

# **INFORMATION PACK**

## **ERITREA**

*May 2016*



Europe External Policy Advisors

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## MAIN POINTS OF ATTENTION

### 1. EU aid to Eritrea

- €200 million allocated for renewable energy and governance
- Deal: Eritrea limits the National Service to 18 months
- The European Parliament did not approve it
- Many Eritreans and (diaspora) organisations opposed to it

### 2. National Service in Eritrea

- The slavery-like condition of the National Service
- Unlimited National Service
- Very low salary and no opportunity to escape from it

### 3. Financial and currency controls

- No national budget
- Total **lack of transparency** surrounding the aid to Eritrea, as there is no national budget nor any independent way of reviewing the implementation of the aid

### 4. Shoot-kill policies at the borders

- Ongoing shoot-to-kill policy makes it dangerous to pass the borders but it does not prevent 5.000 Eritreans from fleeing the country each month.

### 5. Broken promises

- Eritrea had made promises to the EU that it would shorten the National Service to 18 months, but the Eritrean government officials have announced that **Eritrea will continue its policies of indefinite military conscription.**
- Eritrea promised to increase the small allowance for conscripts with 700%, but at the same time the government tightly controls the currency.

## RESOURCES

### Attempts to cooperate with Eritrea

1. National Indicative Programme ([NIP](#)) (DG DEVCO, January 2016)
2. Leaked '[Non-Papers](#)' of the EU about potential cooperation on migration with several states at the Horn of Africa (State Watch, March 2016)

### National Service

3. Amnesty International [report](#) on Eritrean national service (December 2015)
4. [Reuters](#) on Eritrea won't shorten national service (February 2016)
5. [Tesfa News](#) on pay rise and no limitation (February 2016)
6. [BBC](#) on killed deserters (BBC) (April 2016)

### Currency Reform

7. [Tesfa News](#) on currency reform (November, 2015)
8. [Voice of America](#) on potentially harsh consequences of the reform (November 2015)
9. [Awate.com](#) on how the reform could be used for population control (November 2015)

### Human rights situation and living conditions

10. Swiss [report](#) of 2015 on if Eritrea meets conditions for bilateral cooperation (February 2015)
11. UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea [report](#) (June 2015)
12. Country focus [report](#) on Eritrea by European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (June 2015)
13. Ranking of World Press Freedom Index created by [Reporters without Borders](#) (2016)
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19. [Martin Plaut](#) "Eritrea: The battle for international opinion" (May 2016)
20. [Asmarino article](#) "Eritrean anti slavery campaigners appalled by regime's lies"
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## EU announces support for poverty eradication in Eritrea

Brussels, 11 December 2015

**The European Union today has announced €200 million in new long term support to promote poverty reduction and socio-economic development in Eritrea through the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).**

The European Union today has announced €200 million of new long term support to promote poverty reduction and socio-economic development in Eritrea through the 11th [European Development Fund \(EDF\)](#).

Until 2020, under the National Indicative Programme (NIP), the European Union will support two main areas - energy and governance. The programme has the full agreement of the EU's 28 Member States.

Announcing the new programme on behalf of the European Union, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *"The EU provides development aid where it is most needed to reduce poverty and support people. In Eritrea, we have agreed to promote activities with concrete results for the population, such as the creation of job opportunities and the improvement of living conditions. At the same time, we are insisting on the full respect of human rights as part of our ongoing political dialogue with Eritrea. As in other countries, the EU engages with governments around the world to promote human rights, democracy, and people-centred development everywhere."*

### Support to the energy sector

In a country with one of the lowest access rates to electricity, supporting the energy sector is crucial for the Eritrean people as it will allow better access to social services, including schools, hospitals and health centres. The support will also facilitate irrigated agriculture and the development of the country's considerable fishing potential. A more efficient energy network will have a broad positive effect on the social and economic development of Eritrea.

### Support to governance

The EU's support for governance is designed with two goals: to strengthen Eritrean capacity to better manage public finances, and to help Eritrea implement the recommendations of the [Universal Periodic Review \(the United Nations mechanism examining human rights performance of all 193 UN Member States\)](#). With regards to economic governance, support will be given to the production of reliable statistics, and to help build a conducive environment for the private sector.

### Background:

The National Indicative Programmes represent an important step in the programming of EU development aid. In 2013, EU Member States agreed on the overall amount for development cooperation that will be channelled to [78 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries](#) through the 11th EDF during the financing period 2014-2020. The total amount is €30.5 billion.

On Eritrea's National Indicative Programme, the European Union and the Government of the State of Eritrea agreed to converge efforts on the most critical issues for the local socio-economic development in the years up to 2020 - notably energy efficiency and sustainability, and improved governance.

### For more information

DG EuropeAid website: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/eritrea\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/eritrea_en)

IP/15/6298

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**Council of the  
European Union**

**Brussels, 17 March 2016  
(OR. en)**

**7205/16**

**RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED**

**MIGR 64  
COAFR 81**

**NOTE**

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From:	European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS)
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Ethiopia

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Delegations will find attached the above joint Commission-EEAS non-paper.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 16 March 2016

ARES (2016) 1325627

<b>FROM:</b>	<b>European Commission and the High Representative</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>COREPER Ambassadors</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Ethiopia</b>

**Country Fiche proposing possible leverages across Commission-EEAS policy areas to enhance returns and effectively implement readmission commitments.**

**1. Key Migration Features of Ethiopia**

Ethiopian nationals as migrants in the EU

- In 2015, more than 3500 identified Ethiopians crossed the EU borders irregularly, which represents 175% increase from 2014. In 2015 (until end October) 4650 Ethiopians applied for asylum in the European Union. The acceptance rate is relatively high, nearly 50% in the first 3 quarters of 2015. UNHCR estimates, however, that 40 to 60% of asylum seekers claiming to be from Somalia and Eritrea are in fact Ethiopians.
- The majority of Ethiopians cite economic reasons and lack of livelihood opportunities as the main driver for migration. Insecurity comes second, with a high proportion of ethnic Oromos claiming they fear political oppression or persecution. The International Labour Organisation suggests that there is a ‘culture of migration’ in Ethiopia where families expect their children to go abroad and provide remittances. Moreover, Ethiopia is facing a worrying humanitarian crisis<sup>1</sup> (El Nino-driven drought), highlighting its vulnerability to the impact of climate change. 18 million people are considered food insecure countrywide. Instability is spreading in several regions, and the situation is evolving into a potential source of forced displacement.

<sup>1</sup> More than EUR 40 million of humanitarian assistance have been mobilised to respond to the crisis. In addition, development funds are mobilised to support early recovery and socio-economic stability of the drought affected population. The global EC support to El Niño crisis amounts to over EUR 100 million.

- To date, Ethiopia has not been cooperative on returns and readmission of irregular migrants from Europe, despite receiving large numbers of returns from neighboring and Middle Eastern countries. With only 180 return decisions executed out of 1105 issued across the EU in 2014, the return rate is extremely low at 16%. However, since the visit of the High Representative to Addis Ababa on 20 October 2015, the Government has pledged to enhance cooperation with the EU in this area; it remains to be seen whether this will be translated in practice.

#### Migration situation in Ethiopia

- Ethiopia is a country of origin, transit and destination of migrants from the region, situated in the centre of the regional migration corridor from Somalia / Eritrea to Sudan and/or Yemen. Its crude net migration rate is negative (-0,13/1000 in 2013). It is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa (over 730000 refugees, mostly from Somalia and South Sudan).
- Migration flows from Ethiopia follow three routes: eastern route to the Middle East via Djibouti/Yemen and to a lesser extent via Sudan/Red Sea (most popular: UNHCR indicates that over 80000 Ethiopians migrated to/via Yemen in 2015, despite the conflict); northern route to Europe via Sudan/Libya (country of origin and transit); and, increasingly, the southern route to South Africa through the South-Eastern corridor, mainly through Kenya. Trafficking and severe human rights abuses are reported along all routes.

## **2. Relations with the EU**

### General

- The enhancement of EU-Ethiopia relations is an important priority for the country. Preparations are thus ongoing to sign a “Strategic Engagement” Joint Declaration, with a commitment to an annual ministerial meeting and to six sectoral dialogues, including migration but also counter-terrorism, where Ethiopia is keen to take a stronger role<sup>2</sup>.
- EU development assistance to Ethiopia is substantial – it has the largest national envelope from the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF (2014-20), amounting to EUR 745 million; the total figure when all EU thematic and humanitarian sources are aggregated is closer to EUR 1.4 billion. However, Ethiopia has repeatedly argued that they would rather not receive this assistance than accepting it with conditionality. There is however a strong plea for increased budget support (sector support for transport and health sectors) which could be an incentive.
- When engaging with Ethiopia, the political and socio-economic development and human rights situation will need to be considered<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The six sectoral dialogues currently envisaged include: regional peace and security; countering terrorism and violent radicalization; migration; social and economic development, investment and trade; governance and human rights; climate change and environmental cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> A European Parliament resolution from 21 January 2016 strongly criticized the Government for significant and widespread human rights violations.

## Migration

### Migration relations EU-Ethiopia

- Ethiopia is the only country in the region (second in Africa) with which the EU has signed a bilateral declaration on migration – a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM).
- The visit of the HRVP to Ethiopia on 20 October 2015, where she launched the High Level Dialogue on Migration with a wide range of government Ministers, including the Prime Minister, accelerated the process which was pending since February. The CAMM Joint Declaration was signed on 11 November 2015 in the margin of the Valletta Summit on Migration.
- Ethiopian Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Tedros Adhanom visited Brussels on 12-13 January 2016, where he discussed migration with Commissionerr Avramopoulos and with the HRVP and reiterated the Prime Minister's commitment to implement the CAMM and to cooperate on returns.
- At the occasion of the EU (EU inter service + DE, NL, CH, UK) technical visit to Ethiopia in February 2016, Ethiopian authorities - while insisting on the difficulties to establish who is an Ethiopian national and who is not - confirmed that in case of identified Ethiopians, they would respect their international obligations to readmit them. This commitment will now be tested in practice, as a pilot of 57 cases from 5 Member States (UK, NL, SE, DK and DE) and CH was submitted to the Ethiopian side on 18 February 2016. DG HOME, the EURINT Working Group, and the EU Delegation in Addis cooperate closely on the follow-up. The mission also discussed the text of an aide-mémoire on CAMM implementation, with the objective of agreeing on an Action Plan by March/April 2016.

### Migration relations EU Member States - Ethiopia

- There are no bilateral readmission agreements, Norway has a Memorandum of Understanding which is not being implemented by Ethiopia.

## **3. Key interests of the country and the EU**

### Ethiopian interests

- Improvement of international standing, enhanced international financial/trading package to help maintain levels of recent economic growth;
- Improved ways for legal migration and entry to Europe. Ethiopia is interested in a preferential visa deal, and it may well be that hurdles faced by EU companies in the country (including restriction on length of business visas) are related to this.

- Remittances represent a substantial part of ETH income and provision of foreign currency, estimated at US\$ 5.2billion in 2012, amounting to 4-5 times EU+Member States annual disbursements. The Minister for Foreign Affairs specifically asked the EU to explore ways to transfer remittances cost-free.
- Ethiopia is keen to increase EU (and other international private) investments in the country, including by organizing an EU-Ethiopia Business event in Brussels in 2016.
- Ethiopia has specifically requested support for reintegration of returnees and funding of targeted informational campaigns on risks of irregular migration to Europe.

#### EU interests

- Effective cooperation on returns/readmission, including organisation of identification missions to Europe and the use of the EU Laissez-passer for return purposes.
- Monitor and reduce secondary movement from refugee camps in Ethiopia towards Europe.
- Finalization and implementation of the action plan as an annex to the CAMM.
- Enhance partnership with Ethiopia on migration as an example for all countries of the region, including through the Khartoum Process.

#### **4. Possible incentives<sup>4</sup>**

- Ongoing negotiations for the EU-Ethiopia “Strategic Engagement” linked to tangible outcomes of cooperation on migration.
- Co-host an EU Business Forum for Ethiopia in Brussels in 2016 (target October / November 2016). Focus could be on investments in industrial sector, on value addition of agriculture commodity goods, and agricultural export potential (such as the coffee sector).
- Support data collection on the Northern route to provide quantitative data on the scale and nature of irregular migration on this route for improved policy making.
- Support to the reinforcement of capacity to respond to readmission requests, including identification of irregular migrants, delivery of emergency travel documents, and reintegration of returnees. The EU needs to be ready to recognize that non-voluntary returns are EU initiated.
- Support to returnee reintegration<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> No conditionalities can be attached to needs based humanitarian aid in line with the humanitarian principles.

