

Seattle Welcomed May 24, 2015 in Style!

Eritreans residing in the Emerald City and its environs have celebrated the 2015 Eritrean Independence Day with strong patriotic messages. The weekend event was marked by the presence of the one and only one, Helen Meles, popularly dubbed as the “Eritrean Diva”, who had come from Eritrea to help the Eritrean community in the US to celebrate their most solemn day!

Helen’s appearance on a Seattle stage, which was scheduled for Saturday’s event, has been the talk of town, with much anticipation, ever since the story of her coming to Seattle was out!

On Saturday night, May 23, to the delight of the eagerly awaiting audience, Helen appeared with her rendition of “SeAre” song that was acknowledged by a thunderous applause of the independence celebrants. After being on the stage barely a few seconds, however, the talented vocalist headed on to the floor with wireless mic on hand driving even wilder the cheering crowds.

While Helen was the star of the show, she was also accompanied by capable musicians including Habtom Fessehaie, “Enquee”, who kept many of the more than 650 audiences on their feet dancing to some mesmerizing lyrics he was singing while playing his well-tuned *Krar*!

The next day, Sunday the 24th, was a family type picnic set up at Seattle’s Volunteer Park to celebrate our 2015 Independence

Day. As if to accentuate the significance of that important date, the park was almost log jammed with Eritreans and friends of Eritrea, estimated at some 3, 500 strong.

The program started with our youth singing and dancing group, who displayed some incredible talent by playing the various Eritrean nationality musical themes. The performance of these youth group, whose ages range from 6 to 17, were simply superb and a welcome sight. After the successful and very entertaining youth talent, the general or adult dance was opened up with the classic Tehambele dance group leading it. But that number had quickly swollen up when many of the audiences decided to join in the festive mood, by dancing to the beautiful tunes that were being played live by krarists Tekelesenbet and Dawit.

While these activities were nothing to sneeze at, what makes this year a very special occasion regarding the Seattle Independence festivities is, we have received four congratulatory messages of solidarity from VIPs, two of which were actually letters of “Proclamation of May 24” – as the Eritrean Independence Day abroad. Those letters were handed to us by:

1. Mayor Ed Murray of Seattle, whose physical presence amongst us was most welcome and appreciated, spoke kindly of Eritrea and Eritreans in the Seattle area and handed us the Proclamation after he read it out to the attentive audiences.
2. That was followed by Mr. Larry Gossett’s “Proclamation of May 24th – as the Eritrean Independence Day in King County”, on behalf of the Metropolitan King County

Council, which was read out by Berhane Alazar, of the ENHOC Seattle branch.

3. Another message of solidarity came from the office of Governor Jay Inslee of Washington State. In that letter, which was read by Stephen uy, a staff member of the Governor's office, the Governor extended his warm greetings to Eritreans who were gathered at the Volunteer Park to celebrate the Eritrean Independence Day.
4. Lastly, expressing her regret for not being able to be at the Park, a message of solidarity from Seattle City Councilwoman Kshama Sawant, was read by Berhane Alazar.

Thus, this year's Eritrean Independence Day Festivities was one of the most successful, memorable, heart warming and gratifying events we have seen recently. Credit goes to the hard working members of the ENHOC Seattle branch.

Eritrean Independence is irreversible!

Long Live free and independent Eritrea!

Eternal memory to our Martyrs!

Awet nhafash!