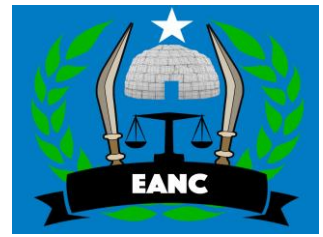




ERITREAN AFAR NATIONAL CONGRESS ERITRIYAH QAFARIH AGATHI KOBOXU

المؤتمر الوطني لعفر ارتريا

*Restoring the Self Determination of the Eritrean Afar Nation
Eretriyah Qafar Isim Isih Madqittaamih Cakki Daabisenno*



CONFERENCE ON AUTONOMOUS DANKALIA

OTTAWA, CANADA JUNE 28 - 29, 2024

Conference, cultural event & more

ERITREAN AFAR NATIONAL CONGRESS

6th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL STATUS AUTONOMY IN DANKALIA

UNITED ERITREA

Sovereignty, secured borders
& territorial integrity

Constitutionally decentralized
democratic nation state

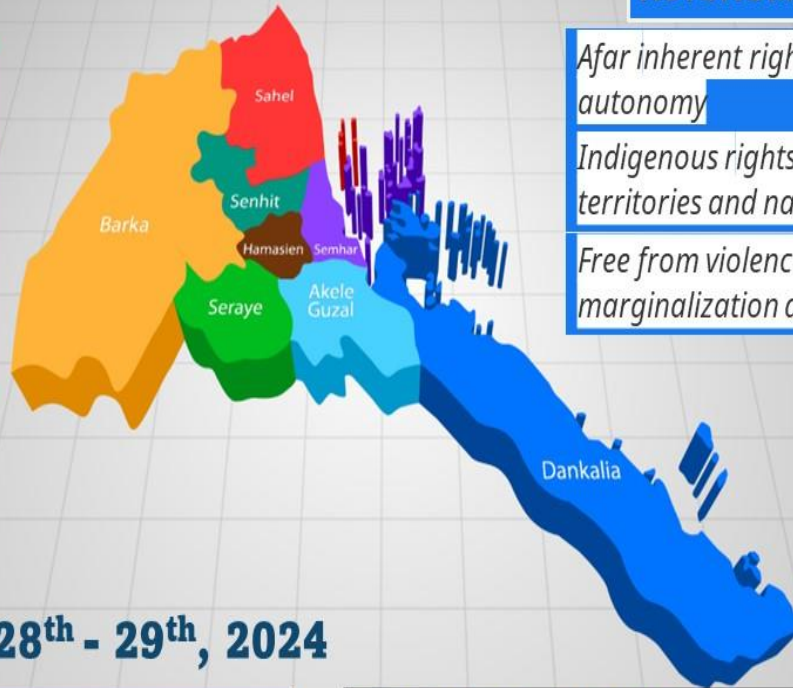
Nation state free from
military tyranny & regional
hostility

AUTONOMOUS DANKALIA

Afar inherent right of self-government &
autonomy

Indigenous rights to culture, lands,
territories and natural resources

Free from violence, discrimination,
marginalization and assimilation



JUNE 28th - 29th, 2024

DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE

EQUALITY & AUTONOMY

OTTAWA, CANADA

AFAR CULTURE & DINNER

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Introduction

This year marks the 33rd anniversary since Eritrea's authoritarian military leaders, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), seized control and dashed the hopes and aspirations of the Eritrean people for democracy, rule of law, and basic human rights.

Our unwavering commitment is to steer Eritrea toward a democratic future while safeguarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and traditional borders by all available means. We are determined to replace PFDJ rule with a decentralized democratic nation state in Eritrea that upholds rule of law, constitutional democracy and national unity through fairness and equality. This involves implementing a power-sharing constitution that distributes autonomous functions and authority between the central government and eight provinces (regional states)– Akale-Guzai, Barka, Dankalia, Hamasien, Sahel, Semhar, Serae, and Senhit - as shown on a traditional map above.

