



Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change
Chairman of the Executive Office

Eritrean Opposition Urges Sudan and Egypt to Protect Eritrean Refugees, Expresses Outrage at Isaias Regime's Complicity in People and Organ Trafficking

Press Release, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 16, 2010. The new Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change is outraged by the inhumanity of the government of Eritrea toward suffering Eritrean refugees fleeing repression and torture at home.

The Executive Office denounces the brutalization and killings of Eritrean refugees in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula by murderous Bedouin organ traffickers. It urged the Egyptian authorities and the United Nations to come to the rescue of the hundreds of detained Eritrean refugees many of whom have been threatened with death and organ extraction unless they paid up to \$30,000 per head to their abductors. The council also urged the Egyptian authorities to release the estimated 600 Eritrean refugees in prisons throughout the country.

The Council's Executive Chairman, Dr. Yusuf Berhanu expresses readiness to work with the Egyptian government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in finding third countries willing to resettle the refugees once their freedom is secured.

Dr. Yusuf expresses his dismay at the ruling PFDJ's greedy and heartless involvement in lucrative human trafficking of its own citizens as corroborated by a UN fact finding group in July last year. He says Eritreans who chose not to risk the shoot-to-kill government directives were paying the authorities exorbitant amounts of money, sometimes as much as \$2,000 per head, in exchange for safe border crossing where they are handed over to fellow traffickers waiting on the Sudanese side of the border.

Eritrean intelligence and security officials work hand in hand with rogue, lawless agents on the Sudanese side of the border transporting Eritreans across the vast regions of Sudan, Libya and finally into Egypt's Sinai where fellow traffickers demand huge sums of money from their relatives and friends in North America, Europe and the Mid East.

According to refugee's firsthand accounts, after paying their dues to the callous Eritrean regime, many begin their journeys penniless making them vulnerable to blackmail, kidnapping, abuse, rape and death at the hands of traffickers with their dreams melting away in the desert before reaching Israel or Europe.

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While thanking Sudan for hosting hundreds of thousands of Eritrean refugees over the years, the Executive Office appeals for an immediate halt of the most deplorable forced deportation of refugees to Eritrea, especially those that are politically active. Deportees are routinely jailed, tortured or killed upon return to Eritrea.

The Executive Office praised the recent visit by UNHCR Chief Antonio Guterres to Eritrean refugee camps in Eastern Sudan where he spoke of the need of finding “lasting solutions for thousands of long-staying Eritrean refugees” in Sudan. The Council also appreciates Mr. Guterres’s deep concern for the trafficking of vulnerable people including asylum seekers many of whom are becoming “victims of trafficking, kidnapping and killing”.

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