**EUROPES OPEN DOOR POLICY DRIVES MIGRATION INCLUDING ERITREANS AND ETHIOPIANS-- ISNT IT ABOUT TIME WE FIND OUT WHO IS AN ASYLUM SEEKER OR ECONOMIC MIGRANT?**

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 **Europe’s open door policy:** The question that needs to be asked here is, do European policy makers have any clear policy or guidance on Eritrean Asylum seekers and Economic Migrants? The answer is simply---- no, they have no coherent policy at all resulting in unsustainable open door policy. When it comes to refugees and asylum seekers they have been tinkering around the edges of their open door policy rather than look into the root causes of the issue. The dividing line between asylum seeker and economic migrant is blurred. For instance some come to Europe or UK for different reasons but once here they change their mind and become asylum seekers. People come for wedding from abroad once inside the host country--- they may apply for asylum. Parents or relatives who come on short visit or on a visitors visa with the assurance to return home-- then they change their mind and apply for asylum--- so that they can end up looking after their grand children. Some come for health reasons, education or change their, mind-- apply for asylum. Some come from their country of origin to do military training, commit crime/rape and apply for asylum. Some sports men/women are sent from their country to represent their nation at the Marathon apply for asylum, Artists who are the cream of society come to Europe for specific assignment then apply for asylum. So the concept of asylum is now completely diluted.

Where does one draw the line? I think the concept of asylum seeking is becoming confused and it is about time those in office precisely define whether most of those I mentioned above are asylum seekers or economic migrants, or neither. Policy makers need to create a clear, transparent system and clearly define who is an asylum seeker and who is not. While the economy benefits directly and indirectly from asylum seekers and economic migrants from their labour, the concept of genuine asylum seekers is becoming buried by economic migrants posing as asylum seekers. For the moment lets stick to the familiar phrase of an asylum seeker as we understand it.

But **who is an asylum seeker**? An asylum seeker is some one who leaves their country for political reasons, war, civil war, persecution for reasons of race, social groupings, political opinion; they cross borders to seek safety in other countries in the hope of being granted full refugee status. **While an economic migrant:** is one who moves to another country for a better life, they seek work legally or illegally in the safe country they have entered. Whether a person is an asylum seeker or an economic migrant is often left to the government policies of the host country, at times the word asylum can be interpreted differently and become perplexing. It is true that politicians play great part in defining who is what, some countries may define an economic migrant as an asylum seeker or vice versa, or countries like Israel may refuse to entertain these client group or give them very limited leave to work but many of them are classifies as illegal entrants subject to immigration control.

To find out why a large number of Eritreans were coming to Europe the in the last 2 years the Danish immigration Service wrote a comprehensive and thorough, eye witness account on Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers entitled “Eritrea-drivers and root causes of emigration, national service and the possibility of return”. The aim of their research was to establish why Eritreans are leaving their country and their finding was completed in November 2014. Some European countries dismissed the report, and others supported it. But what is strange is that those who dismissed the Danish report did not do any investigation to find out why Eritrean asylum seekers were coming. At present time Europe is overwhelmed by a huge influx of many genuine Syrians, Iraqis, Afghan, refugees and European officials are rushing around like fire brigade crew trying to twist hands to find a solution for the crisis they are partly to blame in having an open door policy---- by jumbling every one in one basket. Now however after the arrival of more I.8 million asylum seekers mostly Syrians and economic migrants from other countries, they are finally making desperate efforts to tackle the case head on as they are unable to close the flood gates--- they themselves have wide-open.

 When it comes to Eritrean and Ethiopian asylum seekers, they should have sent their fact finding missions many many years ago to countries like Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan to find remedies in time. In the absence of any European problem solving mechanism or coherent policy towards Eritreans and those Ethiopians pretending to be Eritreans, the 79 page Danish Immigration report on Eritreans at least provides a clear and comprehensive picture, highlighting from A to Z- the reasons why Eritreans are leaving their country and whether they are political refugees or economic migrants. Of course, the report has its drawbacks but on the whole it is very thorough. If Europe wanted to have a descent asylum policy especially for the Eritrean, Ethiopian cases, then they should follow what Danish immigration service has done and physically visit Eritrean refugees and economic migrants in the refugee camps of Ethiopia, Sudan and speak to Eritrean officials, non governmental organizations, UN officials and European ambassadors in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. But they did not bother to do anything in the past perhaps viewing Eritrea insignificant country as compared to Ethiopia.