Each provincial regions (8 regional states) will have the right to self-govern and political independence within a federated Eritrea. Our commitment also entails the pursuit of justice, equality for all, and constitutional governance that guarantees indigenous and minority rights to own and manage their lands and natural resources. This includes ensuring equality among Eritrea’s ethnic nationalities, cultures, religions, and geographic regions as already recognized and provided for in regional legal instruments such as The African Charter for Human Rights (Banjul Charter), and international instruments such as The United Nations (UN) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The pressing political and humanitarian situation in Eritrea is very urgent. You may recall that our conference on July 1st, 2023, was dedicated to gathering constitutional experts, Eritrean Diaspora, and human rights activists. We have produced a document called the [Afar Model](#), which proposes a democratic transition and power-sharing constitutional model that grants decentralized governance and the rights to autonomy to all regions of Eritrea. This year, we are taking you back to Dankalia, one of the eight (8) provincial regions in Eritrea, which is the traditional home of the indigenous Afar people.

This year, our conference calls for special status recognition for Dankalia.

Our conference theme is ***“Autonomous Dankalia within United Eritrea”***.

Our event will be held in Ottawa, Canada. June 28th is dedicated to the Afar audience in the diaspora and at home, while June 29th will be open to all Afar and non-Afar audience.

We invite you as a friend and supporter of the Afar cause in Eritrea to join us alongside our guests from various representatives of Eritrean opposition groups, constitutional experts, human rights activists, and regional experts for discussions on the democratic future of Eritrea. The program will include presentations, Q&A from the audience and entertainment featuring traditional Afar food and a cultural show hosted by the local Afar community.

About EANC

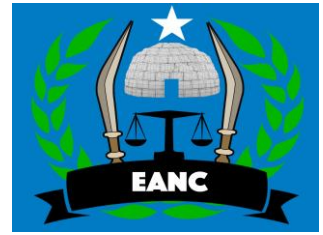
Eritrean Afar National Congress (EANC) is an exiled Afar political organization dedicated to self-determination and self-rule of Eritrean Afar people in their coastal homeland of Dankalia, Eritrea, where the indigenous Afar are subjected to marginalization, persecution and ethnic cleansing at the hands of the current Eritrean government. EANC is the voice of the Eritrean Afar people. EANC draws its mandate from the political and traditional Afar leaders, the leadership of Afar women and youth groups, the Eritrean Afar Diaspora and Eritrean-Afar refugees.



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History of the Afar Nation and Pre-Independence Eritrea

The Afar people are ancient and indigenous, with their traditional territories in the Afar Triangle being fragmented into what are now the sovereign states of Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea during "the Scramble for Africa" in the 1880s. The Franco-Italian colonialists divided this area into three pieces to establish their colonies and international borders, effectively separating the Afar nation. Djibouti fell to the French, Eritrea to the Italians, and Ethiopia was, by and large, escaped uncolonized, though the Italians briefly did occupy Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941¹.

The combined precolonial Afar territories form a strategically important region spanning approximately 157,000 square kilometers, equivalent in size to four European countries: Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Positioned at a crucial geopolitical junction, the Triangle connects the coastal waters of the Red Sea with international maritime shipping routes that connect the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandab. Moreover, it hosts three significant ports: Assab in Eritrea and Obock and Tadjourah in Djibouti.

Despite initially honoring peace agreements with the Afar nation, European powers expanded their dominance by encroaching into Afar territories without consent. This led to a revolt by the Afar people against the colonial powers. The resistance was ultimately suppressed due to Europe's superior military strength, leading to the death of Yasin Haysama, Sultan of Girrifo by Italian forces, and the capture of the Sultan Laoita in Goba'ad by French forces. He was subsequently taken to French colonies in Madagascar and vanished without a trace².

Today, long after the colonial division of Afar territories by the Europeans, artificial borders continue to define the contemporary reality for the Afar people. The psychological wounds left over from the colonial era manifest in Afar poverty, marginalization, and helplessness throughout the region.

In the partitioned Afar Triangle, the threat against the Afar people are especially evident in the current state of Eritrea. Eritrea has committed more crimes against its people as an African state than all the European colonizers combined. In Dankalia, the threat against the Afar nation is both immediate and persistent.

