



Eritrean Afar State in Exile

Restoring the Dignity of the Eritrean Afar People Democratically

"Eretriyah Qafarih Konnabna Demokraasil Daabisenno"

November 10, 2014

Ref#: 0007

H.E. Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos

State Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

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Subject: RSADO leadership calls for murder of Afar opposition

Dear Excellency Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos,

I'm writing to you to bring to your attention a serious threat of violence and an attempt to incite murder by the leadership of the **Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization** (RSADO), one of 13 Eritrean opposition umbrella groups who operate within your country.

I have recently come across evidence of a call to assassinate myself and my colleagues who make up the leadership of the Eritrean Afar State in Exile (EASE), by the Chairman of RSADO.

This evidence comes in the form of an audio recording (<http://youtu.be/AqpBm9dd550>) recorded on October 1, 2014 in Logiya, Ethiopia during a meeting with Afar elders organized by RSADO's chairman Mr. Ibrahim Harun and his deputy, Mr. Mohamed Shina. In the recording they can be heard trying to justify the murder of people who disagree with them, which prominently includes EASE.

Though they do not identify EASE by name, we believe the references to another group are clearly directed at us and are cause for grave concern. EASE has called for democratic reform and transparency within RSADO's ranks and we believe this is why we are being targeted.

I would like to bring to your attention that we have raised concerns about RSADO's ongoing behaviour of interference and intimidations of Eritrean Afar refugees to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and senior officials in your government in the past.

As I am sure you will agree, the use of violence or threat of violence is unacceptable in democratic discourse, especially in a burgeoning democracy like yours that's striving hard to restore democratic process, bring peace and security, and confront the threat of extremism in the region.



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Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Ethiopia for maintaining an open-door policy to avail my fellow countrymen with humanitarian access and auspice to those who are fleeing Eritrea due to political repressions. Ethiopia has been a safe haven for ever-growing Eritrean refugee population, especially to my people, the marginalised indigenous Afar.

EASE is the democratic, non-violent voice of the Eritrean Afar people. EASE draws its wide mandate from the political and traditional Afar leaders, the leadership of Afar women and youth groups, the Eritrean Afar Diaspora and Eritrean-Afar refugees. Over time, and especially in the recent months, Eritrean Afar have consolidated their resources and visions under EASE in an effort to end the suffering of Eritrean Afar people under the current Eritrean regime.

That suffering has been documented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, who reported Eritrea's use of murderous means to clear the Afar from their homelands and confiscate their lands, resources and businesses.¹ The United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously adopted the SR's findings and Report.²

EASE worked hard with the Special Rapporteur and others to document the unacceptable situation that is now the hard reality in Eritrea.

EASE's program is set out in the Samara Declaration, a solemn document ascribed to by the Afar traditional and political leadership and signed by thousands of ordinary Afar people. The Samara Declaration calls for a power sharing constitution for Eritrea, specifically a multi-ethnic Federation. This is the only model that has delivered relative peace, democratization and development in the Horn of Africa countries, all of which are multi ethnic, multilingual and which observe many varieties of Christianity, Islam and indigenous religions.

This is a track record we are proud of your Excellency. Nothing in our record suggests or jeopardises the quest for rights of Afar people's self-determination in Eritrea nor the host county's stability and democracy.

This is a grave infringement of Ethiopia's Law. This threat by RSADO, if carried out, would be a huge setback for the peaceful relationship presently enjoyed by the Eritrean Afar people and the government of Ethiopia. Together we have worked strenuously to initiate an incipient democratic structure for Eritrea that respects rule of law, democracy and human right.

¹Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth, UNGAOR, 23rd Sess, UN Doc A/HRC/23/53 [Keetharuth Report], paras 75-77.

²HRC resolution 23/21, UN Doc A/HRC/RES/23/21, based upon UN Doc A/HRC/23/L.17, Human Rights Council, 23rd Sess, 10 June 2013, item 4; online http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A-HRC-23-2_en.pdf



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Your government have welcomed and continues to provide the Eritrean Afar refugees and their families to live in safety and free of harassment. As well as urgently needed a political space and representation to advance Eritrean Afar causes.

Your Excellency,

I call upon your government to take all appropriate measures to correct the undemocratic behaviours and the culture of intimidation and threats by RSADO leadership. I have the absolute faith in your esteemed judgement to ensure accountability of the perpetrators.

Yours Truly,

Ahmed Y Mohamed
Executive Chair, Eritrean Afar State in Exile (EASE)

CC: Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CC: H.E. President Ismail Ali Sirro, Afar Regional State, Ethiopia

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