<sup>5</sup> Argue that the potential number of returnees will be limited compared with (for instance) the number of forced returns from other countries: from November 2013 to February 2014, Ethiopia received over 170000 forced returns from Saudi Arabia.



- Activate Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement by proposing a draft readmission agreement with the EU to be annexed to the CAMM action plan.
- Improve capacity to provide effective international protection and increase livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities in Ethiopia, including by working with CSOs, notably through the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for the Horn. Possibilities for support to technical improvement of the registration process will be envisaged. This may also contribute to reducing secondary movement to Europe.
- Support for legal migration from Ethiopia to the region and to Gulf, including capacity building for implementing the new migrant worker legislation through enhancing oversight over recruitment agencies and improving conditions for labor migrants in destination countries.
- Enhance capacity to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, improved police intelligence sharing (Interpol has announced the opening of an Addis office).
- Support communication efforts to counter messages from smugglers by providing funding in support of the Ethiopian government programme, and through the continuation and enhancement of targeted awareness-raising campaigns on risks and realities of irregular migration, and on legal migration opportunities.
- Enhance/improve opportunities for legal migration and entry from Ethiopia to the EU in coordination with EU Member States; increase exchange of students, researchers, university teachers within the context of the Erasmus+ programme and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions<sup>6</sup>.
- Continuation and enhancement of European Investment Bank (EIB) activities which will contribute to tackle the root causes of migration<sup>7</sup>.
- A possible *ad hoc* review of the National Indicative Programme (NIP) can provide an opportunity to increase the envelope for Ethiopia. Given the push factors, a potential increase in funding could include for example employment generation, climate change adaptation, resilience measures, and the development of a biometric multi-purposes civil registry.

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<sup>6</sup> Ethiopia is one of the African "top-performers" in terms of university student and staff participation in the EU's higher education programmes to date (Erasmus Mundus and now Erasmus+). Seven Ethiopian universities are participating in the Harmonisation of higher education and Tuning initiative also.

<sup>7</sup> Two of most prominent are the Boost Africa partnership and a Smallholder Financing Facility - further needs assessment is ongoing. Moreover, an EU technical assistance grant currently under consideration will be crucial for the implementation of an initiative aiming at increasing access to finance for small and medium enterprises, which is at an advanced stage of discussion with the Ethiopian authorities. Finally, a European Investment Bank loan for the financing of the Modjo Leather City project, an environmentally friendly and fully organized leather district which will create concrete opportunities for local and foreign direct investment and will foster job creations, could be blended with a technical assistance grant from the EU.

- Use Joint Programming to enhance coherence of EU activities in the country, in particular towards migration. The objective should be to replace the current National Indicative Programme by a Joint Programming Document, although the National Authorising Officer is reluctant to this idea.
- Leverage of Schengen visa issuance, within the boundaries of the Visa Code, to be discussed with the Member States;
- Restrictions in bilateral visa exemption agreements for diplomatic and service passport holders, to be discussed with the Member States.

## **5. Recommendations**

### Short summary

Given positive cooperation in the previous months on migration with Ethiopia, including through the signature of the Declaration on a CAMM on 11 November 2015, the EEAS and European Commission services recommend pursuing a constructive, step-by-step approach on the migration incentive package for Ethiopia, pending results of cooperation on returns.

### Recommendations

- Agree on the Action Plan as annex to the CAMM Joint declaration following the technical mission which took place in early February 2016 and feedback by the authorities on the Aide-Mémoire. This Action Plan should include, as a package, activities highlighted above as possible incentives, including on data collection, return and readmission, capacity building, support to legal migration, awareness raising, etc.
- Use the existing mapping of EU+Member States activities in the field of migration to identify gaps and EU and Member States funding possibilities and human resources available to support the package. Use in particular the ongoing Joint Programming exercise to ensure coherence and coordination.
- Approval of RDPP Ethiopia action in April operational committee of the EU Emergency Trust Fund Horn of Africa window, and start preparations for a CAMM implementation package for the October/November operational committee. EIB activities should also continue.
- An *ad hoc* review of the NIP can be envisaged, particularly if cooperation on returns becomes effective. Coherence of EU activities could be enhanced if the Government agrees to replace the NIP by a Joint Programming document.
- Organization of an identification mission to Europe, if possible still in March 2016 (Valletta Action Plan).

- Continue negotiations on Joint Declaration for a Strategic Engagement (including holding of EU-Ethiopia business event in Brussels), with linkages to CAMM implementation. Signature of the joint declaration on 7 April should depend on effective cooperation, in particular on the 57 cases and on the organization of identification missions to Europe.
- The proposal for a readmission agreement should only come after confirmation of effective cooperation on returns and identification missions, to avoid Ethiopia using the negotiations to put on hold cooperation on returns, arguing that they want to wait for the agreement to be finalised.
- Recruitment of an EU Migration Liaison Officer in Ethiopia to reinforce the capacity of the EU Delegation and MS to provide analysis and advice on migration-related issues.
- Ethiopia to be retained as a target country for pilot projects of pooling offers on legal migration paths.

**6. Next steps – should focus on next (high –Level) meetings**

- 7 April – in the margin of their participation to the Commission-to-Commission meeting in Addis, HRVP and Csr Avramopoulos to conduct a High Level Dialogue on migration with Ethiopian PM / MFA and other relevant Ministers. Focus on returns and readmission (depending on effective cooperation), as well as on CAMM Action Plan and upcoming Ethiopian chairmanship of the Khartoum Process.
- Agreement on CAMM Action Plan by April 2016.

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**Council of the  
European Union**

**Brussels, 17 March 2016  
(OR. en)**

**7206/16**

**RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED**

**MIGR 65  
COAFR 82**

**NOTE**

From:	European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS)
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Somalia

Delegations will find attached the above joint Commission-EEAS non-paper.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 16 March 2016

ARES (2016) 1325690

<b>FROM:</b>	<b>European Commission and the High Representative</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>COREPER Ambassadors</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Somalia</b>

## **Country Fiche proposing possible leverages across Commission-EEAS policy areas to enhance returns and effectively implement readmission commitments.**

### **1. Key Migration Features of Somalia**

#### Somali nationals as migrants in the EU

- In 2015, almost 20 000 Somalis applied for asylum in the EU. Somalia does not cooperate on return and readmission; the average rate of return from the EU in 2014 was 7%. In 2015 there were 17 692 irregular border crossings reported.

#### Migration situation in Somalia

- Somalia is a country of origin and transit: Migration push factors include insecurity and terrorist activities (Al-Shabaab), poverty and natural disasters. Majority of Somali refugees registered in the region are mainly hosted in Kenya (over 400 000), Ethiopia (over 250 000) and Yemen (over 205 000). Somalia also continues to face one of the largest and most complex protracted displacement situations with 1.1 million internally displaced (around 8% in Somaliland, 12% in Puntland and 80% in the south central regions).
- There are two main migration routes towards Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries in the region: the *southern route*, from Somalia into Kenya, either staying in Kenya or transiting through Kenya destined for South Africa; and the *western route* towards Libya with the intention to access Europe. In 2015, as for the previous years, Somali were among the top nationalities of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Prior to the conflict in Yemen in March 2015, large numbers of Somali migrants also used the *eastern route*, crossing the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and across the Arabian Peninsula into the Gulf countries. Despite the situation in Yemen, this route is still used though the numbers are lower.

- Following the relative improvement of the domestic situation in Somalia, the return of its nationals from neighboring countries has somewhat increased. Following the 2013 Tripartite Agreement Governing the Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees Living in Kenya between Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR, about 6 000 Somalis returned from Dadaab camp in Kenya in 2015. For 2016, UNHCR projects that up to 50 000 Somali refugees may return.
- Somalia is also a destination for refugees mainly from Ethiopia and recently from Yemen. In 2015, there were nearly 18 000 refugees and asylum seekers in Somalia, most of whom are Ethiopians residing mainly in Somaliland and Puntland. The armed conflict in Yemen led approx. 30 000 people to flee to Somalia since March 2015. More than 26 000 of them are Somalis who had originally sought refuge in Yemen (almost 258 000 Somali refugees in Yemen). Around 4 000 are Yemeni citizens now seeking refuge in Somalia.

## **2. Relations with the EU**

### General

- The EU is the single biggest donor to the development of a secure and stable Somalia in line with the New Deal Compact from 2013, employing the full range of its instruments, including through development cooperation, CSDP missions and substantial contributions to African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Through its heavy investment and active engagement, the EU has gained important political leverage in Somalia. However, a conducive environment to ensure a sustainable return and reintegration of migrants is not yet in place and the absorption capacities of the regional states need to be enhanced. Before any mass-scale voluntary returns can be envisaged, it is of utmost importance that the security situation is stabilized and that prospects for return, i.e. overall improvement of living conditions and job opportunities are in place and coordinated. As for other countries in the Horn of Africa, Somalia is highly vulnerable to climate change. Moreover, the already existing and potential humanitarian consequences of El Nino, have also to be considered. It is therefore critical to address climate change adaptation and resilience, thus addressing one of the root causes of migration.
- Under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF National Indicative Programme, Somalia has so far benefitted from EUR 286 million in support; possible additional allocations could be foreseen within the 2016 *ad hoc* review.

### Migration

#### Migration relations EU-Somalia

- At regional level, Somalia is engaged in the Khartoum Process.
- A Regional Committee on Mixed Migration for the Horn of Africa and Yemen has been set up offering a platform for government actors to discuss cross-border issues related to migration. Committee members include officials from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Somaliland, Puntland, Sudan, and Yemen. Observers include the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU).

- Locally, there is a regular dialogue mainly on technical issues. The EU Delegation has promoted a more structured forum to discuss migration related issues with all relevant national institutions, implementing partners and donors. Somali counterparts had shown interest in maintaining this forum. Dialogue has not really started on readmissions and the context will limit the scope for such a dialogue in the foreseeable future.

#### Migration relations EU Member States - Somalia

- N/A

### **3. Key interests of the country and the EU**

#### Somali interests

- To maintain the level of political and financial support from the international community, notably the EU, which has to be squared with the EU interest in Somalia taking full ownership and responsibility for its security and development. Over the past five years the EU has spent around EUR 1,5 billion to help stabilise and reconstruct the country.
- Keeping the flow of remittances which play an important role in Somalia supporting livelihoods and economic development. The remittance flow accounts for around 50% of Somalia's GNI and 80% of investment in the country. According to the World Bank, 40% of Somalis (or 3,4 million people) rely on remittances to meet their basic needs.
- Migration *per se* does not represent a major priority for Somalia; the regime has an interest, however, in returns of educated migrants from the diaspora, the opening of legal migration channels linked to education opportunities as well as using the issue to raise its profile on the international scene. At the EU-UNHCR co-hosted Conference on Somali Refugees on 21 October 2015 in Brussels, ahead of the Valletta Summit, Somali migration has re-established its importance on the international agenda.

#### EU interests

- A secure and stable Somalia which is a prerequisite for the stability of the wider Horn of Africa region and beyond.
- Support to the development of a conducive socio-economic and security environment to stem refugee flows and to ensure a sustainable return and reintegration of migrants. Thus, enhancing the absorption capacity of the federal State as well as regional states is key. REINTEG programme under the EU Emergency Trust Fund will contribute to creating conditions for returns.

#### 4. Possible incentives<sup>1</sup>:

- Address migration root causes through on-going support to state-building as well as social sectors such as education, increasing food security and building resilience (including from climate change impacts such as drought and floods) in line with the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF National Indicative Programme for Somalia (EUR 286 million) and possible additional allocations within the 2016 ad-hoc review.
- Opening legal migration channels notably linked to educational opportunities, which is a priority for the Federal Government.
- Support a sustainable and durable re-integration of returnees/refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Somalia by enhancing Somalia's responsiveness to the management and reintegration of mixed migration flows. To that effect, a EUR 50 million EU Emergency Trust Fund-programme has been adopted aiming at close existing gaps in managing refugee returns from Europe, Yemen and Kenya by providing transportation and ensuring protection; to improve and implement policy and legal framework for Internally Displaced Persons, refugees and returnees, and to increase access to basic services in the main accessible areas.
- Provision of livelihood opportunities to refugees in protracted situations in Kenya when returns to Somalia are not yet possible. A EUR 15 million EU Emergency Trust Fund programme is under preparation.
- Enhance capacities to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings and support capacities for integrated border management.
- Leverage of Schengen visa issuance, within the boundaries of the Visa Code, to be discussed with the Member States;
- Restrictions in bilateral visa exemption agreements for diplomatic and service passport holders, to be discussed with the Member States.