Afar Persecution Inside Eritrea

Eritrea has colonized, marginalized and persecuted the Afar since formation of the state in 1993³. The UN Commission on the situation of Human Rights in Eritrea [COI-Eritrea] and the United Nations Special

¹ Emperor Haile SELASSIE became an internationally renowned figure in 1935, when he unsuccessfully appealed to the League of Nations to prevent Italy from occupying Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941. CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/#introduction>

² Sultan of Gobaad and his deputy was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and taken to Fort Duaphin, Madagascar. The sultan died in exile 19 July 1932 both titles of Sultan and deputy Sultna (Banoyta) ceased to exist and the Sultanate was abolished. <https://en.sewasew.com/p/ge-baa-d>, Encyclopaedia Aethiopica

³ May 9 2023, UN Special Rapporteur reports the Disturbing situation of human rights of Afar people in Eritrea becoming more visible, republished by IWGIA https://iwgia.org/en/news/5228-disturbing-situation-human-rights-afar-eritrea.html?fbclid=IwAR39p8l_7JaTvW2UvbHFwjGN16VgxSpb7i3KnxkXf5XKzRS1u4IBIbk0J-8

Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea [SR-Eritrea] thoroughly examined how Eritrea treated the Afar community. Both UN bodies concluded that Eritrean authorities systematically persecuted the Afar population, including forcibly removing them from their ancestral lands near Assab port through acts of violence, murder, and mass killing. They determined that this persecution amounted to crimes against humanity.⁴ Both entities suggested that these crimes and those responsible for them be referred by the UN Security Council to the International Criminal Court¹ for further action.

A decade-long and extensively detailed reporting by UN investigations and experts reveals the unique nature of the crimes against the indigenous Afar in Eritrea. The premeditated and systematic destruction of the Afar indigenous nation or ethnic groups by the Eritrean government is evident.

a) Extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, 2013ⁱⁱ

The United Nations Special Rapporteur report 2013 (Sec K, para, 75-78):-The Afar are subjected to extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and rape, as well as the destruction of their traditional means of subsistence and livelihood, and businesses.

b) Systematic violations of the fundamental rights and freedoms, 2014ⁱⁱⁱ

The United Nations Special Rapporteur report 2014 (A/HRC/26/45, 9, page4):- The Special Rapporteur noted allegation regarding the ongoing and systematic violations of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Red Sea Afar people, one of the nine ethnic minority groups in Eritrea.

c) Crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, 2015^{iv}

*The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (COI) 2015, (independent experts, Chair Mike Smith, Victor Dankwa, Sheila B. Keetharuth, confirmed that Eritrean officials have committed the **crime of persecution, a crime against humanity** against Eritrean Afar population since 1991. (Para, 1121,1122):-The killing of members of the Afar ethnic group and reports of the existence of mass-graves.*

-The Afar people have been subjected to extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearance by the Eritrean Government since 2000.

-These killings have also triggered their displacement from their lands within the country and across borders to Ethiopia and Djibouti.

-This has posed great difficulty to their livelihoods as they depend on their traditional lands for the sustenance as an indigenous ethnic group.

d) Ethnic persecution, forcible evictions and campaign of killings, 2016^v

The United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) report 2016 Para 292 – 295(COI finds crimes against humanity against Afar):- The Commission also received reports of forcible evictions of members of the Afar ethnic group, and arbitrary arrests of members of the Kunama ethnic group, in late 2015 and 2016,

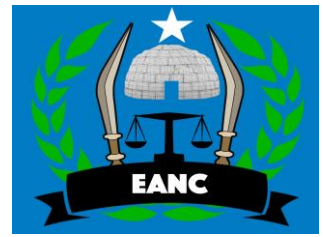
⁴ Ethnic cleansing is a well-recognized form of persecution, which is a crime against humanity. See generally, Currie & Rikhof, *International and Transnational Criminal Law* (2nd ed., 2013), p. 134, who also describe the elements of the offence.



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-The government of Eritrea engaged in a campaign of killings, arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances targeting Afar and Kunama civilians,

- forcible eviction and, forced relocation.

-The Commission also has reasonable grounds to believe that Eritrean officials have intentionally and severely deprived Eritrean Kunama and Afar of fundamental rights contrary to international law on ethnic grounds.

