

# OBITUARY

## THE DEATH OF JOURNALISM

*A Response to Fifth Estate CBC Program – Feb 12, 2016*

Dear Mark Kelly & Fifth Estate,

I watched The Fifth Estate presentation titled "Dealing with a Dictator" aired on February 12, 2016. Obviously, you are a new add to Fifth Estate and it shows you have a lot of learning ahead of you.

I am writing my observation to you and "Fifth Estate" who produced the piece. I will not try to defend Eritrea, because Eritrea's formidable track records are intact and doesn't need any defense. Do you know why? Because Eritrea staunchly and adamantly stays off the "Food Aid" and follows "self-reliance" as a principle of pragmatic governance.



I will not try to defend NEVSUN either, because NEVSUN has marked its integrity since the Eritreans came to know it as a law abiding and clean company. And that is what matters. None of "Fifth State" mediocre reportage would lower its integrity and status.

However, I was very saddened to see your reportage had no journalist aptitude. Because, to document such a piece requires of you to find all the facts dotted and lined up. Rather, your reportage appears to have an intent of smearing noble standings; both Eritrea's and NEVSUN's. The reportage sounded like a smear campaign on either Eritrea as a nation or NEVSUN as a successful company. Or perhaps you got the assignment in a rush and you didn't have the time nor the depth to research facts that could have saved from what you insinuate in your documentary.

Dear Mark,

Do you know Eritrea very well? Or did you watch it from across the Hill of refugee camps in Ethiopia and speculated? The reason I ask is your reporting sounded very outdated and full of unmanaged rhetoric.



You seem surprised when you learnt Eritrea has a 40% share in Bisha gold mine. You actually pressed a question whether the deal was a "take or leave it" making you sound insinuate that NEVSUN accepted the deal under duress. You called the business deal "a shot gun Marriage?" Obviously you seem to have no capacity or outlook or imagination that an African country [Eritrea] forging equal partnership with foreign companies.

Doesn't that make you sound ill trained in gathering facts? Is it not a typical stereotyping? Ignorance to be exact.

For your information, Eritrea's policy is for equal partnership since its independence. Actually it dates back to the struggle days as well. However, you didn't know that Eritrea says "No" to master-slave relations, and stands tall against any kind of exploitation. Obviously you didn't know Eritrea doesn't accept "foreign food aid" except development aid aimed at equal partnership.



If that is dictatorship, I would like to see more dictatorships as such!

Also did you know that Women in Eritrea get equal pay as their men counterpart? Of course, you may not be able to fathom that fact because you are used to women getting less pay than men for the same job in the Western developed countries.

Amazingly, you didn't seem to have read the UN reports on Millennium Development Goals 2015. Had you read a little, you could have understood Eritrea is one of the few countries that finished ahead of time. Therefore, you could have imagined where Eritrea puts its hard earned mining income. Eritrea puts all its money towards developing its human capacity and infrastructure.

Also, you did not know the UN couldn't produce a shred of evidence that Eritrea supported Al Shabab. Or did you only have the words of Abdinur Soyano; the Somali gun man whom you met in Nairobi, Kenya? You probably didn't know your guest Canadian Matt Brydon (former Chief of Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group) was fired from a UN post for his unprofessionalism and biased activities. Matt Bryden was sitting across your table. You could have asked him why he got fired as well. You may have learnt from his misgivings that could have helped you avoid yours as well.

Did you know that even former US ambassador Herman Cohen articulated Eritrea's involvement with Al Shabab doesn't hold water?

Did you know the Russian UN ambassador told reporters that his government couldn't find evidence of Eritrea's support to Al Shabab? You may also learn the South African diplomat also aired his concerns in similar fashion. The point is what you were hammering during your show was a callous and unlearned hear-say that shies away from true journalism.

Did you know the Canadian government hosts Eritrean consulate in Ottawa? And why do you think the Canadian government stays in diplomatic terms with Eritrea if your forceful theory and ill informed allegation of Eritrea's support to Al Shabab were true?

However, to my surprise you constantly tried to put Al Shabab footages next to Eritrea's. Even you're your guest Todd Romaine of NEVSUN kept saying positive results about his experience, you kept switching gears to hammer the "dictator" card. Does that make you a fact finder journalist or a person driven with a skewed agenda?