#### 5. Recommendations

- Combination of the EU's important political leverage with the Somali key interest in maintaining the level of political and financial support from the international community; however, in this context, it is important not to push the return of refugees/Internally Displaced Persons before the adequate security situation is in place and access to basic services is guaranteed, not to mention the obligations under International Law to ensure voluntary and dignified return.

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<sup>1</sup> No conditionalities can be attached to needs-based humanitarian aid in line with Humanitarian Principles



- The *ad hoc* review of the National Indicative Programme in 2016 could provide the opportunity of increasing the envelope for Somalia, 2017-20. The mainstreaming of climate resilience and disaster preparedness should also be enhanced. By the end of 2016 allocations for Somalia will have been committed by 100% at decision level.
- Increase the mobility of students, researchers and university staff through the Erasmus+ programme and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

**6. Next steps:**

- Given the large number of irregular arrivals in 2015, there is a need to discuss a coherent strategy on irregular migration with Somalia. To this end, a EURINT working group on Somalia will meet in Oslo on 17 March. A number of Member States together with DG HOME are planning an exploratory technical level mission to Nairobi 14-15 April to meet with the Somali representatives and European embassies present on the ground.
  - After the bilateral meeting between Commissioner Mimica and the President of Somalia at the HLPF Istanbul 23-24/2, a political and operational follow up needs to be ensured swiftly to proceed to the launch of a High Level dialogue and including initiatives under the EUTF and elements concerning the wider migration challenge.
-



**Council of the  
European Union**

**Brussels, 17 March 2016  
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**NOTE**

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From:	European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS)
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Sudan

---

Delegations will find attached the above joint Commission-EEAS non-paper.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 16 March 2016

ARES (2016) 1325584

<b>FROM:</b>	<b>European Commission and the High Representative</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>COREPER Ambassadors</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Joint Commission-EEAS non-paper on enhancing cooperation on migration, mobility and readmission with Sudan</b>

## **Country Fiche proposing possible leverages across Commission-EEAS policy areas to enhance returns and effectively implement readmission commitments.**

### **1. Key Migration Features of Sudan**

#### Sudanese nationals as migrants in the EU

- In 2015, nearly 10000 Sudanese crossed irregularly into Europe, primarily through the Central Mediterranean route. The EU asylum recognition rate is relatively high for Sudanese, at 55% (provisory data), while the return rate for those who do not have the legal basis to stay in the EU is particularly low (12% compared to 40% average) pointing to a complete lack of cooperation on **readmission** from the Sudanese side. The return rate has to be enhanced by improving the cooperation on identification and issuance of emergency travel documents and offering the Sudanese authorities capacity building measures within the remit of the newly established Readmission Capacity Building Facility. It is important that the EU level and the Member States policies go hand-in-hand on this issue.

#### Migration situation in Sudan

- **Country of origin, destination and transit** at the centre of the migrant-smuggling route linking the Horn of Africa and East Africa with Libya and Egypt. Trafficking, kidnapping and smuggling of persons are major concerns; particularly acute in peripheries where internal conflicts created a vacuum of lawlessness and destitution; notably Darfur and East Sudan (reports of collusion from authorities). The country hosts 375 000 refugees/asylum-seekers and 3.1 million Internally Displaced Persons (UNHCR).
- **Conflicts in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur** are ongoing; and there has been limited progress to solve internal conflicts and to engage in meaningful National Dialogue. Situation compounded by low respect for human rights (HR) and general lack of accountability. Social conditions and the overall economic situation are deteriorating.

## 2. Relations with the EU

### General

- **Difficult EU-Sudan relations** marked by ICC indictment of Pres Bashir and limited by Cotonou non-ratification. No economic, trade (EPA) dialogue. EU remains a main provider of direct assistance to the population, but faces obstacles in terms of access (including closure of NGO vital for providing lifesaving assistance to hundreds of thousands Sudanese). The EU should carefully consider the high reputational risk associated with its engagement with Sudan if exclusively focused on migration.

### Migration

#### Migration relations EU-Sudan

- At regional level, Sudan is playing a constructive role in the context of the Khartoum Process. The country volunteered to host the first thematic meeting of the process, on human trafficking and people smuggling, to be held in May 2016.
- Locally, dialogue on migration at technical and more political level takes place regularly.
- First bilateral between Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Ghandour and HRVP held in Valletta, followed by a High Level Dialogue between Sudanese MFA and HRVP / Commissioner Avramopoulos on 16 February in Brussels. At the latter meeting, Sudanese MFA showed positive attitude on cooperation on migration, and expressed a strong interest for border management and the Sudan component of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for the Horn of Africa.

#### Migration relations EU Member States - Sudan

- N/A

## 3. Key interests of the country and the EU

### Sudanese interests

- **Raising its international profile:** while migration does not represent a major priority for Sudan, the regime sees cooperation on the issue as an entry point to raise its profile and gain legitimacy on the international scene: recognition of stabilising role in Horn of Africa/South Sudan, Red Sea, and Libya.
- Sudan also wants to increase cooperation on countering violent extremism and **counter-terrorism**. It has strong concerns about security (Libya/Daesh).
- Sudan seeks to **reintegrate into the international economy**. In this context, debt relief and easing of sanctions are key demands and most persuasive leverage.
- **Increase level of assistance:** Following Valletta Summit, expectations in terms of funding are high; strong appeal for more funds earmarked exclusively to Sudan in tackling migration but also in the broader development sense.

- Sudan will welcome assistance on (1) border management, (2) capacity building for national authorities, (3) regional international cooperation – regional training centre - and (4) assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and host communities.

#### EU interests

- Migration cooperation is an **opportunity for a renewed political dialogue** in areas of common interest, especially regional stability. Sudan being a major hub for migration, the dialogue is an opportunity to encourage measures tackling root causes of migration, cooperation on readmission and reducing the migrant smuggling/trafficking routes linking the Horn of Africa/East Africa to Egypt and Libya. In broader context, strengthen political relations in areas of common interest.
- The emerging security challenges in the region (radicalisation, growing irregular migrant's influx, Libya, influence of the Gulf States/Red Sea) warrant to explore new avenues of dialogue. It is also an entry point to create some leverage on "internal affairs" (national dialogue and human rights) while concrete results may prove difficult to reach without wider international pressure and engagement.
- Given its strategic position and possible role on migration, a stable Sudan is of key interest for the EU. In this context, the ongoing internal conflicts and HR violations remain of concern. **EU priority** is thus to support efforts towards a holistic and inclusive political solution in Sudan. More specifically on **migration**, much closer and effective cooperation is needed, in particular on return and readmission, fighting trafficking and smuggling<sup>1</sup>, and increasing Sudan's capacity to reduce onward movements to Europe.
- In the **short term**, the EU interest is four-fold: 1) cooperation on the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP), 2) enhancing joint action on trafficking and smuggling and encouraging a stronger role for Sudan in the Khartoum Process 3) launching a dialogue on readmission, and 4) creating a stable and conducive economic and social environment, while enhancing the ability to tackle the negative effects of climate change and building resilience, including to the immediate effects of El Nino. This will allow to maintain in Sudan its own population at risk of migrating and to host migrants from the region.

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<sup>1</sup> This goes hand-in-hand with prevention of drugs and weapons smuggling, as these networks are in fact the same

#### 4. Possible incentives<sup>2</sup>

##### (1) Measures that have an impact in the immediate/short term

- **Intensify political dialogue** by passing coherent political messages at the EU and Member States level. Recognising Sudan's efforts and the wish to deepen cooperation. The central part memorandum should be, however, a clear commitment of the Sudanese side to cooperate on return and readmission as well as to step up the fight against smugglers.
- **Invest in development:** EUR 100 million package for 2016/2017 to strengthen resilience of population in Sudan's peripheral areas and conflict areas, including to the impacts of climate change, and to tackle poverty, marginalisation and exclusion, which are at the roots of conflict, radicalisation, irregular migration and criminality. With this bottom-up approach, the EU aims at supporting conflict management to contribute to peace and improve stability at subnational level.
- Improve capacity to **provide effective international protection and increase livelihood opportunities for refugees and refugee-hosting communities** through RDPP for the Horn of Africa, which will focus mainly on the Eastern part of the country where the refugee camps are established, as well as on Khartoum, which is the most populated urban refugee-destination area.
- Enhance capacities to **tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings**, including developing capacity to adopt and implement new legislation. Current programs include "Support to Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue" (EUR 17.5 million, Pan-African Programme), "Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Eastern Africa (EUR 6 million, DCI GPGC) and "Better Migration Management in the Horn of Africa" - Khartoum Process (EUR 40 million, EU Emergency Trust Fund).
- Strengthening **border management** on the border between Sudan and Libya once a Government has been established there. This could also be explored for East Sudan/Eritrea.
- **Increase the mobility** of students and university staff through the Erasmus+ programme and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.
- **Leverage of Schengen visa issuance** within the boundaries of the Visa Code, to be discussed with the Member States.
- **Restrictions in bilateral visa exemption agreements** for diplomatic and service passport holders, to be discussed with the Member States.

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<sup>2</sup> No conditionalities can be attached to needs-based humanitarian aid in line with Humanitarian Principles

(2) Measures that have an impact in the medium term

- **Debt relief:** The future of Sudan's economy is contingent on debt relief. The EU and its MS hold the largest share of Sudan's external debt. The EU could engage MS towards the resumption of international dialogue on debt relief pending substantial progress.
- **Trade/Facilitation of WTO accession negotiations:** EU MS are important trade partners and have sponsored bilateral economic conferences. Despite WTO accession request in 2004, technical work came to a halt in 2009. This process depends mainly on political will and internal capacity. The EU could support the resumption of the technical work.
- **Ease of (US) economic sanctions:** The EU could explore EU business interest and the feasibility to trade and carry out financial transfers with Sudan. Exemptions touch sectors essential for Sudan's economic survival, such as agriculture.
- Strengthen the cooperation on **counter- terrorism**. Enhance EU-Sudan counter terrorism dialogue and advocate with the US for the removal of Sudan from the list of **states sponsoring terrorism**.

**5. Recommendations**Short summary

- The EU should carefully consider its reputational risks in its engagement with Sudan (ICC indictees in the country, ongoing violent conflicts, lack of political space and widespread human rights violations, US sanctions due to Sudan's status as a “state sponsor of terrorism”). The EU has so far limited its engagement with the country, notably by channeling assistance through non-governmental means.
- Moreover, The EU should adopt a realistic step by step approach testing Sudan's political will and seriousness in tackling mixed migration flows. Progress on the internal situation will be key in addressing such challenges. A financial package can alleviate tensions and create better prospects for populations (thereby reducing secondary movements), but leveraging structural reforms will require support by MS and a strengthened dialogue with the US.

Recommendations

- Discuss with EU Member States the way forward on engaging politically with Sudan in the migration area, to ensure the passing of coherent political messages. On this basis, intensify political dialogue recognising Sudan's efforts and the wish to deepen cooperation while demanding a clear commitment of the Sudanese side to cooperate on return and readmission as well as to step up the fight against smugglers.
- The EUR 100 million Special Measure for Sudan, as well as RDPP actions, should progress. Enhancing capacity to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings should also be prioritized, notably through existing programmes.

- Further positive incentives (such as discussions on ease of US economic sanctions, debt relief, effective cooperation on counter-terrorism), could be provided to promote effective cooperation on return and readmission and fight against smuggling. If cooperation is not effective, discussions with EU Member States could be initiated on possible visa restrictions.
- Possibilities to strengthen border management should be explored but carefully assessed against reputational risks and risks of diversion by the Government.

## 6. Next steps

- **EEAS/EC joint fact-finding mission on migration, including return and readmission as well as fight against smuggling** (first half of 2016).
  - **Visit of Commissioner Mimica to Sudan** (4-6 April 2016).
  - Further to ongoing mapping of EU+MS activities in the field of migration, identify EU+MS funding possibilities, as well as **gaps and human resources to support the package**.
-



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PRESS RELEASE DECEMBER 1, 2015

## Eritrea: Refugees fleeing indefinite conscription must be given safe haven

The huge number of young people fleeing indefinite national service in Eritrea is adding to the global refugee crisis. These people have the right to international protection, a [new report](#) from Amnesty International has found.