-Persecution on both religious and ethnic grounds has been an integral part of the Eritrean leadership's plan to maintain its authority in a manner contrary to international law. Thus, the Commission finds that Eritrean officials have committed the crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, in a large-scale and routine manner since May 1991.

e) *The killing of Afar Fishermen, UAE Military base in Assab, 2017*^{viii}

The UN SR Report 2017 (Commission reports on killings of Afar fishermen, paras 11,34)

- It also described the use of Eritrean land, airspace and territorial waters by the Arab coalition supporting the anti-Houthi military campaign in Yemen, as well as the construction of a permanent military base at Assab International Airport and a new permanent seaport adjacent to it.

- Reportedly, in October 2016, a helicopter gunship hit a boat carrying Eritrean Afar fishermen travelling along the Eritrean coast near Edi and Bara-Assoli, killing one person and injuring seven others.

f) *Lang grab, dispossession, forcible displacement and destruction of economy and livelihood, 2018*^{viii}

UN SR report 2018 **para 90-93** Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth

- The Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea documented forcible evictions of the Afar, a pastoralist ethnic minority who depend on their traditional lands for their livelihoods.*
- Reports by the Special Rapporteur, the Eritrean Government continues to actively pursue a land policy which has legitimized forcible displacement and dispossession of indigenous populations and minorities.*
- Its land policy has led to arbitrary and uncompensated evictions. The Special Rapporteur was informed that forced evictions continue in particular in the area around Assab, the port city in the Southern Red Sea Region, an area traditionally belonging to or used by the Afar.*
- According to information received, the Afar people's efforts to seek compensation for dispossession of their traditional lands during the construction of the military base in Assab were stifled. When the leaders of the Afar complained about the loss of access to their traditional lands, salt mines, and fishing grounds, they were warned to refrain from further complaints.*

g) Killings of Afar fishermen, economic destruction, 2019^{ix}

UN SR report 2019 Para 50-52, Ms. Daniela Kravetz, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea calls on the Government to ensure respect for Afar ethnic rights in Eritrea. Report

- *Since the establishment of the United Arab Emirates base in Assab, the rights of Afar communities to conduct traditional livelihood activities, such as salt production and fishing, have been seriously curtailed.(Para 50-51)*
- *projects to redevelop the port of Assab and expand road infrastructure in the area are having an impact on the ancestral lands of this community.*
- *As the authorities do not recognize the land rights of the Afar, these projects are reportedly being carried out without involving or consulting them.*
- *the Special Rapporteur has received various reports of attacks on Afar fishermen in Eritrean coastal waters. In separate incidents between October 2016 and August 2018, at least 10 Afar fishermen were reportedly killed and several others injured after United Arab Emirates helicopters fired on their boats at sea.*

h) Discrimination, harassment, arbitrary arrests, disappearance, violence and widespread persecution, 2023^x

The United Nations Special Rapporteur report May 2023, Special Rapporteur notes: “the Afar are one of the most disenfranchised communities in Eritrea. For several decades, they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, arbitrary arrests, disappearance, violence and widespread persecution.” Sec IX, Paras, 58 to 62

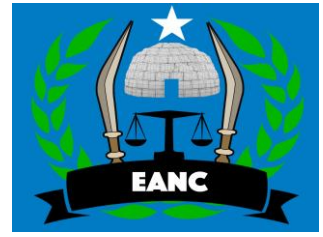
- *The Eritrean Afar Indigenous communities who continue to be subjected to discrimination, persecution and interference in their traditional means of livelihood*
- *The Afar Indigenous ethnic group has also been prevented from carrying out their traditional occupation, namely fishing. These violations and abuses have interfered with their traditional means of livelihood, eroded their culture, caused displacement and threatened their way of life.*
- *The main economic activities of the Afar are fishing and trading with neighbouring States – Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Yemen. According to multiple sources, the Government has blocked all access to Dankalia by sea and road since the onset of the pandemic, prevented the Afar from fishing and withheld humanitarian assistance, resulting in starvation in the region.*
- *On 28 August 2022, the Eritrean navy seized fishing boats and detained between 80 and 100 Afar fisherfolk off the coast of Bara’sole and took them to The Special Rapporteur has observed discriminatory treatment of the Afar Indigenous People by the authorities in the provision of fundamental services, such as education, access to decent work and livelihoods, health services and humanitarian assistance.*



