Eritrean people. This resolution has no legal ground but is politically motivated and aimed at undermining and curtailing the social and economic developments Eritrea has registered through national service with full participation of its citizens. The promising mining industry is also targeted. How can this be allowed to stand? The same council that **advocates for respect for human rights is working to disable a nation** of its means to achieving economic growth, which not only is a human right in itself but is a necessary prerequisite for functioning democracy.

What is very surprising and to a certain extent bordering absurdity is that the three countries on whose name the resolution, A/HRC/20L.19/Rev.1 is tabled, namely **Somalia, Nigeria & Djibouti have no moral or legal grounds** to level such unfounded accusations against Eritrea. Nigeria has a long

history of civil disorder and religious intolerance. Corruption in that country has no parallels and is rampant in which a few benefit from the riches of the nation while the majority are denied of their basic human rights. Somalia has been ruled by armed war lords since early 1990s with no structured governance to respect any form of human rights. Djibouti as a country cannot claim to be independent when in fact it is a mere military station for the USA and France. It has very questionable human rights record of its own. It has also falsely accused Eritrea of occupying its territory along mutual border area. Basically, **No self-respecting political entity that originates from these three countries can talk about the respect for human rights or human values in their own countries let alone show any concern for the rights of Eritreans in Eritrea.** But of course we are not naïve enough to ignore the role of the USA in arm-twisting these countries into authoring the resolution.

Shouldn't this pragmatic nation building process centred around social justice, in country which is trying to break away from aid dependency **through political and economic freedom** (an ideology which none among Nigeria, Somalia or Djibouti can be remotely associated with) be encouraged and supported rather than curtailing and suffocating its development efforts through **politically motivated accusations of human rights violations** and thus using that as a pretext for further economic sanctions?

Concluding Remarks

The Eritrean people have been the subject of unfair and unjust violations of their rights not only by individual external powers but also by collective body such as the UN in particular throughout their history. As a nation, they have been victims of innumerable injustices at the hands of superpowers who for one reason or another feel their interests are undermined or even threatened by the basic rights Eritreans believe they have - **economic and political independence.** Eritrea has fought long and hard struggle for its independence and will not make any apologies for its pursuit of economic and political independence however incompatible this path is with the interests of the western powers. Eritrea does not over estimate its significance on the global stage nor does it claim to compete with bigger powers for influence outside its borders. What the government of Eritrea and its people are asking for is for them to be afforded the space to live in peace within their borders. Eritrea has neither the interest nor the resources to interfere in Somalia or any other place. Eritrea has never invaded nor occupied any territories inside Djibouti, contrary to accusations. Ethiopia on the other hand remains unchallenged while occupying Eritrean territories for over 10 years, **violating UN sanctioned peace agreement** which ruled that it should withdraw its forces from all occupied territories. It also continues to invade and interfere in Somalia with the blessing of the USA and the acquiesce of the UN, ironically these are the same bodies who are accusing Eritrea with no evidence of the crimes that Ethiopia, not Eritrea, is committing.

As shown through its history, Eritrea is **a new nation born out of a long struggle for the respect of human rights and human values.** It therefore becomes farfetched and unfounded that a nation that has paid hugely for the same values and rights should be accused of gross human rights violations as is purported by various entities that for one reason or another are looking to punish the people of Eritrea.

As a young nation and continuously facing challenges from external forces in a hostile and unstable environment, coupled with Ethiopia's refusal to withdraw from what is **legally ruled as Eritrean**

territories, which in turn has created a no war no peace situation between the two countries means that its human and material resources are naturally stressed in a continuous struggle to defend its hard earned independence. The economic, social and political implications of this are profound. The economic consequences are perhaps the easy ones to measure. The regression in political and social sphere in which, otherwise significant and positive developments could have been advanced under a peaceful environment is of no less significance. Collateral to this, as in any other nation having to defend itself against a continuous cycle of hostilities, is that there are always human rights challenges. What is required here is not inflicting more hardship and poverty onto the people through sanctions and further hostilities which only fan existing problems, but proactive engagement and dialogue on equal partnership in addressing the underlying issues discussed above.

While sanctions may appear to hurt the government to the untrained eye, those who live through the hardship will tell you it is an impotent weapon and by design unable to achieve its stated objective (unrest and thus regime change). Let us assume for arguments sake that the Eritrean government is a despotic dictatorial regime with appalling human rights record, keeping a corrupt and tight control on the country's wealth at the hands of the few, how is an embargo going to affect the supposedly lavish lifestyle of those abusing basic human rights? **Sanction as a tool has never worked anywhere in history** in that way other than to hurt innocent civilians and will certainly not work in Eritrea where the government is nothing like what is painted by agenda driven hostile media.

It is clear to all Eritreans and anyone else who cares to investigate the truth, that the problems in Somalia or the human rights situation in Eritrea have nothing to do with the accusations and thus sanctions imposed on Eritrea. The crux of the matter is touched on in the above, i.e. the incompatibility of the path Eritrea is following - **political and economic independence** - with the interests of the western powers, i.e. Eritrea being a bad example. **Just imagine a world order where all African countries and other developing nations start to follow this path and really begin to take ownership of their resources, decisions and ultimately their destiny?**

Thomas Keneally, a renowned author and very familiar with the Eritrean struggle long before independence predicted many years ago that **Eritrea will face a lot of challenges from the west if it continues to follow its independent path**. He was of course referring to the ideology of **self-reliance** the Eritreans followed (perhaps by necessity more than by choice at the time) during the armed struggle and continue to follow to this day. In his bestselling book titled *"Towards Asmara"* [3], he wrote the below which really captures what this is all about.

*"Do you know what the emergency really is? You want to hear about the really big emergency? The emergency is that if you guys [Eritreans] succeed [using your principle of self-reliance], you'll be an embarrassment to Africa. Who wants a setup like yours? There aren't many governments on this continent that do. There aren't many governments in Europe. Colored folk who can look after themselves? It isn't viable. It upsets the world picture. Don't you know the West has to believe famine's an act of God? If they believe that, they only have to make a donation. But if they believe it's an act of bloody politics, they have to really do something, and that's too, too complicated. So what is the story? The story is you guys will fall on your own f***ing swords, because you've got this crazy idea that the world will allow you to be perfect!"*

‘These guys [Eritreans] are astounding! Running all this. And you know what? The world hates ‘em for it! The world hooked into the idea of ‘the helpless Africans!’

“You know what I think? They are brave to the point of folly and they’re clever to the point of being dumb. No one absolutely no one, from Washington to Moscow, wants them to succeed. No one. ... God’s even taken the rain away from them, for Christ’s sake. Even he thinks they’re wrong-headed. The sin of pride ... the sin of being sharp when no one wants them to be.

Finally thank you for giving us the opportunity to write to you and wish you success in your work. On this occasion, EriPN would kindly like to remind you of your responsibilities for a fair and balanced reporting of the unadulterated facts. We very much hope that you do not become just another contributing party to the historic injustice Eritreans have suffered and continue to suffer while the UN not only gives a blind eye to their plight but becomes a compromised body serving the interests of bigger powers at Eritrea’s expense. Eritrea as a nation is one that believes and works for regional peace and harmony based on equal partnerships. As a country of multi-religion with a long history of Christianity (since 4th century) and as one of the earliest Muslim settlements in Africa, it has no history of ethnic or religious conflicts. **Eritrea is synonymous with history of struggle for justice and respect for human rights** and the current government being an extension of the liberation struggle is incompatible with gross violation of human rights abuse.

Reference

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EriPN Chair Person

April 2013, London, UK