**Miss classification:** In addition European policy makers have not been dealing with Eritrean cases objectively because they have been wrongly classifying Ethiopian refugees as Eritreans, why is that? The simple answer seems to be policy carelessness, ignorance at times deliberate because Eritrea is seen as unfriendly country. **Thus many Ethiopians have exploited the system full by disguising themselves as Eritreans in order to obtain a European passports and have so far succeeded.** If west Europe wanted to know who is an Eritrean and who is Ethiopian, it is straight forward, Ethiopians speak a national language called Amharic and in Eritrea the two common national languages are Tigrinya and Arabic followed by 7 other ethnic languages spoken in the country. Note also the people of Tigrai in Northern Ethiopia, where the minority government of Ethiopia come from, do speak Tigrinya like us Eritreans, but their accent is completely different from that spoken in Eritrea and only native Eritreans can differentiate between those who come from Tigrai and proper Ethiopia.

**Open Door Policy, the Eritrean Perspective:** A second problem is that Europe has an open door for Eritreans, this encourages Eritreans who are not in any danger, to leave their country and apply for asylum superfluously, this has depleted Eritrea of its youth. There are also other pull factors especially Eritreans to leave their country for Europe, that every Eritrean who leaves the country has relatives abroad in America, Europe, Middle East, Australia. Obviously for those who want to improve their lives they are tempted to leave their country after hearing about the lives of their relativities abroad and by seeing relatives splashing money when they come to visit relatives in Eritrea. It has to be remembered that Eritrea's exchange rate is low that even an unimpressive salary or been dependant on welfare in Europe would look like wealth in Eritrea after currency conversion. Moreover we the relatives abroad also facilitate the departure of our relatives in Eritrea by sending them money at times willingly and at times by hook or crook when they are threatened with death by traffickers.

Europe's open door policy has resulted in the exodus of Eritreans flocking to Europe to seek asylum as European politicians have also created a representation that they would give preferential treatment to Eritreans. Note also due to their miss classification, Ethiopians--- will also be encouraged to leave. So I don't blame fellow Eritreans or Ethiopians if they come here and apply for asylum, at least some of them can have better lives. There is also other ways that Europe can slow down the arrival of Eritreans and Ethiopians to Europe, by forcing Ethiopia to accept the Algiers agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia and end the no war no peace situation between the two countries. The number of Eritrean asylum seekers/economic migrants flocking to Europe would fall dramatically and Eritrea would also have restored diplomatic relationship with Ethiopia in 24 hours time.

*It is quite strange that, Eritrea is not Syria, the Eritrean capital Asmara is not Damascus, there is no war or civil war in Eritrean, there is no starvation, there is no any sectarian killings or fundamentalism, in fact it is one of the most peaceful countries in Africa*. Moreover the German Ambassador to Eritrea who invited the German symphony orchestra to celebrate Eritrean independence day last year said, Eritrea is a peaceful country and we do not have to believe anything the media says. Yet the perception created by many European politicians that Eritreans should be accepted as political refugees has created the rush for Eritreans from around the world to take advantage of the loose European asylum policy to reach Europe by any means. That news has reached the whole of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and the Middle East. Many Eritreans who were born in or emigrated to countries like Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, South Sudan, Israel and Ethiopia, who have been living for decades peacefully, are taking advantage of the open door policy. What is even stranger is that even some who have lived in Europe for years have gone to Calais to try their luck for UK and the only thing they need to say is that they are fleeing national service in Eritrea. Even rich Eritreans who have been living peacefully in many parts of the world are taking advantage of the situation, selling their properties in order to come to Europe. To facilitate the exodus, the traffickers are also everywhere to assist their journey. through the Mediterranean and once in international waters, they can call on European Coastguards to save them as they have moral duty to save lives.