*Just Deserters: Why indefinite national service in Eritrea has created a generation of refugees* reveals that, despite claims by officials that conscription would be limited to 18 months, national service continues to be indefinite, often lasting for decades. Conscripts include boys and girls as young as 16 as well as the elderly and conscription often amounts to forced labour.

Attempts to flee national service have resulted in Eritreans making up the third-largest number of refugees trying to reach Europe. Yet, despite the reality on the ground, European states are increasingly rejecting asylum applications from Eritrea.

"The situation facing conscripts in Eritrea is desperate and exposes the lie behind claims made by certain host countries that most Eritreans arriving at their borders are economic migrants," said Michelle Kagari, Amnesty International's Deputy Regional Director for East Africa, the Horn and the Great Lakes.

"These people, many of them children, are refugees fleeing a system that amounts to forced labour on a national scale and that robs them of choice over key aspects of their lives."

Based on interviews with 72 Eritreans who fled the country since mid- 2014, the report sheds new light on the harsh conditions facing conscripts and the brutal methods used by the military against those who attempt to evade it. Some of the people interviewed told Amnesty International they had been conscripted for more than 10 or 15 years before fleeing the country. Others had husbands or fathers still conscripted after 20 years of service.

In some cases, multiple family members are conscripted at the same time and geographically separated, denying them the right to enjoy a family life. One 18-year-old woman told Amnesty International how a new requirement for older women to report for duty meant that every member of her immediate family was conscripted or had fled the country.

Some former conscripts described how they had gone for several years without being granted leave. Those who take leave without permission face imprisonment; if they cannot be found, family members are imprisoned in their place.

National service impacts negatively on children. Many children drop out of school early to avoid conscription and girls are married off early in the hope that this will render them ineligible for conscription. Other children, whose parents have been conscripted for a long time, have had to assume economic responsibility for their families.

Not only is national service prolonged and indefinite, it is also abysmally paid.

Every former conscript interviewed by Amnesty International said it is impossible to meet the basic needs of a family on the salary received. The basic monthly conscript salary is 450-500 Nakfa per month (USD43-8) before deductions.

People caught trying to evade or escape national service, including by fleeing the country, are detained, sometimes indefinitely, in appalling conditions. Detainees are often kept in underground cells or in shipping containers. The same fate would likely befall those forcibly returned from overseas upon the rejection of their asylum applications in Europe or elsewhere, and there is a generalized risk of arbitrary detention and torture and other ill-treatment for any returned asylum-seekers.

People attempting to cross the border into Ethiopia are at risk of being shot by the Eritrean authorities.

The government of Eritrea says the system of national service is necessary for self-defence in light of the longstanding hostility with neighbouring Ethiopia, but not all conscripts undertake military duties. Many are deployed in civilian roles including farming, construction, teaching and the civil service. Despite claims by officials that conscription would be limited to 18 months, this has clearly not

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### Austria: Block Restrictive Asylum Law (UA 103/16)

On 27 April the Austrian parliament passed amendments to Austria's asylum law that will allow people fleeing violence and conflict to be turned away at the border. In order for the legislation to enter into force, it has now to be signed by the Federal President. He has the power to stop this amendments.

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### FEATURE



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DEMAND ACTION

happened.

"Conscription continues to be indefinite for a high proportion of conscripts and sometimes lasts for decades. Older people are re-conscripted, and those who try to escape are arbitrarily detained without charge," said Michelle Kagari.

"Eritrea is haemorrhaging its youth. Children are walking alone, often without telling their parents, to other countries, to avoid lives of perpetual forced labour on low pay with no education or work opportunities. That they choose to undertake such precarious and unsafe journeys to supposed safe havens reflects the gravity of the human rights violations they would face if they stayed at home."

Amnesty International is calling on Eritrea to end the system of indefinite conscription into national service. The organization is calling on all states to recognize it as a human rights violation.

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#### FEATURED ACTION



##### Free Leonard Peltier

Amnesty International is concerned about the fairness of proceedings leading to the trial and conviction of Leonard Peltier, an Ashinabe-Lakota Native American who was convicted of murdering two FBI agents.

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# Eritrea won't shorten national service despite migration fears

ASMARA | BY EDMUND BLAIR



Passangers wait for public transport at a bus-stop in Eritrea's capital Asmara, February 20, 2016.  
REUTERS/THOMAS MUKOYA

1 of 6

Eritrea is not prepared to stop forcing its youth into lengthy stretches of work as soldiers and civil servants, a conscription policy that is driving waves of refugees to make the perilous trip across the Sahara desert and Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

European nations say that the poor Horn of Africa nation is moving only slowly and cautiously to stabilize the economy to stem the tide of migrants which is aggravating the refugee crisis that is gripping the European Union.

The Asmara government insists conscription is vital for national security saying that it fears attack by its far bigger neighbor Ethiopia with which it fought a bloody and expensive war that ended in June 2000.

On paper, citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 must complete 18 months of service to the state but diplomats and those who have fled say this can stretch to a decade or more. The government reserves the right to extend length of service in periods of emergency.

Eritrea is raising national service salaries, printing new local currency notes to deter people-traffickers and investing in mining and other sectors, but diplomats are not convinced it is doing enough to retain its young people.

Western diplomats said the strategy, boosted by a new EU financial package, showed greater engagement and openness by one of Africa's poorest countries, which has championed "self reliance" and has long accused world powers of trying to push it into isolation with U.N. sanctions.

But the diplomats, who all spoke on condition of anonymity, accused Eritrea of back-tracking on privately made commitments by some officials last year to fix national service at 18 months, a term stipulated four years after Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1991.

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needed to prop up the domestic economy.									
Each month as many as 5,000 people flee Eritrea according to U.N. figures, estimates the Eritrean government disputes. The government puts the population at about 3.6 million, while other estimates suggest it could be almost double that.									
"The government is doing the utmost that it can do, under the circumstances," Information Minister Yemane Ghebremeskel told Reuters in Eritrea, saying salaries would rise but there were no plans to scrap or cut national service.									
"Demobilization is predicated on removal of the main threat," Yemane said in his office overlooking Asmara.									
"You are talking about prolongation of national service in response to ... continued belligerence by Ethiopia," he said referring to Eritrea's neighbor with a population of 97 million.									

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## ERITREA "ENGAGING MORE"

Eritrea, which sits on the Red Sea coast next to one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, won independence after decades of conflict in which the death toll for both sides was tens of thousands dead. It also fought a border war in 1998 to 2000.

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It has complained that world powers failed to push Ethiopia to accept an arbitration ruling on demarcating their boundary. The government in Addis Ababa has said it wants talks on implementation, which Asmara rejects saying the ruling is clear.

Diplomats want the Eritrean government to make creating more jobs in the state-dominated economy a priority to discourage young people from fleeing, but believe the government is acting cautiously. "They are engaging more," one Western diplomat said. "You have to build their confidence. They don't move quickly."

Eritreans in national service receive military training, but many move to civil service jobs after a few months, working as medical professionals, teachers, engineers or other jobs. For years, they have earned less than regular civil servants and often complain they are shunted into careers they didn't choose.

"Some people come out after two to three years. Some serve more than 10," said another diplomat. "That makes it difficult for the young people to plan their life. That has been one of the main reasons why Eritreans get asylum so easily in Europe."

Rights activists have described it as "forced labor" and accuse Eritrea of other rights abuses too, including holding political prisoners, allegations the government denies.

Eritreans who have fled dismiss the idea of serious reforms to the national service system, run by President Isaias Afwerki since independence. However, others who have stayed said some national service conscripts were now being better paid.

Abel Haile, a 21-year-old who fled this month to Ethiopia, told Reuters when he was drafted into the army in 2014 an army general told conscripts they would be in the military for just one year. He left 13 months later when he saw no end in sight.

"It would mean sacrificing your whole life otherwise," he said in Enda Aba Guna, an Ethiopian town near the border.

In Asmara, a 23-year-old who works at a ministry said she earned 500 nakfa - the equivalent of about \$33 a month at the official rate but less on the black market. But she said she understood her earnings would rise under new rules.

"We are waiting. Graduates pay is higher," she said, speaking while helping out in her family's small grocery shop.

## PUSH VS PULL FACTORS

In a series of interviews, ministers accepted there were "push" factors like low pay driving people abroad, but mostly blamed "pull" factors enticing Eritreans away, saying migrants only needed to complain about what they said were injustices in national service to get asylum in Europe.

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The EU signed a 200-million-euro package of support last month with Eritrea, a nation that has in the past turned down some foreign aid when it believed it would create dependence not development. The EU package includes energy sector support.

Generators from chronic power shortages often rumble in the capital, an elegant, low-rise city with buildings and street cafes from the early 20th century Italian colonial era.

Most residents cannot afford the luxury of a private power supply, leaving shops in the dark as evening draws in. In rural areas, many are not connected to the national grid at all.

Finance Minister Berhane Habtemariam said new mines - one commercial mine is in operation and three more are due to start by 2018 - would boost the economy, but he said the government also wanted investment in tourism, fisheries and other areas.

He declined to give growth or other economic forecasts.

"Every time we give figures, it is used by our enemies to attack us," he said, the kind of remark that fuels Eritrea's reputation as a reclusive nation, a description the government vehemently disagrees with saying it is open but faces threats.

The African Development Bank estimates growth in 2015 was 2.1 percent up from 2.0 percent a year before.

The minister said he did not know how the bank reached those figures, but said growth had been in double digits about five years ago when gold mining started and prices were higher.

Berhane outlined some new national service pay scales, including for graduates who would receive 4,000 nakfa a month instead of 1,400 nakfa. Civil service pay across the board was under review and would help discourage migration, he said.

#### SECRET PLAN, WORTHLESS NOTES

Introducing new nakfa currency notes late last year was designed to rein in a black market and hit human traffickers abroad, such as those in Sudan who took cash from migrants in nakfa and had kept the old notes, the minister said.

The new notes were issued in a six-week period - the timing of which had been kept "top secret" said one official - to ensure traffickers could not send their cash hoard back in time, leaving them holding now worthless old currency notes.

"It might not stop (human trafficking) altogether, but I am sure it is going to have an impact," the finance minister said.

While the official rate of around 15 nakfa to the U.S. dollar has stayed fixed, the black market rate has plunged to about 20-25 from 50-55 before the new notes were circulated.

Western economic experts say floating the nakfa currency would help scrub out the black market in a nation that relies heavily on remittances from Eritreans abroad. Government officials say it would simply hurt the economy.

The government has instead limited circulation of the new notes and bank withdrawals to encourage more Eritreans to use cheques and bank transfers, trying to reduce the size of the cash economy that officials say allowed illegal trade to thrive.

But this has created challenges for a country with just two commercial banks and 30 branches combined. A cash crunch has left shops and restaurants struggling to find customers, as few people have enough notes to spend on anything more than basics.

"Demand is less than it was since the new exchange system," said Mohamed Nour, a 70-year-old clothes shopkeeper on one of Asmara's main commercial streets. "But we must have patience."

(Additional reporting by Aaron Maasho in Ethiopia; Writing by Edmund Blair, editing by Peter Millership)

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## NEWS



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# Eritrea Raising National Service Salary by 700%, Won't Shorten to 18 Months Limit



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The EU has a vested interest in seeing Eritrea stabilized as a stable Eritrea means fewer migrants. But Eritrea's stability doesn't come entirely from the stability of the economy but rather from its national security. Eritrea has a security threat from its much larger and hungrier neighbor Ethiopia. In the absence international will to 'guarantee' Eritrea's security concerns, the immediate option for Eritrea is to make staying in the country attractive first by improving the salary of National Service conscripts by up to 700 percent.

By **Edmund Blair** | for Reuters,

Eritrea is not prepared to stop forcing its youth into lengthy stretches of work as soldiers and civil servants, a conscription policy that is driving waves of refugees to make the perilous trip across the Sahara desert and Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

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But the diplomats, who all spoke on condition of anonymity, accused Eritrea of back-tracking on privately made

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## Eritrea TV (Wide Sc



commitments by some officials last year to fix national service at 18 months, a term stipulated four years after Eritrea’s independence from Ethiopia in 1991.

European nations say that as long as national service dragged past the time limit Eritrean youths would continue to leave the country, thereby losing valuable workers that are needed to prop up the domestic economy.

Each month as many as 5,000 people flee Eritrea according to U.N. figures, estimates the Eritrean government disputes. The government puts the population at about 3.6 million, while other estimates suggest it could be almost double that.

“The government is doing the utmost that it can do, under the circumstances,” Information Minister Yemane Ghebremeskel told Reuters in Eritrea, saying salaries would rise but there were no plans to scrap or cut national service.