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- *The Afar Indigenous People's right to free, prior and informed consent in relation to the management and exploitation of their lands continues to be systematically violated, and they have little access to information to empower them to effectively participate in matters that affect them.*

Autonomous Dankalia within United Eritrea (Special Status)

The quest for freedom and self-determination deeply resonates with the Afar people. It is closely intertwined with the historical self-governance of the Afar as an indigenous people. Their cultural identity is both ancient and unique in Eritrea, making the geopolitical and strategic landscape attractive to those seeking to colonize them. Additionally, ongoing genocidal policies against the Afar in Eritrea further highlight their uniqueness.

The aspiration of the Eritrean Afar as self-governing indigenous nation, has a right to strive to free themselves from internal colonialism for Eritrean state, seeking recognition of their rights as a guarantee under international law to fulfilling Afar society's aspirations while emancipating from systematic discrimination, marginalization and poverty in Eritrea.

The Afar people's demand in Eritrea for internal autonomy is backed by both African and the UN charters and international laws.

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) guarantees that colonized or oppressed peoples shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognized by the international community;^{xi}
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) recognizes that all peoples shall have the right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen.^{xii}
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes that Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, security of the person, to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples, to not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, to not be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture, and to not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories;^{xiii}

It's important to remember that Dankalia has historically been at the forefront of resistance. It resisted not only European colonialism but also the Ethiopian rule during the independence struggle. In Sidiha-eela, Eritreans organized themselves to demand self-determination against Ethiopian rule in 1977. As history has shown, any developments in Dankalia will have an impact on all parts of Eritrea. Autonomy in Dankalia would mean advancement towards democratic transition and freedom from the military junta rule of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).

Eritreans should rally behind Afar autonomy in Dankalia

The Eritrean democratic opposition should come together to recognize the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of their fellow Afar in Eritrea for autonomy within the country. They are part of the Eritrean and African family, and it is important for them to join hands with the international community and United Nations instrumentalities, which have acknowledged the political, cultural, and economic rights of historically oppressed and marginalized peoples like the Afar in Eritrea.

The distinction between the PFDJ's goal of creating a state and the desire of the Eritrean people to exercise their democratic rights as individuals or a group is crucial. The loyalty of the Afar people to Eritrea has been discussed extensively, often confusing their legitimate plea for protection of their rights in Dankalia with secessionism or opposition to Eritrea's independence.

In the midst of the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict in 1998-2000, there were baseless accusations that the Afar people were against Eritrea's independence. This led to serious consequences for the community. Eritrean troops destroyed border towns and Afar settlements, committing terrible crimes such as killings, sexual violence, and forcibly displacing innocent civilians. These beliefs still exist in the Eritrean diaspora today, especially among those who oppose the PFDJ regime but support the current government's position on land rights, governance structures, and recognition of Indigenous and minority groups within a multinational, multiethnic, and multireligious constitutional framework.

The Afar people in Eritrea are not seeking to secede. They believe in the sovereignty and integrity of international borders, just like everyone else. They are seeking freedom from persecution and oppression by the Eritrean military or any other form of dominance. The Afar in Eritrea are demanding recognition of their rights under international law, aiming to overcome discrimination, marginalization, and poverty. They also seek the right to self-government within Eritrea. Ensuring the rights of groups like the Afar would enhance the unity and stability of Eritrea, moving beyond the current challenges posed by the rule of the PFDJ.

Democratic Eritreans in the diaspora should strive to initiate constructive discussions and cooperation with the Afar community, aiming to address their concerns and strive for a democratic self-governing system in Eritrea. Backing autonomy for Dankalia would be a pivotal step towards promoting democracy in Eritrea, potentially inspiring other regions to seek similar recognition. Recognition of the Afar people's struggle echoes sentiments of solidarity by oppressed people worldwide.

