



Eritrean Afar State in Exile

Restoring the Dignity of the Eritrean Afar People Democratically

"Eretriyah Qafarih Konnabna Demokraasil Daabisenno"

Nov 9, 2015

RE: The Afar People of Eritrea

Dear Dr. Hartmut Quehl,

Thank you very much for your explanation for not inviting EASE to your workshop. We respect your decision to carry out the workshop of selected groups of Eritreans for this purpose.

We have only learned about the conference from Eritrean website which indicated some of the topics for discussion was in fact about the rights of ethnic groups and land issues and did not have prior knowledge of evolved process. Thank you.

We have been championing diversity and multi ethnic constitutional framework for Eritrea's future democracy, the rule of law, indigenous rights and land and resource rights for years. This is why I reached out to you by email and felt the right ingredient was missing for important inclusive dialogue for your workshop.

This is why we still believe;

- The ethnic issues cannot be appropriately discussed without the perspective of the ethnicities the subject of the discussion;
- Constitutional solutions cannot be appropriately debated without the participation of Eritrea's interior nationalities.
- These truths are universally acknowledged by all serious political, academic and professional organizations.

Afar Eritreans have gained recognition and respect from United Nations organs, including the SR on human rights in Eritrea, the UN Human Rights Council, and the UN Commission to investigate human rights violations against Afar in Eritrea.



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Furthermore,

One of the main contentious issues that have crippled the Eritrean opposition groups from uniting against authoritarian dictatorship in Eritrea is the unimplemented 1997 Eritrean Constitution. The implementation of this constitution seems to get the support of most of your invited guests for this workshop.

Eritrea's unimplemented 1997 constitution is at odds with Afar vision. It excludes minorities from effective participation in reformed Eritrea. It suffocates them in institutions that will be dominated by the two large nationalities. It confiscates their lands to be disposed of by the dominant large nationalities. All of this is contrary to international law respecting minorities and indigenous peoples (the Afar are both).

The Afar homeland (Dankalia) is known to contain vast resources, including large potash deposits, gold and other metals. Dankalia's coast is significant geopolitically: it includes the country's two main port cities of Assab and Massawa which are economically strategic to Eritrea's continuity as developing Nation State.

We believe the issue of the proper constitution (power sharing) constitution– is something (the only thing) which has been shown to work to foster stability in plural and deeply divided societies in Africa.

As a key plank of your institutional mandate to promote cultural tolerance and critical thinking, we share your views and are hopeful that you will stand for the rights of indigenous people and minorities such as the Afar of Eritrea.

We would be grateful for an opportunity to meet with you in the near future to exchange thoughts on the matters related in this correspondence.

Sincerely,

Ahmed Youssouf Mohamed
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