“Demobilization is predicated on removal of the main threat,” Yemane said in his office overlooking Asmara.

“You are talking about prolongation of national service in response to ... continued belligerence by Ethiopia,” he said referring to Eritrea’s neighbor with a population of 97 million.

Eritrea “Engaging More”

Eritrea, which sits on the Red Sea coast next to one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes, won independence after decades of conflict in which the death toll for both sides was tens of thousands dead. It also fought a border war in 1998 to 2000.

It has complained that world powers failed to push Ethiopia to accept an arbitration ruling on demarcating their boundary. The government in Addis Ababa has said it wants talks on implementation, which Asmara rejects saying the ruling is clear [final and binding].

Diplomats want the Eritrean government to make creating more jobs in the state-dominated economy a priority to discourage young people from fleeing, but believe the government is acting cautiously. “They are engaging more,” one Western diplomat said. “You have to build their confidence. They don’t move quickly.”

Eritreans in national service receive military training, but many move to civil service jobs after a few months, working as medical professionals, teachers, engineers or other jobs. For years, they have earned less than regular civil servants and often complain they are shunted into careers they didn’t choose.

“Some people come out after two to three years. Some serve more than 10,” said another diplomat. “That makes it difficult for the young people to plan their life. That has been one of the main reasons why Eritreans get asylum so easily in Europe.”

Rights activists have described it as “forced labor” and accuse Eritrea of other rights abuses too, including holding political prisoners, allegations the government denies.

Eritreans who have fled dismiss the idea of serious reforms to the national service system, run by President Isaias Afwerki since independence. However, others who have stayed said some national service conscripts were now being better paid.

Abel Haile, a 21-year-old who fled this month to Ethiopia, told Reuters when he was drafted into the army in 2014 an army general told conscripts they would be in the military for just one year. He left 13 months later when he saw no end in sight.

“It would mean sacrificing your whole life otherwise,” he said in Enda Aba Guna, an Ethiopian town near the border.

In Asmara, a 23-year-old who works at a ministry said she earned 500 nakfa – the equivalent of about \$33 a month at the official rate but less on the black market. But she said she understood her earnings would rise under new rules.

“We are waiting. Graduates pay is higher,” she said, speaking while helping out in her family’s small grocery shop.

Push Vs Pull Factors

injustices in national service to get asylum in Europe.

Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed, who said ties with European Union states were deepening, also told Reuters that Western policies had “taken the young generation to Europe”.

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The EU **signed** a 200-million-euro package of support last month with Eritrea, a nation that has in the past turned down some foreign aid when it believed it would create dependence not development. The EU package includes energy sector support.

Generators from chronic power shortages often rumble in the capital, an elegant, low-rise city with buildings and street cafes from the early 20th century Italian colonial era.

Most residents cannot afford the luxury of a private power supply, leaving shops in the dark as evening draws in. In rural areas, many are not connected to the national grid at all.

Finance Minister Berhane Habtemariam said new mines – one commercial mine is in operation and three more are due to start by 2018 – would boost the economy, but he said the government also wanted investment in tourism, fisheries and other areas.

He declined to give growth or other economic forecasts.

“Every time we give figures, it is used by our enemies to attack us,” he said, the kind of remark that fuels Eritrea’s reputation as a reclusive nation, a description the government vehemently disagrees with saying it is open but faces threats.

The African Development Bank estimates growth in 2015 was 2.1 percent up from 2.0 percent a year before.

The minister said he did not know how the bank reached those figures, but said growth had been in double digits about five years ago when gold mining started and prices were higher.

Berhane outlined some new national service pay scales, including for graduates who would receive **4,000 Nakfa** a month instead of 1,400 Nakfa. Civil service pay across the board was under review and would help discourage migration, he said.

## Secret Plan, Worthless Notes

Introducing **new** nakfa currency notes late last year was designed to rein in a black market and hit human traffickers abroad, such as those in Sudan who took cash from migrants in nakfa and had kept the old notes, the minister said.

The new notes were issued in a six-week period – the timing of which had been kept “top secret” said one official – to ensure traffickers could not send their cash hoard back in time, leaving them holding now worthless old currency notes.

“It might not stop (human trafficking) altogether, but I am sure it is going to have an impact,” the finance minister said.

While the official rate of around **15 Nakfa** to the U.S. dollar has stayed fixed, the black market rate has plunged to about 20-25 from 50-55 before the new notes were circulated.

Western economic experts say floating the Nakfa currency would help scrub out the black market in a nation that relies heavily on remittances from Eritreans abroad. Government officials say it would simply hurt the economy.

The government has instead limited circulation of the new notes and bank withdrawals to encourage more Eritreans to use cheques and bank transfers, trying to reduce the size of the cash economy that officials say allowed illegal trade to thrive.

But this has created challenges for a country with just two commercial banks and 30 branches combined. A cash crunch has left shops and restaurants struggling to find customers, as few people have enough notes to spend on anything more than basics.

“Demand is less than it was since the new exchange system,” said Mohamed Nour, a 70-year-old clothes shopkeeper on one of Asmara’s main commercial streets. “But we must have patience.”

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## Eritrean army conscripts 'killed in Asmara escape bid'

6 April 2016 | [Africa](#)



**Security forces in Eritrea's capital Asmara have killed several young conscripts who tried to escape the convoy they were travelling in, according to opposition media outlets.**

There were also civilian casualties after some of the recruits' friends and family used a bus to block the road to help them escape, according to the **unconfirmed reports**.

Conscription in Eritrea is compulsory.

The Eritrean authorities have not commented on the alleged incident.

Rights groups consider Eritrea to be one of the world's most repressive states.

In 2015, it ranked bottom of the World Press Freedom Index, published by media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Conscription in Eritrea can last for decades and is one of the main reasons tens of thousands flee the country every year.

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# Eritrea Issued Legal Notice to Regulate New Currency



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NIP IN THE BUD. A major and unprecedented step to regulate the economy.

By TesfaNews.

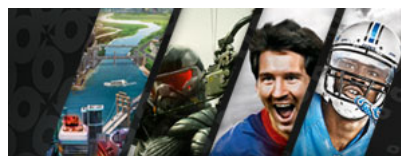
The National Bank of Eritrea issued a legal notice No. 124/2015 to replace all denomination of the existing Nakfa currency notes with a new legal tender Nakfa currency notes.

The unprecedented step that aimed at stimulating the economy first by regulating the circulation of the national currency is expected to effectively curb the rampant money laundering practices, illegal hoarding of large bills and circulation of counterfeit notes among others that are all contributing in strangulating the economy by skyrocketing the inflation and foreign currency exchange rates.

The legal notice outlines some strict procedures to follow during the exchange process of the old Nakfa currency notes as it puts in place a mechanism to squeeze out those who were amassing and hoarding large amount of the legal tender out of circulation among others.

or opportunity for any individual or entity to deposit any amount of money they possess in their bank accounts, if they have any.

The stringent measure is expected to hit hard to those individuals and organisations who have been hoarding the Nakfa currency notes for quite sometime; those who thrive from illegal border tradings and human trafficking; money launderers; and those who thrive from informal foreign currency exchange in the black market among other, as it effectively render their Nakfa empire to nothing than a worthless pile of paper.



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The Bank said it will announce through media the period during which redemption shall commence and terminate.

The Nakfa was introduced in November 1997, replacing the Ethiopian Birr, six years after independence.

Here below is the full text of regulation No. 124/2015

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# Legal Notice No. 124/2015

## Legal Tender Nakfa Currency Notes Regulations

### Article 1. Issuing Authority

The Bank of Eritrea hereby issues these Regulations pursuant to authority vested in it by Articles 5 and 52 of the Bank of Eritrea Proclamation No. 93/1997.

### Article 2. Short Title

These Regulations may be cited as the “Legal Tender Nakfa Currency Notes Regulations No. 124/2015”.

### Article 3. Redemption of the Nakfa Currency Notes in Circulation

- (1) The Bank of Eritrea shall declare through media the period during which redemption shall commence and terminate.
- (2) The Bank of Eritrea shall, through the commercial banks, redeem the old Nakfa currency notes in circulation with new legal tender Nakfa currency notes at the rate of one old Nakfa currency note equals one new Nakfa currency note.

### Article 4. Commercial Banks and Customers

- (1) Commercial Banks shall, from the day of entry into force of these Regulations up to the end of the process of redemption pursuant to Article 5 of these Regulations, engage in opening new accounts for customers, redeeming the old Nakfa currency note with the new Nakfa currency note, ensuring that the forms accordingly prepared are properly filled, providing receipts to customers and clarifying the redemption procedures.
- (2) Any individual or entity shall be allowed to redeem currency solely in one bank and solely once.
- (3) During redemption, individuals or entities shall be allowed to exchange in cash only up to twenty thousand new Nakfa currency note for the old Nakfa currency note. Any amount in excess shall be deposited in their accounts.
- (4) During redemption, individuals or entities shall be allowed to withdraw from their accounts only up to twenty thousand in new Nakfa currency notes. Any transactions in excess may only be settled through checks or other bank instruments.
- (5) Foreigners or foreign entities wishing to exchange old Nakfa currency notes for the new Nakfa currency notes may be allowed to do so after the legitimacy of the mode of obtaining the old Nakfa currency they wish to exchange has been verified.

### Article 5. Time Limit for Currency Redemption

- (1) The currency redemption procedure shall commence on the day of the entry into force of these Regulations.
- (2) Individuals or entities may, during the period of redemption, surrender old Nakfa currency notes for redemption.
- (3) During the last four weeks, however, individuals or entities may surrender old Nakfa currency notes for redemption.
- (4) All old Nakfa currency notes not surrendered for redemption within the time frame provided for in sub-Articles (1), (2) and (3) hereof, shall be irredeemable and worthless for the purpose of effecting payment.

### Article 6. Penalty


Whosoever intentionally violates the provisions of these Regulations or hinders their implementation shall, upon conviction, be punishable in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Transitional Penal Code of Eritrea.


### Article 7. Effective Date

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## Some Experts Wary of Eritrean Currency Redemption Plan

Print Comment (13) Share:



Eritrea map

Salem Solomon

November 25, 2015 1:03 PM

The Bank of Eritrea recently announced that all Nakfa notes in circulation must be exchanged for new government-issued notes.

The decision by the country's central financial institution is expected to have a major impact on the economy.

While the nationwide currency replacement program is not meant to change the value of the money, as the exchange will be on a one-to-one basis, observers nonetheless expected the effects to be wide-ranging.

Biniam Fessehazion Gebremichael, a former Eritrean judge and legal counsel for Eritrean Airlines who now lives in Oakland, California, says the official reasons given for the exchange included introducing new banking instruments such as checking for transactions above 20,000 Nakfa, redeeming old currency and controlling illicit business.

But he also said the biggest reason for the currency replacement — hoarding of undeposited cash — was not mentioned.

"Currency hoarding ... happened because Hawala financial and business entities and individuals in Eritrea have been doing illicit foreign exchange and illicit trade with the help of some legitimate entities in Eritrea," he said. "This is the main reason."

Despite a strictly controlled economy, Eritrea's black market is thriving. The currency has been in a state of rapid inflation in recent years, leading to a large disparity between official and unofficial exchange rates. One U.S. dollar is worth 15 Nakfa at Eritrea's official exchange rate, but worth 50 to 58 Nakfa on the black market.

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"Even the government rates its prices or other commodities ... with the black market," Biniam said, explaining that if the exchange rates go unadjusted, it may force prices too high for the average Eritrean.

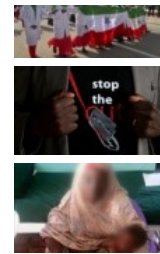
Eritreans who possess large sums of money and work outside of the formal economy have a difficult decision to make: either give up their savings or face serious penalties including confiscation, heavy taxation or imprisonment. According to Biniam, these penalties can be assessed without the accused being given right to a lawyer.

"The consequences are very, very grave," he said.

These decisions will have to be made quickly. According to Hanibal Goitom, a foreign law specialist at the U.S. Library of Congress, the currency redemption program will occur over a six-week period, whose as-yet-unannounced start date is expected to be at the bank's discretion. The new law restricts bank withdrawals during the six-week period to 20,000 Nakfa and stipulates that all foreigners exchanging money prove that they obtained it legally.

The decision already appears to be having an impact, with reports that Eritreans are rushing to purchase commodities or property in advance of the switch. Biniam warns that the currency swap could have an impact on the value of assets as well.