Join us in person | Address: 250 Somerset St. E, Ottawa, ON

Virtual Event | Please register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvdOyorTgpGNzUfGJccqCWRzNnI9YEH8Ct>

For your further inquiries, please contact us by email: info@dankalia.org or by phone +1 613 266 0929

Thank you and looking forward to seeing you all!

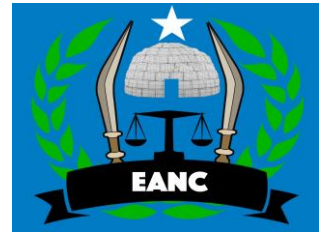
Giclo Bisoh (Struggle must continue)



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ⁱ GENEVA (28 October 2016) – States must heed the pleas of countless victims of crimes against humanity for justice and accountability, Sheila Keetharuth of the former UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea urged the UN General Assembly today. The Commission has recommended that the situation in Eritrea be referred to the International Criminal Court.

ⁱⁱ The Afar are subjected to extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and rape, as well as the destruction of their traditional means of subsistence and livelihood, and businesses. They have also been forced into displacement from their traditional territory. Forced military training and national service requiring young Afar women to leave their homes for long periods of time is met with criticism. The Afar consider that they are targeted as a community and are discriminated against, given that the Afar region has suffered from lack of development and security for the past 20 years.

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A.HRC.23.53_ENG.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ The Special Rapporteur noted allegation regarding the ongoing and systematic violations of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Red Sea Afar people, one of the nine ethnic minority groups in Eritrea.

<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/26/45>

^{iv} The killing of members of the Afar ethnic group and reports of the existence of mass-graves. During the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Afar people on both sides of the border were caught in the middle.

The Afar people have been subjected to extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearance by the Eritrean Government since 2000.

These killings have also triggered their displacement from their lands within the country and across borders to Ethiopia and Djibouti.

This has posed great difficulty to their livelihoods as they depend on their traditional lands for the sustenance as an indigenous ethnic group.

In Abihte-Koma about 18 Afar civilians were reportedly killed by militaries.

This massacre was followed by the looting of personal property including livestock. The information also states that the dead bodies remained unburied for about three days until other Afar people from neighbouring villages later came to bury them in mass graves.

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIEritrea/A_HRC_29_CRP-1.pdf

^v The United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) report 2016 Para 292 – 295(COI finds crimes against humanity against Afar)

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIEritrea/A_HRC_32_CRP.1_read-only.pdf

The Commission also received reports of forcible evictions of members of the Afar ethnic group, and arbitrary arrests of members of the Kunama ethnic group, in late 2015 and 2016,

The government of Eritrea engaged in a campaign of killings, arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances targeting Afar and Kunama civilians,

Separate information about the forcible eviction and, in some cases, forced relocation, of Afar civilians in 2015 and 2016.

The Commission also has reasonable grounds to believe that Eritrean officials have intentionally and severely deprived Eritrean Kunama and Afar of fundamental rights contrary to international law on ethnic grounds.

Persecution on both religious and ethnic grounds has been an integral part of the Eritrean leadership's plan to maintain its authority in a manner contrary to international law. Thus, the Commission finds that Eritrean officials have committed the crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, in a large-scale and routine manner since May 1991.

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^{vi} The UN SR Report 2017 (Commission reports on killings of Afar fishermen, paras 11,34)
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It also described the use of Eritrean land, airspace and territorial waters by the Arab coalition supporting the anti-Houthi military campaign in Yemen, as well as the construction of a permanent military base at Assab International Airport and a new permanent seaport adjacent to it.

Reportedly, in October 2016, a helicopter gunship hit a boat carrying Eritrean Afar fishermen travelling along the Eritrean coast near Edi and Bara-Assoli, killing one person and injuring seven others.

^{viii} UN SR report 2018 **para 90-93** Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_38_50.pdf

The Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea documented forcible evictions of the Afar, a pastoralist ethnic minority who depend on their traditional lands for their livelihoods.

Reports by the Special Rapporteur, the Eritrean Government continues to actively pursue a land policy which has legitimized forcible displacement and dispossession of indigenous populations and minorities.

