

**EPDP Urges Switzerland and EU
Countries to Investigate Abuses Against
Refugees by Agents of Eritrean Embassies**

By

Department of Information and Culture,
Eritrean People's Democratic Party

14.02.2010

In a memorandum addressed to the Swiss Department for Foreign Relations, the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) urged the Swiss Federal Council (Government) to take swift action to stop the abuses being perpetrated by agents of the Eritrean embassy against Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland. The memorandum has also been copied to the Presidency of the European Union to take similar action in view of the fact that the same abuses are being witnessed against refugees by Eritrean embassies in many European countries.

The EPDP memorandum, sent under the name of party chairman, Mr. Woldeyesus Ammar, accused the Eritrean embassy staff and a few of their supporters of forcing Eritrean refugees either to take part in a demonstration being organized against the targeted UN sanctions or face 'severe consequences' like action against their relatives in Eritrea, confiscation of property, and denial of visas or travel rights.

The memorandum requested for a meeting soon with Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey the Swiss Federal Councilor in charge of Foreign Relations to discuss in detail serious problems facing Eritreans abroad and in their homeland. (See below the full text of the EPDP memorandum to authorities in Switzerland.)

To:

Her Excellency Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey,

Federal Councilor,
Head of the Federal Dept for Foreign Affairs
Bundeshaus West
CH-3003 Bern, Switzerland
info@eda.admin.ch,
pa2-afrika-naher-osten@eda.admin.ch
CC: Mr. Herman van Rompuy,
President of the European Union, presa@ue.ames.es
February 12, 2010
CC: Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General,
UN Office at Geneva
webmaster@unorg.ch

Your Excellency Ms Calmy-Rey,

This message is an SOS call to you and, through you, to the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation, addressed on behalf of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers as well as Swiss citizens of Eritrean origin, who are currently facing acts of intimidation, psychological pressure and threats of vengeance against their parents in Eritrea, by members and messengers of the Eritrean embassy in Switzerland, who are knocking at every door and ordering people to take part in a demonstration they are organizing in Geneva on 22 February 2010.

As we know it well, the demonstration is not intended to put pressure on the UN Security Council to rescind its Resolution 1907 but it is being organized to show that the Eritrean regime still has some left over "public support" among Eritreans. To this end, the Eritrean embassy staff members and their errand carriers are ordering people not to fail to appear at the demonstration. A free bus ride to Geneva is promised to all. Those who cannot come are asked to sign a paper of support to the demonstration and its organizer, the government, as well as to pay the cost of transport for others who are willing to go. Those who refuse to do either are being asked,

under threats, to say in writing why they are not joining the demonstration and/or why they are not supportive of the demonstration!!

The severe consequences they 'promise' to those who would dare fail to appear at the demonstration include future denial of visa or travel rights to Eritrea, refusal of passport renewals to those who carry Eritrean documents, possible confiscation of property they may have in Eritrea and threats of extracting 50,000 Nakfas (Eritrean currency) from their parents at home for the assumed 'crime' committed by their son or daughter in Switzerland or other parts of the world who left Eritrea illegally.

Likewise, the Eritrean regime's use of heavy pressure on Eritreans to attend the 22 February demonstration in Geneva is not limited to Switzerland and its neighbouring countries like Italy, Austria, Germany and France. Eritreans in far away Scandinavia and the United Kingdom are equally subjected to these incredible acts of terror in the midst of democratic Europe. I am, therefore, taking the liberty of copying this message also to the Presidency of the European Union with the hope that it will reach all concerned countries.

Dear Ms Calmy-Rey,

You will agree that this unwarranted act of intimidation against a civilian segment of your population is unacceptable by all standards, and we, members of the Eritrean political opposition, call upon you and your esteemed Federal Council to investigate the matter and kindly take appropriate action. We also anticipate other European countries to give due attention to this call.

Also allow me, Madame, to request an audience at your esteemed office for me and my party delegation within a short time so that we could be able to explain to you in great detail the real problems Eritreans are facing today inside their country and abroad by the Khmer Rouge-type of regime in Eritrea under the absolute control of Dictator Isaias Afewerki.

For your quick information, the party addressing you this message is called the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) which was formed a few weeks ago after a merger of three mainstream Eritrean opposition organizations (please see attached short profile). Myself, I am a former functionary of the UN system, currently chairing this party. If this earnest request to meet you for rich exchange of notes receives your favourable response, my delegation members will include the EPDP head for the Department of Foreign Relations, Ambassador Adhanom Ghebremariam, who was Eritrea's Attorney General and former ambassador to Nordic countries; EPDP Executive Committee members Ambassador Mohammed Noor Ahmed, long-time freedom fighter and former Eritrean ambassador to China, and Mesfin Hagos, a renowned leader in the Eritrean liberation movement, who also served as Defense Minister after Eritrea's liberation before his and his colleagues' break with the dictatorial regime in 2001.

Trusting that you will positively reaction to this appeal, I remain, Madame,

Sincerely yours,



Woldeyesus Ammar,
Chairman,
Eritrean People's Democratic Party

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