"In the long run, this uncertainty will increase the price of property. People will never trust banks and will never trust currency, so people will start accumulating wealth in assets, [which] will impact the price of assets or property," he said. "The benefit is good at this time, but it will have a long impact that will be hard to eliminate at the end of the day, because if people don't trust [their] banks, they're not going to put cash in the banks and, as you know, governments borrow from banks to pay their debts. So in the long run it will be very unfortunate."



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**Salem Solomon**

Salem Solomon is a journalist and web producer at Voice of America's Horn of Africa Service, where she reports in English, [Amharic](#) and [Tigrigna](#). Her work has appeared in The New York Times, Poynter.org, Reuters and The Tampa Bay Times. Salem

researches trends in analytics and digital journalism, and her data-driven work has been featured in VOA's [special projects](#) collection.

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by: **Wedi Adi Mongoti**

December 20, 2015 12:52 PM

We can say we are Eritreans because the of sacrifice of many, long live Eritrea!

---

by: **kidane** from: **Pretoria**

December 19, 2015 6:39 AM

HGDEF knows what he is doing leave him alone, but the people are like sheep without knowledge led astray. My problem is not HGDEF but the Coptic church.

---

by: **Yohannese** from: **US**

November 28, 2015 11:55 AM

The issue is not that a government is exchanging money if it is done by appropriate and legal manner. the problem is Eritrea is now governed by a Dictatorial Junta (HIGDEF) who does not have any regard for the welfare or asset of the people. This junta has never promulgated law or directives to benefit the people or the country. Every law passed is to further subjugate the Eritrean people and for the benefit of junta. Who is hoarding money by inappropriate manner (smuggling and selling people)? The henchman of this Junta. The Junta have no right to usurp the assets of the people. But again the junta does not care about rights. This junta does not have any legitimacy as government in the eyes of Eritreans. The only way for Eritrean people is the final solution, getting rid of this Junta. PERIOD

### In Response

by: **Jumbo**

November 29, 2015 3:41 PM

So go overthrow them. Good luck

---

by: **TeddySheda**

November 27, 2015 8:59 PM

Very Entertaining Article . Content and Heading of Article don't even match.

1. What qualification does an ex lawyer have regarding financial issues & Decisions ?
- 2) Speculative statements are just that, speculations.
- 3) But much more interesting are the balance of the negative and positive tones . It admits that illicit money transactions and illegal trade/exchange was occurring large amount of the cash flow in the country. Then makes excuse or tries to reason why the Government of Eritrea should NOT take actions. As it might affect the countries economy. Simply Amazing.

Is the VOA not aware that the Eritrean Government is a Government? That it has Economic and Financial advisors & experts more qualified than an "ex lawyer " and a "think tank Lawyer"?

Finally why is there no by line? Who wrote this so called article?

---

by: **Cabral** from: **Sweden**

November 27, 2015 5:25 PM

As a trained economist, I was taught that hoarding is an economic phenomenon which occurs either when people anticipate an apparent increase in value of resources (including money) or due to a collapse in the economic system. As a result people distrust the economy and the state policies leading to a flourishing underground economy. This happens to be the case in Eritrea.

---

by: **FORMA HAGER**

November 26, 2015 2:50 PM

I am sure Eritrea move is good move on currency adjustment and what the international banking is acting on, then why is it wrong when Eritrea is following the advance banking system!

### In Response

by: **what**

November 26, 2015 6:08 PM

Eritrea is finished ...

---

by: **Erena**

November 26, 2015 11:28 AM

The article only shows that the people who hoard will learn not to do so again. Buying commodity makes sense but the "people will not trust the banks" doesn't make sense. There was no justified explanation in the article that indicates that future event

---

by: **Goita**

November 26, 2015 6:40 AM

The junta playing cat and mouse among themselves. It's a sign of their fall as many dictators have done in the past, grip-grape anything to reduce the damage but going anyway.

by: **Manuel**

November 25, 2015 11:38 PM

This issue was implemented with experts not overnight dream...don't worry we have experts living in Eritrea.  
...not escaped and gives analysis

by: **John**

November 25, 2015 11:10 PM

So if you're a foreigner, you must prove to the satisfaction of the Eritrean government that any Eritrean currency you hold was obtained legally. Obviously no foreigner should sell anything to an Eritrean at this time. The government will simply claim that the transaction was illegal and refuse to replace your currency.

**In Response**

by: **Anonymous**

November 27, 2015 10:51 AM

Nakfa is not bought and sold in the international market. Or do you have some forged Nakfas??

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## Eritrea's New Capital And Social Control through Currency Change

November 11, 2015 Written by: Awate Team 368 Comments

Category: Pencil  
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Awate Team

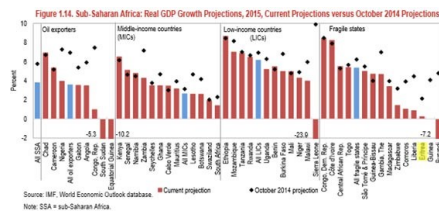


Countries usually announce change of currency to (a) stabilize a wobbly banking system, (b) to fight hyper-inflation, (c) to opt for currency substitution due to joining a regional or international currency or (d) to assert sovereignty. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Eritrean regime announced that it will be issuing new currency and that Eritreans have six-weeks to surrender old currencies in exchange for new Nakfa at a 1:1 ratio. Four reasons have been given—officially and semi-officially—for this decision. They are (1) to fight the black market; (2) to fight inflation; (3) to increase currency circulation; (4) to fight contraband and corruption. This poses the following questions: Are the measures it is taking adequate? If they are not adequate, why, and what must be done? This is what we will try to address in this editorial. But to help us all understand where we are, we need to begin with the state of Eritrea's economy.

Since the government has no published budget and no reports (or reporting mechanism), Eritreans often rely on international financial institutions to understand the state of the economy. The problem is that the financial institutions, themselves, give wildly varying numbers. Three years ago, the pro-regime websites couldn't get enough of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) forecast that Eritrea's economy would be among the fastest-growing in the world for 3 consecutive years. But of late, even those with bullish forecasts, like AfDB have tempered their forecast. Another problem is that some of the reports are lagging and infrequently updated.

### I. GDP Growth

For GDP growth, we will use that of the International Monetary Fund: Real GDP Growth Projections for 2015. According to IMF, the revised growth rate for Eritrea is estimated to be 0.2%. We realize that the IMF is not popular with some segments of Eritrea—we are using it because it updates its forecasts frequently. Those who are skeptical of the IMF (because, according to pro-regime websites, a senior Ethiopian at the bank manipulates the data to make Eritrea look bad) can reference the World Bank and the Africa Development Bank. The IMF categorizes states as oil exporters, middle income countries (MICs), Low Income Countries (LICs) and Fragile states. Along with Liberia, Comoros and Zimbabwe, Eritrea is a member of the four fragile states club which will experience a less than 2% GDP growth—mostly due to drop in copper prices, its single export—for 2015; catastrophic for a nation whose population is growing at 3% annually.



What is even worse is that GDP is calculated by using the USD equivalents of Nakfa at *official exchange rates*. According to the World Bank, Eritrea's GDP for 2014 is USD \$3.858 billion. Let's now see what happens if we are to use the real (market) exchange rate: it would be \$3.858 \* \$15 (official)/\$60 (unofficial). That is: Eritrea's REAL GDP is ¼ of what is published: it's less than \$1 billion USD. This takes us to the second issue: black market.

### II. Black Market

One of the reasons given for introducing the new currency is to bring to control the black market. The real question is: why is Eritrea one of only eight African countries that has a fixed exchange rate? The rest of the world has moved to a market (floating) exchange rate and has virtually eliminated the black market. Some economists (like Friedman) have also argued that a country that has a floating exchange rate does not even need to have reserves. However, following the 1998 financial crises in SE Asia, many countries maintain high reserve of US dollar and Euro to fend against currency manipulation. Moving away from the fixed exchange would eliminate the black market in Eritrea and give the bank's coffers much-needed hard currency. Issuing new currency only kicks the can down the road—after a short period, the black market will come roaring back. We can only assume that the reason the government sticks with the fixed exchange is because it wants to manipulate the size of its GDP, and to have hard currency that exists in a parallel market—also controlled by the ruling party. That is, the black market exists to allow the ruling party to dominate the economy, to maintain a cloak of secrecy and to avoid any transparency or accountability.

### III. Fight Corruption

According to Transparency International, Eritrea ranks 166 out of 175 countries in the least corrupt ranking. Put another way, there are only 9 countries that are more corrupt than Eritrea now. What is even worse is that the rank has been steadily getting worse since 2010 moving from 123, to 134, to 150, to 160 and now 166. Corruption is measured by the *perception* of the public sector. This suggests that corruption is endemic and part of the public sector culture now, not the least of it being due to income disparity between the haves and have-nots (one of the highest in the world) and that public sector employees do not have livable wages. In fact, it is hard to imagine how an Eritrean who has no Diaspora support can make a living in Eritrea.

### IV. Inflation

Eritrea's inflation rate has varied between the extremely high recorded in 2009 (34.70) to the high recorded for 2014 (11.6%). In fact, only four African countries—Central African Republic, Ghana, Malawi and South Sudan—have markedly higher inflation rates than Eritrea. This, no doubt, is tied to shortage of goods and inflated money supply.

Money supply, also called M2, is the sum of "currency outside banks, demand deposits other than those of the central government and the time, savings, and foreign currency deposits of resident sectors other than the central government." Basically, it is cash and cash equivalent that is highly liquid. M2 is measured as a percentage of the nation's GDP. Eritrea's M2 is 115.6% of its GDP. Recall that Eritrea's GDP (at the official exchange rate) is \$3.86 billion USD. This means its M2 is \$3.86\*115.6% = \$4.46 billion. That is, again using the official exchange rate, 62.44 billion Nakfa that is circulating in Eritrea. That is how much new currency will have to be issued from a 1:1 exchange. To be sure, there is no absolute rule that says that high M2 leads to inflation—in fact some of the most dynamic economies (China, Hong Kong, Japan) have high M2. There is a consensus, however, that high M2, coupled with shortage of goods, with no budget constraint, or sound monetary policy is a contributor to inflation. Because of lack of available data, we are unable to run basic econometric models to analyze the impact of these macroeconomic variables on the Eritrean economy.

### V. Contraband

Where there is a shortage of goods—and government policies that create shortage of goods, as is the case in Eritrea—contraband will thrive. For the last year that data is available, 2012, Eritrea's Balance of Trade (trade deficit) was \$461 million. This is because after 2010, with Bisha mine going to production, Eritrea became a one-commodity-export-economy, whose bulk of GDP is generated by one mining company.

Its import of a variety of essentials—equipment, wheat, pasta—is more than double the export. Coupled with this is the Party competing with the Government and the People: with the government issuing ill-advised and wrong decisions that empowers contraband trade, which is controlled by the ruling party.

### VI. Conservative Banks

One of the arguments made for changing the currency is that the government wants to introduce a culture where people use all the tools of modern banking including checks and electronic cards. There are two problems here. Firstly, for the most part, Eritrea's banks—just like the rest of its institutions—are not managed by technocrats but political hacks. Secondly, and related to that, Eritrean banks have one of the lowest loan-to-deposit ratio. Let's look at both.

With a dysfunctional central bank, Eritrea's monetary policies are not formulated to stabilize the economy and create trust; they are created to ensure that the regime's coffers are the main beneficiary as a way of perpetuating its rule. For decades, that policy has created a stagnant economy resulting in unemployment, inflation, and poverty—the symptoms of bad fiscal and monetary policies and a reflection of a lack of management of money supply and the underlying problems associated with it. Consequently, a parallel unofficial economy flourishes, which encourages and rewards contraband, human trafficking and smuggling, currency black market, money laundering, and corruption at the highest levels, especially by the high ranking military officers who are involved in all sorts of illicit activities. Even Canadian mining company Nevsun engages in a militarized commerce in which the regime provides them with free labor, security protection, and transportation for hard currency.



A 1997 interview that was conducted with Berhane Abrehe, the former minister of finance, Weldai Futur, the IMF loaned consultant, and Girma Asmerom, the then-upcoming PFDJ diplomat, shows the big gap between what was promised by the Eritrean government, and what has transpired. Berhane Abrehe explained the issue of currency in a professional manner; Weldai Futur emphasized the differences in the approaches of both the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments; meanwhile, Girma, who has no training in the field, kept emphasizing how the Eritrean government wants to encourage free trade, and that it does not want to tell traders how to conduct their business transaction, sprinkling his statements with high sounding words like "globalization" and "free trade". Time proved that those terms are alien to the PFDJ regime which was never for free trade, nor for relaxing its grip on the economy, but always focused on suffocating the business community, which it sees as a competitor not as an engine that powers the national economy the regime is supposed to manage. In hindsight, we now know that the PFDJ was opposed to Ethiopia's insistence of using LC, (Letter of Credit) to document trade transactions because it had every intention in engaging in illicit cross-border trade to benefit PFDJ business enterprise and not the Eritrean people— a position that contributed to the 1998 war. Having failed to deliver peace and prosperity, Eritrea's sole legal party is now insisting on trying to document and control all financial transactions of its own people. And by doing that, it will further damage the already crippled economy.