**Hermon:** Of course the Syrian issue is different from that of Eritrea and when it comes to young people; but it has been said repeatedly that, the best interest of the child is to stay with their parents, but we have seen hundreds of Eritrean children leaving Eritrea. These young children are suppose to be with their families and go to school but many are abandoning their school and flocking to Europe simply because they have relatives abroad and are also fooled by the green grass they see on the other side with out realizing the devastating traumatic effect it has on their future. For instance an Eritrean boy called Hermon, 15 years of age, arrived in France last year and was interviewed by a journalist from BBC called Fergal Kean. The young boy was asked how long it took him to reach France. The young boy said it took him about 2 years which means he left Eritrea when he was 13 years and when pressed why he left Eritrea, he said he did it because his friends were doing it. The question is, is young Hermon an asylum seeker and do the French government have any political responsibility for him?

The answer is simply, he is not an asylum seeker, because young Hermon can not be threatened by any one in Eritrea, he will not be called for national service as he is too young, he is suppose to be in school with his friends. Or at least he could have waited until he reaches the age of National Service, then he could have done what ever he wanted. Moreover the French government do not have any political obligation, but they do have a moral obligation towards him. By now, Hermon may have met the so called Eritrean opposition who are not fit for a purpose, he may have been coached by relatives, interpreters and foster parents to say the unsayable, like he would have been tortured or killed if he stayed in Eritrea.

But the reality is that Hermon and others of his age may have left without informing their parents and once in Sudan or Ethiopia then relatives abroad will have no choice but to send money to him in order to keep him safe and to be escorted by adults to come to Europe. There is no doubt some Eritrean families may think that sending their children to Europe is an investment. What ever parents back at home in Eritrea think, the majority of Eritrean youngsters are simply an “accident of their time” they don't know what they are doing and are too young to understand what the asylum system is. These youngsters are simply trying their luck in the hope that they will be rescued by the Coast Guards and hoping to succeed in Europe, but it will not be easy. The damage that is done to young people like Hermon is enormous, they are already damaged, traumatized, and have seen hardship. These youngsters may have experienced abuse after abuse by traffickers, they may have seen death torture on their years of journey through the Sahara.

**Risks:** It is not only the younger generation who are taking advantage of Europe's open door policy, another example of this is, a pregnant Eritrean women interviewed by the same BBC journalist, was asked where she is going to give birth. While smiling the pregnant Eritrean women said, here in the Park again in France. There was also another tragic story of a heavily pregnant Eritrea woman who looks like she did not want to apply for asylum in France (Kedija Ibrahim) but in Britain instead. She was running with other youngsters towards lorries heading for Britain, she fell over and has miscarriage d, and her unborn child is now buried in the Jungle of Calais refugee camp. The woman was admitted to hospital in France but she was reported to have discharged her self from the Hospital and her whereabouts were not know at the time. It is shocking that she lost her child and no one knows what happen to the mother. Another tragic accident was that an Eritrean man in France was seen on a news channels, tossing his child over the high fence in Calais in order for him and perhaps his family to come here to the UK.

What people are not realizing is that those children who leave their parents and their country at a young age and go through the horrifying experience of traffickers, detention centres the long and uncertain wait for refugee status, are damaged by the events and are less likely to succeed in life, because of unusual background, little education as the education system in England or France is geared to children born in Europe. Yes Hermon and others in similar situation may in the short term have smart phones, designer, shoes, clothes but in the long term these client group may end up living on wages than salaries. -*Which means the financial stress they will be facing to make ends meet in such a harsh competitive world--- would stress them out to the limit. Meaning they could easily lose their hair in their late 20th as the daily challenges of survival become enormous.* The end result to many of them may be complete lose to Eritrea and perhaps burden to themselves and the host country. Unless obviously, these client group can go into higher education after 18 years of age or develop certain skills to succeed in life---- otherwise the end result for many of them may be diminishing return.

**What about the Syrian issue?** Of course, the Syrian issue is completely different from that of Eritrea, Syria has civil war, destruction, Islamic fundamentalism, beheading and the Syrians are the genuine refugees. But what exacerbated the Syrian refugee crisis was politicians who created the perception that refugees would be welcomed, without trying to find a solution to the Syrian crisis. Look at Angela Merkel of Germany, she made the biggest political blunder of her political carrier, when she publicly said on television, without consulting her counterparts in Europe, that refugees were welcome in Germany. Merkels words caused a rush among refugees to come to Germany including thousands of Eritreans and why not? She has now breached the Dublin convention which says an asylum seeker has to apply for asylum in the first European country they entered and if they cross borders to go to other European countries, they are suppose to be fingerprinted and may be returned to the first safe country they entered, although governments can use their own discretion when it comes to Dublin regulations. The reaction to the German chancellor's view, either from the German and European public, has been negative.