Its land policy has led to arbitrary and uncompensated evictions. The Special Rapporteur was informed that forced evictions continue in particular in the area around Assab, the port city in the Southern Red Sea Region, an area traditionally belonging to or used by the Afar.

According to information received, the Afar people's efforts to seek compensation for dispossession of their traditional lands during the construction of the military base in Assab were stifled. When the leaders of the Afar complained about the loss of access to their traditional lands, salt mines, and fishing grounds, they were warned to refrain from further complaints. Up to today, the complaints filed by the Afar community with the local administration remain without a response and no compensations were awarded.

Many members of the [Afar] 2000 families concerned have fled to neighbouring countries.

^{ix} UN SR report 2019 Para 50-52, Ms. Daniela Kravetz, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea calls on the Government to ensure respect for Afar ethnic rights in Eritrea. Report <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/41/53>

Since the establishment of the United Arab Emirates base in Assab, the rights of Afar communities to conduct traditional livelihood activities, such as salt production and fishing, have been seriously curtailed.(Para 50-51) projects to redevelop the port of Assab and expand road infrastructure in the area are having an impact on the ancestral lands of this community. As the authorities do not recognize the land rights of the Afar, these projects are reportedly being carried out without involving or consulting them. the Special Rapporteur has received various reports of attacks on Afar fishermen in Eritrean coastal waters. In separate incidents between October 2016 and August 2018, at least 10 Afar fishermen were reportedly killed and several others injured after United Arab Emirates helicopters fired on their boats at sea. In one incident in February 2018, 10 fishermen from the coast of Bori, close to Massawa, went missing after they set off to sea.

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In early February 2019, three fishermen from the coast of Makkaka, near Assab, reportedly went missing while fishing and, in March, relatives are said to have found the bodies of two other fishermen at sea.

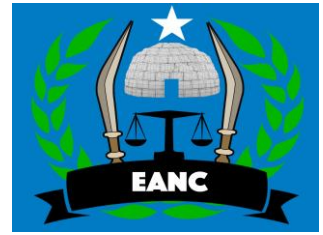
Over the years, many Eritrean Afar have fled. Some 20,000 Eritrean Afar currently live as refugees in Ethiopia.



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The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to promote the rights of ethnic minorities, including through policies of equitable development and social inclusion.

^x The United Nations Special Rapporteur report May 2023, Special Rapporteur notes: “the Afar are one of the most disenfranchised communities in Eritrea. For several decades, they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, arbitrary arrests, disappearance, violence and widespread persecution.” Sec IX, Paras, 58 to 62

The Eritrean Afar Indigenous communities who continue to be subjected to discrimination, persecution and interference in their traditional means of livelihood.

The Afar Indigenous ethnic group has also been prevented from carrying out their traditional occupation, namely fishing

These violations and abuses have interfered with their traditional means of livelihood, eroded their culture, caused displacement and threatened their way of life.

The main economic activities of the Afar are fishing and trading with neighbouring States – Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Yemen. According to multiple sources, the Government has blocked all access to Dankalia by sea and road since the onset of the pandemic, prevented the Afar from fishing and withheld humanitarian assistance, resulting in starvation in the region.

On 28 August 2022, the Eritrean navy seized fishing boats and detained between 80 and 100 Afar fisherfolk off the coast of Bara’sole and took them to Assab prison

The Special Rapporteur has observed discriminatory treatment of the Afar Indigenous People by the authorities in the provision of fundamental services, such as education, access to decent work and livelihoods, health services and humanitarian assistance.

The Afar Indigenous People’s right to free, prior and informed consent in relation to the management and exploitation of their lands continues to be systematically violated, and they have little access to information to empower them to effectively participate in the matters that affect them.

e in the matters that affect them.

<https://www.iwgia.org/en/news/5228-disturbing-situation-human-rights-afar-eritrea.html#:~:text=For%20several%20decades%2C%20they%20have,carrying%20out%20their%20traditional%20occupation.>

^{xi} the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) guarantees that colonized or oppressed peoples shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognized by the international community. article 20(2)

^{xii} African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter), article 20(1), All peoples shall have the right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self- determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen. https://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/docs/African_Charter_Human_Peoples_Rights.pdf

^{xiii} United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arts 7, 8, 10