The banks which are run by political appointees—which is to say, personally by Isaias Afwerki—are, in turn, not in the business of serving their depositors—the people—but Isaias Afwerki and his Party. For 2013, the last available report, the loan-to-deposit ratio of Eritrea is 23.3%. To put this in perspective, only South Sudan had a lower ratio of 15.2%. That is to say, for every \$1,000 in deposit, the Bank only lent \$233. To put this in perspective again, the median loan-to-deposit ratio for Sub-Saharan Africa is 87.2%. In short, Eritreans have no incentive to go to the Bank as it is unlikely to extend credit to them. Even those who could put their properties as collateral for loans simply cannot do any kind of business because of the chronic shortage of goods, stagnant economy, and inability to compete with PFDJ business enterprises. And if it did, there are no investment opportunities and whatever little opportunities there are, they are reserved for PFDJ conglomerates. And now, with a fiat, the government wants to change people's behavior without offering an incentive for them to do so.

#### Recommendations.

Under a normal government, the antidote to the underlying cause of the challenges Eritrea faces are rule of law, good governance, administrative competence, transparency, well-functioning media to inform the public in exposing corruption, and free and meaningfully regulated free enterprise.

The adoption of a market based exchange rate, which would attract inflows of private capital and foreign exchange, is the only way to remove the expanding gap between the official and parallel market exchange rates. Many developing countries have tried and failed to maintain a fixed exchange rate. African countries that still have fixed exchange rates are: Cape Verde, Comoros, Eritrea, Lesotho, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan, and Swaziland.

Such draconian and coercive undertaking of major currency exchange exercise—remember, if every Nakfa is surrendered, that is 62.4 billion of it being counted, exchanged, documented, witnessed, audited— would have been unnecessary as the underlying issues would have been addressed by the institution found in an open, politically stable, democratic society that aims at maintaining an independent central bank that benefits the economy and not the intelligence entities.

People are overwhelmed by the corrupt environment that the regime created, they are trying to make a living, and now they will be impoverished or arrested. Even the ardent regime supporters who often use the black market when vacationing in Eritrea will find a way to circumvent the rules as they will not be happy to be required to exchange their money at a fraction of the black market rate.

As a result, the Eritrean Nakfa has become as good as a USA penny (down from 12 cents in 1998); its purchasing power is eroded, and such a situation doesn't encourage investing or doing business. The decision to change the currency in such a haphazard way will result in a higher inflation, higher exchange rate and more corruption that will kill the already damaged economy.

In short, with all powers concentrated under one man, Eritrea does not have institutions that can ensure macroeconomic stability, control inflation, exchange rate stability, attracting foreign investment and supporting economic growth. Unless the government embraces institutionalism, accountability, transparency, the only way it will get people to do what it wants them to do is through its coercive powers. And that, as every failed communist nation has demonstrated, is no way to grow and develop.

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sara

Dear Readers I asked a friend where saay is this days, she said probably busy organizing Eritreans silver jubilee celebration probably not too far from the Bay area. happy independence day to all...

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Tzigereda

Dear Awatistats,  
Kerney qenikum?  
I thought this video clip might have some interesting points on the ongoing discussions:  
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=...>

Europe Targets Eritrea's Natural Resources · 5 hours ago

Gebre

Dear Bahlib, You wrote a wonderful manuscript that fits well to the old story of the ELF/EPLF style. The write up is an excellent story telling without much of the dynamic political analysis. That...

From Mutual Coexistence to Mutual Suspicion · 7 hours ago

Saleh Johar

Hi Hope, Please think of what you are saying before you type your comments: You wrote, "The awate team should have allowed you to expand this comment of yours in an Article format vis-a-vis..."

Europe Targets Eritrea's Natural Resources · 8 hours ago

AMAN

Dear Awates ... Greetings to All ... I found most part of this writing a smear campaign and an attempt to framing Eritrean history of the Armed struggle for attack by internal enemies and/or...

From Mutual Coexistence to Mutual Suspicion · 9 hours ago

josef

Mr. Malk, I think we are missing the element in argument. What we have is mixture is worst element of 'maoist' and worst element of traditional culture mixed up in Gedhli generation. What you see...

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Hope

Well said Vet Mahmud. The awate team should have allowed you to expand this comment of yours in an Article format vis-a-vis Yohannes' Article, as a kind of a Follow Up Article to that of...

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Mahmud Saleh

Hi Bahlibi Thank you for this interesting article. The following are few observations I want to make as I read your article. 1. You said the 30 years war was waged "...in the quest for freedom..."

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Hope

Selam AOsmen(Osman Salih Sabbe Junior): I like your approach and your style of debating people. I would combine that of Yohannes' Article and your opinion about the EU's Engagement with Eritrea...

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Hope

Selam Ustaz Aman H: Initially I decided to ignore your insult but felt obligated to comment on it. Read again tsatse carefully. As far as the "Unsettled mind" is concerned.Solomon Haile hit you...

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Mahmud Saleh, Comments (98)

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« Apr						



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von Arb Urs 9. Februar 2015

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# Sondierungsreise nach Eritrea

20.01. – 24.01.2015

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## 1. Einführung

### Hintergrund

Mehrere Ereignisse in der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 2014 könnten auf eine Öffnung Eritreas hindeuten: Zum Unabhängigkeitstag sprach Präsident Isaias Afwerki von der seit etwa 17 Jahren ausstehenden Umsetzung der Verfassung. Die Anti-Folter-Konvention (*Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*) sowie das „Palermo“-Protokoll zur Bekämpfung von Menschenhandel (*Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*) wurden von Eritrea unterzeichnet. Eritrea nahm im Mai 2014 an der Vorbereitungskonferenz, und im Oktober 2014 aktiv an der AU Konferenz betreffend Bekämpfung von Menschenhandel und – schmuggel, sowie am 28. November 2014 an der Lancierung des Khartum Prozesses in Rom teil.

Delegationen aus Norwegen (Juni und Dezember 2014), Grossbritannien (Dezember 2014), Finnland (Januar, Mai, August und November 2014), den Niederlanden (Herbst 2014) und eine *Fact Finding Mission* aus Dänemark (Oktober 2014) reisten nach Eritrea. Der italienische Vize-Aussenminister hat sich schon einige Male nach Asmara begeben.

Gegenüber dem für Eritrea zuständigen Schweizer Botschafter Strub sagte der Berater von Präsident Isaias Afwerki im Oktober 2014 in Khartum, dass Eritrea Interesse an der Kooperation im Migrationsbereich habe. Er bedauere, dass die Migrationsgespräche des vorherigen Jahres nicht fortgeführt wurden.

Wegen der Isolation des Landes, der wirtschaftlich desolaten Lage und der hohen Abwanderung seiner zumeist jungen Bevölkerung ist es möglich, dass Eritrea eine Änderung seiner Politik als nötig ansieht.

### Zielsetzung

- Fortsetzung des bestehenden Dialogs mit Eritrea;
- Abklären, inwiefern Eritrea die im letzten Jahr gemachten Aussagen ernst meint und wie sich Eritrea eine Zusammenarbeit im Migrationsbereich konkret vorstellt;
- Sondieren, ob die Rahmenbedingungen gegeben sind, um eine bilaterale Zusammenarbeit im Migrationsbereich konkret zu initiieren;

- Bekräftigung der Position, dass das SEM die Lage in Eritrea eng verfolgt und die Situation vor Ort regelmässig neu evaluiert.

Es handelte sich weder um eine Abklärungsmission noch um eine Fact Finding Mission. Ebensoviening war es Ziel der Reise, eine Änderung der Asyl- und Wegweisungspraxis zu prüfen.

## 2. Treffen mit der eritreischen Regierung, Botschaften und NGO's

### 2.1. Eritreische Regierung:

*Aussenminister Saleh Osman, Justizministerin Fozia Hashim, Präsidentenberater Yemane Ghebreab*

Die **Regierung** hat Mühe, offen zu kommunizieren, und hat sich nach den gemachten Erfahrungen (nicht-Durchsetzen der UNO-Beschlüsse betreffend Grenzziehung Äthiopien - Eritrea durch die Grossmächte und UNO) infolge mangelnden Vertrauens in die internationale Gemeinschaft selber isoliert.

Gemäss übereinstimmenden Quellen vor Ort sind die Minister [REDACTED]. Die meisten von ihnen sind ehemalige Kämpfer. [REDACTED]

Das Gespräch mit dem **Aussenminister und der Justizministerin** war wenig überraschend und mit bekanntem Inhalt (Rolle [REDACTED], *No war no Peace*- Situation, Asylgewährung in Europa als falscher Pullfaktor).

Zusammenfassung der Gesprächsthemen und Aussagen:

- Die grösste Herausforderung für Eritrea ist die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung.
- Suspendierte Mitgliedschaft IGAD: der Fehler liege bei [REDACTED]. Generell starkes Misstrauen gegenüber der IGAD, die die eigenen Reglemente nicht eingehalten habe, wie z.B. dass der Vorsitz jährlich rotieren sollte, seit 2007 aber in der Hand Äthiopiens ist.
- Die Regierungsvertreter sagten, dass der National Service nun neu auf 18 Monate beschränkt werde. Auf Nachfrage, wie diese Änderungen kommuniziert würden und ob dies schriftlich festgehalten werde, lautete die Antwort, dass etwas Schriftliches nicht nötig sei. Die Betroffenen wüssten Bescheid, und das genüge.
- Die (nie in Kraft gesetzte) Verfassung werde nun neu gemacht. Dies sei ein längerer Prozess, und man wolle möglichst viele Erfahrungen einbeziehen. Es liege aber kein Zeitplan vor.
- Pull-/Push-Faktoren: Aus Sicht der eritreischen Regierungsvertreter sind es vor allem Pull-Faktoren, wie die ihrer Meinung nach falsche Asylgewährung und Propaganda, die zur hohen Emigration führten.
- Die Schweizer Delegation hat die Anliegen der Schweiz (Zugang und Berichterstattung, Menschenrechte) deponiert. Die Justizministerin antwortete darauf, dass grundlegende Menschenrechte respektiert würden und dass Eritrea über länderspezifisches traditionelles Gewohnheitsrecht (customary law) verfüge.
- Das Anliegen der Schweiz zur Zusammenarbeit bei der Identifizierung und zur Ernennung eines Botschafters in Genf wurde beim Aussenminister sowie beim Präsidentenberater deponiert.

Mit dem **Präsidentenberater Ghebreab**, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], ergab sich ein [REDACTED] Dialog mit Fokus auf Migration.

- Pull-/Push-Faktoren: Eritreer emigrieren in erster Linie wegen des Pull-Faktors der seiner Meinung nach falschen Asylgewährung.
- Nationaldienst: Die neue zeitliche Beschränkung auf 18 Monate wird bestätigt, es gebe jedoch nichts Schriftliches. Die Herausforderung sei, was man mit den jetzt neu eingetretenen 10'000 Rekruten nach 18 Monaten mache, wenn diese entlassen würden. Für diese bräuchte es dann plötzlich Arbeitsplätze, die aktuell nicht existieren. Auf die Nachfrage der Schweizer Delegation, wie diese Herausforderung angegangen werden könnte, gab es keine Antwort.
- Unterstützung und Projekte [REDACTED] werden begrüsst. Gegenüber der Schweizer Delegation werden aber keine konkreten Forderungen/Anliegen genannt.
- Khartum-Prozess: Dieser sei interessant. Auf Nachfrage der Schweizer Delegation nach konkreten Plänen oder Prioritäten Eritreas wird nichts genannt.
- IOM: Eine grundsätzliche Offenheit IOM gegenüber und Gespräche werden bestätigt. Es gebe aber keinen konkreten Plan bzgl. Beitritt.
- Der Präsidentenberater wird zur Fortführung des Dialogs [REDACTED] eingeladen. Damit könnte der verschobene Besuch von Dezember 2014 nachgeholt werden.