Did you know 14 UN council members voted to lift the illegal sanctions imposed on Eritrea, with the exception of the USA, simply because the USA has a veto power?

When you reported about Eritrea's youth migrations, did you realize that president Obama openly stated that his government had worked with many organizations to free women and children from the jaws of the brutal Eritrean government? Now, mind you! "Women and children" is emphasized heavily in president Obama's speech. Is that a surprise then the youth would flee Eritrea for any reason other than politics up on president Obama's encouragement? Shouldn't your documentary start with president Obama and the organizations he praised to encourage the migration of Eritrea's youth?



Did you know Eritrea and Eritreans have stormed the worst of psychological warfare since day one and triumphed in all aspects of their plans and world activities?

Let me share some background of what had been tried before.

Watching your program, it reminded me of two names that came to pass during the high seasons of Psychological Warfare against the State of Eritrea. The first name was Mr. Lloyd Axworthy; Canada's politician, statesman and academic whom at one point was a Foreign Minister. Mr. Axworthy vowed that he would uncork open the Eritreans and push them to some sort of forced diplomacy. Do you know what the Eritreans did? They chuckled, and let Mr. Axworthy huff-puff with all his might. Well, Mr. Axworthy despite his strong skills and aggressive capabilities to uncork open nations, he miserably failed when it came to Eritrea.

The second name is, Ms Sheila B. Keetharuth. who is appointed as a special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea. Ms. Keetharuth appeared in front of the UN and presented a very hefty document. When Ms. Keetharuth was challenged though, she admitted the reports were written up on her brief visits to Ethiopia and Djibouti refugee camps. Little did she know the Eritrean Diaspora was ready to challenge her findings in New York. Actually, she shied away from talking to the Eritrean Diaspora (who have a wealth of information to share) and went straight to those who fed her bed time stories.

Did you consider asking the Belgian, Hungarian, Norwegian fact-finding teams and journalists and find out what they gathered about the migration issues of Eritreans and Human Rights conditions in Eritrea?

Perhaps the news of 4 Swiss politicians visit to Eritrea also escaped you and “Fifth Estate”? The Swiss politicians reported that “Eritrea is not Hell.”

Did you come across the Belgian film maker Michel Collen's documentary? Perhaps you should watch the linked video titled “**Come & See**” <https://vimeo.com/114266196>

Now that brings you and Fifth Estate on the plate. Do you realize you were only standing on top hills of Tigray, Ethiopia? You never witnessed firsthand of all the smudges you smeared you on Eritrea and NEVSUN. Because, your reportage comes as a hear-say just like that of Ms. Keetharuth's.

You produced witnesses that can't show their faces and you couldn't reveal their names. To make matters worse you also stated that you were not able to corroborate their stories. The trip you took must have been ugly enough to force you gather whatever you found and patch up a story.

The reason I brought the above examples is that, your documentary is in the nature of that of Ms. Keetharuth's. So does it matter whether you were granted access to visit Eritrea? You already had started your campaign a one way street towards doom.

Dear Mark,

Since 1998 Eritreans have seen politicians and reporters get embarrassed after the facts. Few names for your enlightenment are; Herman Cohen, Anthony Lake, Jendai Fraser, Susan Rice, Llyod Axworthy, Michael Bolton, Dan Connell, Martin Plaut, Matt McClearn, Alex Last, Michela Wrong, Léonard Vincent ...etc. Now if you research what these names mean in regards to their handling of Eritrean facts, your name and/or "Fifth Estate" program adds to the list.

Actually, you seem to discourage Canadian companies competing in Eritrean market and mining. As we speak there are 26+ major international companies investing in Eritrea. Did you mean all the international companies operating in Eritrea in equal partnership get "shot gun marriages"? Having watched your reportage, I was saddened to witness the "death of journalism." Most importantly, I felt very strongly for the Canadian tax payers who watch your unfounded, ill trained, skewed, harassing and immature reportage.

Hence the title of this post; "OBITUARY: THE DEATH OF JOURNALISM." And, truly journalism has died at your hands.

Araia G. Ephrem