**Ambassador Girma Asmerom Embodiment of Valor and Victory**

Ambassador Girma Asmerom’s passing is a great loss for the people of Eritrea. His life was the embodiment of selflessness, bravery, dedication and sacrifices-hallmark of Eritrean grit, stamina and doggedness that propelled the nation to independence against all odds. Ambassador Girma was there every step of the way to oversee Eritrea transition from arduous struggle for liberation to nationhood. Ambassador Girma wore every hat to accomplish the task of achieving independence and beyond.

After independence Ambassador Girma became a diplomat. Most diplomats of the world are trained career professionals-trained in the art of diplomacy to represent their nation. Eritrean diplomats represent Eritrea in unique ways. Ambassador Girma’s responsibilities as a diplomat was unprecedented and different because he served the people of Eritrea not only as a diplomat but as a representative to the cause they fought for decades to bring to fruition. The independence of Eritrea.

It was a symbiotic relationship between Ambassador Girma who fought for independence and wanted to ensure perpetuity; and Diaspora Eritrea that wanted to retain the hard won independence. Perfect marriage. All he needed to do was lead. And he did.

He led by example. He exemplified leadership in the humblest of ways and with humility that disarmed every one that came in contact with him. He embraced everyone with dignity, grace and made them feel at par with him. He was focused and never relented-once or, deviated from message. He was mister consistent-aware of the task-ahead and pursued it doggedly. He worked hard and he was extremely focused. In the process he ensured that people understood what he was doing and what was going on.

Ambassador Girma’s tasks i.e. assignments fell in the most hostile of environments for Eritreans and Eritrean Diplomats in the world namely Ethiopia and the US.

In Ethiopia Ambassador Girma faced the most disgraceful and barbaric Ethiopian regime that uprooted over 80,000 Eritreans in the most horrific of ways. It was mayhem of the highest order that Eritreans faced. It was ethnic cleansing that will remain seared in the hearts of minds of Eritreans forever and Ambassador Girma was in the middle of it all.

In a manner unseen anywhere, the criminal regime in Ethiopia ransacked Girma’s residence, offices and in complete disregard for international diplomatic norms and protocol, the regime violated Eritrea’s diplomatic pouch repeatedly. This took place in Addis Ababa in the middle of Africa’s diplomatic hub. Yet, no one voiced outrage to the outrageous inhuman act perpetrated by the defunct criminal Ethiopian regime comprised of Tigrayan minority group full of hatred and jealousy toward Eritreans.

A look back at these events after the untimely death of Ambassador Girma provides a unique perspective on what Eritreans endured over the last 18 years and the important role Girma played. Above all, it is a reminder how calmly and eloquently Ambassador Girma managed to capture the essences of the challenges Eritreans faced and how he stirred Eritreans to stand against all the machinations designed to destroy their nation.

After he became Eritrean Ambassador in the US, Eritreans embraced Girma and he became central figure in their lives. He was accessible, and a magnet to all types of Eritreans particularly to those Eritreans that have families forcefully ethnic cleansed out of Ethiopia by the minority Tigrayan regime. He was a source of comfort because he experienced what their families experienced.

Eritrean ambassadorship is a unique responsibility. In Washington DC no one can point to a single embassy or ambassador that deals with its diaspora communities like Eritrean ambassadors. As soon as he arrived in DC, Ambassador Girma faced many challenges.

The barrage of attacks by international mainstream media that tried to malign and sally Eritrea’s reputation. Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) leadership that is determined to see Eritrea on her knees and the propaganda campaigns it waged to that end. Diplomatic challenges posed by US State Department. Above all and importantly, tending to the needs of his constituency the people of Eritrea.

Ambassador Girma was a true leader of people. A masterful politician, motivator and diplomat who know what to do, how, when, where and why. He was brilliant, witty and funny in the process. He never took Weyane, or the TPLF which he called “WEYIN” (in feminine context) seriously. He was funny when he addressed them but he was on point. He managed to expose them every step of the way. He challenged them every step and became a thorn on their side. He spoke their language, understood their psyche and tendencies. He was a source of strength to Eritrean Diaspora.

Eritreans are communal people. The life of the people of Eritrea is not individual it is community based. Ambassador Girma understood it well and harnessed the power of the people every step. He conducted regular meetings with the people and communicated the issues effectively. He educated Eritrean Diaspora and showed them where the challenges lay ahead and empowered them. More importantly he showed them how to stand strong “SHET MEANTA” was his favored expression and it means, tighten the belt. Eritreans heeded the message and tightened their belts and marched alone with him as one.

Ambassador Girma anchored the Eritrean community in Diaspora in the most critical time and his legacy will reverberate forever.

Ambassador Girma served Eritrea at the UN and other places uniquely and effectively. His services will be missed. Above all he will be missed. He was towering figure and personality that is uniquely Eritrean. His experiences in life are unmatched and worthy of emulating but impossible to achieve. From a star national soccer player, a scholar, to a leadership position in a revolutionary endeavor, a central figure on formulating a national media outlet Dimtsi Hafash, to a diplomat and statesman. He was a star and will remain one in our hearts forever.

Ambassdor Girma lived true Eritrean life and disregarded his life in the process. In other words, Ambassador Girma was martyred when he was alive because he gave his life to Eritrea until his last breath.

He enjoyed the challenges, the comradery, educating, the mingling and the Eritrean life. He lived his life with a purpose. He exemplified the meaning of living life with a purpose.

Ambassador Girma achieved Eritrea’s independence and helped lead Eritrea’s effort to ensure a bright future by addressing an existential challenge posed by the minority regime in Ethiopia. He saw their demise but unfortunately it was not God’s will to see their burial. Hence, it is incumbent upon all Eritreans to ensure that WEYIN is buried deep in the ground in his honor. It is incumbent upon all to aspire to live his legacy and ensure united Eritrean community that stands with Eritrea.

PS every time I thanked him for his selfless dedication and hard work he always turned it around and told me no, Thank You. Salakum. Meaning, because of you. Ambassador Girma Asmerom, allow me to thank you one more time with this short poem.

Ambassador, thank you do not serve you justice

But thank you anyway,

For, there is no other way

But I must thank you aware

Gratitude must be repaid

In deed worthy of your honor

Repay you by emulating you

Aspire to be you

In my own individual ways

Centered in the causes you lived for

And honor your life so you can live

So that we can live

Centered and anchored by Eritrea

A nation that will light your torch forever

Deservingly

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