Yes her views may have been genuine and human, but we live in a volatile world and unless politicians are careful, their views can at times put them in hot water as politics is a rough trade. I don’t think Angela Merkel has any choice but she will have to accept the view of the general public. After the backlash from her statement that refugees are welcome in Germany, she has changed her tune and is now generously giving cash to Turkey to keep Syrian refugees in Turkey, preventing them from migrating to Europe. It is not enough, the damage is already done to her reputation and she is beginning to lose the support among her public and the European public. From now on, the German chancellor may have to fight harder to justify her policy on refugees for her own political survival. I think she had it so good for so long and has been chancellor of Germany for more than 10 years. it is about time she bows out of politics before the next election in Germany. Otherwise the agreement spearheaded by herself and other European leaders to sign an agreement with Turkey may haunt her and lead to her demise.

The agreement is to give the government of Turkey up to six billion Euros in order to keep migrants in the camps in Turkey, in exchange, Turks get visa free access to the European Union and may be in the next five years Turkey gets to join the European Union. But one thing that needs to be understood here is that the free visa access for Turkish citizen will have its unforeseen consequence. For instance if asylum seeker buy forged Turkish passports, they can easily travel to Europe thanks to the visa free access, once in the EU, they can throw their Turkish passport and apply for asylum. Thus removing the long and dangerous journey asylum seekers make on foot through Eastern Europe. This benefits Eastern Europe as it will reduce the number of migrants who travel on foot through their countries. This will also increase the number of migrants that travel to EU countries and may result in European countries abandoning the Shengen agreement (the treaty that allows free movement of people among the European countries). There is no doubt the comprehensive package for Turkey is great but unlikely to resolve the root cause of the Syrian crisis. Pumping in money to Turkey may be temporary solution but it does not solve the problem. The refugee crisis will continue to flow legally or illegally to Germany and European politicians are now facing the harsh reality of their open door policy. it is they who created the hysteria of an open door policy for refugees to come to Europe dead or alive.

What European politicians are forgetting is that those who live in Third World Countries live under poverty, fear, no effective education system, no job, no safety, no future, no democracy, no electricity for 24 hours, no television. And if your placard openly invites us to come to your countries, then everyone of us would make all the efforts to come to Europe and why not? The truth of the matter is that if we are given the opportunity we will take advantage of it even if we had a respectable lives back home. We may risk coming to Europe as our jobs at home may not guarantee anything, because we are always mesmerized by the saying--- that the grass is greener on the European side, even if it means that we live in a soup kitchen. In short if you give us an opportunity, we will find means and take advantage of it. If you allow gaps in your asylum policy then we will make sure we will exploit it. If you give us a small space, we will make sure we will feel it. If we find a lorry coming to any European countries we will make sure we will jump on it. If we find a moving over ground train coming we will crawl underneath it. If you erect fence to prevent us from coming we will jump over it. The reason is simple we come from poor countries and have nothing to lose, even if we die on the way as we will be forgotten statistics.

Hence instead of resolving disputes peacefully so that we could stay at home, fuel is added to our fires. Instead of your governments try to build hospitals, schools, universities in our countries of origin, you are propping up corrupt regimes who are amassing millions of dollars by starving their people. Instead of taking caution approach and find diplomatic or political solution to world problems, you play us, one against the other and you have always found short term solutions rather than long term solutions to our problems. Therefore it is about time that European politicians first and foremost clearly define who is an asylum seeker, and who is not in the 21st century, rather than the open door policy they have adopted all these years.

We know politicians trade in lies, leaks, misleading informations, and their open door policy is driving migration including Eritreans Ethiopians, Europeans and others---- it is about time they listen to us the ordinary public and come up with unambiguous policy to tackle whether in avoiding taxes to hide them in tax havens. Their open door policy on asylum and migration issues need to be transparent so that it can be easily understood and appreciated by the average public. Otherwise if politicians are going to mislead us and misinform us then, there are plenty of potholes ready in the waiting, to trap them unexpectedly. In other words the current influx of uncontrolled migration where ever it comes from will embarrass them and cost them their jobs.. it is about time they define genuine and non genuine asylum seekers or economic migrants once and for all.

An essay on the UN Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea to follow soon.

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