## **2.2. Treffen mit Missionschefs ausländischer Botschaften:**

[REDACTED]

Die Schweizer Delegation traf die meisten Ansprechpartner der [REDACTED] Mission, die im Oktober 2014 für den umstrittenen [REDACTED] Bericht interviewt wurden.

Zusammenfassung der Gespräche:

- Der [REDACTED] Bericht wurde unisono begrüsst, da dieser viele Punkte anspreche, die davor tabu erschienen. Die Aussagen des Berichtes seien richtig.
- Die Regierung verfolge eine unglückliche Kommunikation.
- [REDACTED]
- Die Begrenzung des Nationaldienstes auf 18 Monate wird als realistisch eingeschätzt. Das Problem sei, dass dies nirgends schriftlich festgehalten werde. Die Missionschefs nennen auch die Herausforderung, was mit den jungen Leuten nach deren Entlassung aus dem National Service passieren solle.
- Wirtschaft: Als grosses Problem wird die Währung, und insbesondere deren beschränkte Konvertibilität, wegen der sich [REDACTED] aus Eritrea zurückgezogen habe, genannt.
- Die Bedingungen für ein ausländisches Investment seien momentan nicht gegeben.
- Es gebe keinen Pluralismus in der Gesellschaft und daher auch keine Opposition.
- Die Landflucht setze dem Land zu und die Regierung habe Interesse daran, dies zu stoppen: Je nach Quelle gebe es 5'000-10'000 Ausreisen pro Monat, hauptsächlich

von Christen. Dadurch drohe sich auch das Religionsgefüge (und das momentan relativ friedliche Zusammenleben) zu verschieben.

■ Hat Interesse an wirtschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit, hat das Handelsvolumen ver-  
sechsfacht:

- ■ baut Verbindungen ■ aus.
- Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit für den (sehr interessierten) Privatsektor sei eine Herausforderung, ■
- Migration aus Eritrea sei ■ momentan kein Problem.

■  
■  
Betreffend Eritrea brauche es ein völlig anderes Verständnis, der klassische Human Rights-  
Approach sei dabei nicht sehr hilfreich. Die Zusammenarbeit sei mit innovativem Ansatz und  
Wille durchaus möglich.

■ Sehr dezidierte Haltung. Eritrea bzw. Migration aus Eritrea hat hohe (innen-) politi-  
sche Priorität, Dialog läuft. ■  
■

### 2.3. Treffen mit internationalen Organisationen/ ■ ■

■  
■  
Zusammenfassung der Gespräche:

- Das Hauptproblem sei die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung: Grundlagen fehlen, insbeson-  
dere Energie (in Asmara gibt es täglich bis 8 Stunden keinen Strom).
- Die Lage sei differenzierter als oft geschildert und nicht in allen Gebieten schlecht.
- Spürbare Lockerungen im Devisenbereich (Einfuhr USD, weniger Kontrolle des  
Schwarzmarktes. Der offizielle Wechselkurs ist 1:15; der Wechselkurs auf dem  
Schwarzmarkt ist 1:54). Dies geschehe wohl aber eher aus Not denn aus Überzeu-  
gung.
- Gründe für die Auswanderung seien eher die allgemeine Perspektivlosigkeit als der  
National Service.
- Es gebe kaum mehr eine Opposition, da die meisten Oppositionellen das Land inzwi-  
schen verlassen hätten.
- Es werden Erfolge genannt: z.B. sehr tiefe HIV-Quote, keine offensichtliche Beste-  
chung, v.a. im Vergleich zur Erfahrung in anderen afrikanischen Staaten, keine Kri-  
minalität.
- Die Datenlage sei unklar, da infolge fehlender Erhebungen die Statistiken (z.B. Hun-  
ger) oft nicht stimmten.
- ■ bezeichnet die Bedingungen zur Zusammenarbeit im afrikanischen Kontext als  
ok. Die Beziehungen zur UNO seien sich am verbessern.
- Als Grundproblem wird genannt, dass kein Vertrauen zu niemandem bestehe.



In einem langen und sehr ungezwungenen Gespräch [REDACTED] mit einer [REDACTED] Eritreerin, [REDACTED] wird die schwierige Situation geschildert. Sie selber konnte sich dem National Service [REDACTED] entziehen, [REDACTED] und nachher jeweils gefoltert worden, bevor [REDACTED] die Ausreise gelungen sei. Problematisch seien die Dauer und insbesondere der tiefe Lohn. Sie hätte nur dank den Zuwendungen ihrer Eltern genug Geld zum Leben und zur Heimreise am Wochenende gehabt.

### **3. Zusammenfassung:**

Die Situation in Eritrea ist komplex und nicht schwarz-weiss, es gibt viele Grautöne. Hierzu die Aussage [REDACTED] *This Country is not a demon, it is not North Korea, but has its challenges*. Das Regime ist isoliert und [REDACTED] Es agiert [REDACTED] Das [REDACTED] verhindert, dass das Regime aussenpolitisch Verbündete findet. Dieses [REDACTED] führt gemäss fast allen Gesprächspartnern dazu, dass viele ausländische Berichte nicht den Tatsachen entsprechen. Gemäss den Gesprächspartnern gibt es realiter Veränderungen, wie die Deviseneinfuhr, oder die Ankündigung der Beschränkung des Nationaldiensts auf 18 Monate, wobei noch nicht klar ist, ob diese nachhaltig und systematisch sind. Ebenso unklar ist allerdings auch, ob die Veränderungen von der Regierung gezielt beschlossen werden oder eher Ausdruck [REDACTED] sind.

In den Gesprächen mit den Regierungsvertretern zeigte sich eine Dialogbereitschaft.

Der Präsidentenberater signalisierte Offenheit, indem er das Engagement von [REDACTED] im Bildungsbereich begrüsste, den Khartum-Prozess als interessant bezeichnete und eine grundsätzliche Offenheit gegenüber IOM nannte. Dies, sowie die Aussagen betreffend eine Begrenzung des Nationaldienstes auf 18 Monate sowie eine Erneuerung der Verfassung klingen positiv, alle Aussagen werden von den Rednern aber sogleich wieder relativiert: So gibt es für keinen der genannten Punkte einen Aktionsplan, oder eine Vorstellung, wie bevorstehende Herausforderungen angegangen werden könnten. Schriftlich will man nichts festhalten.

Die von den eritreischen Vertretern gemachten Aussagen sind somit nicht objektiv belegbar. Es handelt sich einzig um Eindrücke aus Gesprächen, die keine ausreichend belastbare Information darstellen.

Die Kernaspekte, die für die Asylpraxis von Bedeutung sind (die Behandlung von Deserteuren, Refraktären und Rückkehrern) waren nicht Fokus dieser Reise, und es ergaben sich dazu keine grundlegend neuen Erkenntnisse. Die Lage in den Gefängnissen und die Menschenrechtslage wollten die Vertreter Eritreas nicht diskutieren.

2015 ist ein entscheidendes Jahr, in dem sich zeigen wird, ob das Regime zu nachhaltigen Verbesserungen und Veränderungen bereit ist, oder ob das Regime nur auf Zeit spielt.

#### 4. Fazit:

- **Ob Eritrea die Aussagen, die eine Öffnung andeuten, umsetzen wird, muss abgewartet werden.** Ausser der Offenheit zum Gespräch kann zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt nicht von bereits stattgefundenen Veränderungen gesprochen werden.
- **Die Rahmenbedingungen sind (noch) nicht gegeben, um eine bilaterale Zusammenarbeit im Migrationsbereich konkret zu initiieren.** Eritrea legte keine konkreten Vorstellungen zu einer Zusammenarbeit im Migrationsbereich dar. Eine Zusammenarbeit kann da, wo es Sinn macht und Mehrwert bringt, zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt neu evaluiert werden.
- **Der bestehende Dialog mit Eritrea wurde dank der Reise fortgesetzt.** Als nächster Schritt **soll der eritreische Präsidentenberater Yemane Ghebreab** [REDACTED] **werden**, um den im Dezember 2014 (von Eritrea infolge Terminproblemen) verschobenen Besuch nachzuholen.
- **Die Entwicklungen in Eritrea, dem zurzeit wichtigsten Herkunftsland Asylsuchender in der Schweiz, werden weiterhin genau beobachtet.**

Weitere Informationen:

- **Der Austausch mit den wichtigen europäischen Partnern, der schon lange besteht, wird weitergeführt.** Ein Austausch betreffend Asylpraxis und Länderanalyse findet im Rahmen von GDISC (anstehende Konferenz vom 4. März 2015) und EASO statt.



WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

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BODIESNEWS AND  
EVENTSPUBLICATIONS AND  
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## UN Inquiry reports gross human rights violations in Eritrea

**GENEVA (8 June 2015)** -- The Government of Eritrea is responsible for systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations that have created a climate of fear in which dissent is stifled, a large proportion of the population is subjected to forced labour and imprisonment, and hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled the country, according to a UN report released Monday. Some of these violations may constitute crimes against humanity.

Citing an array of human rights violations on a scope and scale seldom witnessed elsewhere, the report by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea describes a totalitarian state bent on controlling Eritreans through a vast security apparatus that has penetrated all levels of society.

"Information gathered through the pervasive control system is used in absolute arbitrariness to keep the population in a state of permanent anxiety," the 500-page report says. "It is not law that rules Eritreans – but fear."

The release of the report comes as the international community, particularly governments in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, struggles to cope with a growing exodus of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants across the Mediterranean and along other irregular routes. Many of them are Eritreans, a significant proportion of whom fall victim to human traffickers while trying to reach Europe. The UN refugee agency placed the number of Eritreans under its concern outside the country at more than 357,400 in mid-2014.

The report strongly urges continued international protection for Eritrean refugees fleeing human rights violations, and warns against sending them back to danger in a country that punishes anyone who tries to leave without permission.

"Faced with a seemingly hopeless situation they feel powerless to change, hundreds of thousands of Eritreans are fleeing their country," the report says. "In desperation, they resort to deadly escape routes through deserts and neighbouring war-torn countries and across dangerous seas in search of safety. They risk capture, torture and death at the hands of ruthless human traffickers. To ascribe their decision to leave solely to economic reasons is to ignore the dire situation of human rights in Eritrea and the very real suffering of its people. Eritreans are fleeing severe human rights violations in their country and are in need of international protection."

The commission of inquiry was established by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2014 to conduct an investigation of all alleged violations of human rights in Eritrea, including: extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearances; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture and inhumane prison conditions; violations of freedom of expression and opinion; freedom of association and assembly; freedom of religion and belief; freedom of movement; and forced military conscription.

The three-member commission is chaired by Mr. Mike Smith (Australia), with Mr. Victor Dankwa (Ghana), and Ms. Sheila B. Keetharuth (Mauritius), who also serves as the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, as commissioners.

Announcing the release of the report Monday, Ms. Keetharuth urged renewed commitment from the

international community to help end the climate of fear in Eritrea.

"With the end of the commission's investigations and the publication of this report detailing our findings on human rights violations in Eritrea, I look forward to a renewed commitment by the international community to address the justice deficit and to support our call for a restoration of the rule of law," she said. "Rule by fear – fear of indefinite conscription, of arbitrary and incommunicado detention, of torture and other human rights violations – must end."

The commission is scheduled to formally present its report to the UN Human Rights Council on June 23 in Geneva.

Eritrean authorities ignored repeated requests by the commission for direct access to the country as well as for information. The commission travelled to eight other countries and carried out some 550 confidential interviews with Eritrean witnesses who had fled the Horn of Africa nation. In addition, it received some 160 written submissions.

The report says fear of reprisals, even among witnesses now in third countries, was a major challenge.

"Many potential witnesses residing outside Eritrea were afraid to testify, even on a confidential basis, because they assumed they were still being clandestinely monitored by the authorities and therefore feared for their safety and for family members back in Eritrea," the report says.

The report notes that the initial promise of democracy and rule of law that came with Eritrea's independence in 1991 has been extinguished by the Government under the pretext of national defence.

"The commission finds that systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have been and are being committed by the Government of Eritrea and that there is no accountability for them," it says. "The enjoyment of rights and freedoms are severely curtailed in an overall context of a total lack of rule of law. The commission also finds that the violations in the areas of extrajudicial executions, torture (including sexual torture), national service and forced labour may constitute crimes against humanity. The commission emphasizes that its present findings should not be interpreted as a conclusion that international crimes have not been committed in other areas."

The report lists the main perpetrators of these violations as the Eritrean Defence Forces, in particular the Eritrean Army; the National Security Office; the Eritrean Police Forces; the Ministry of Information; the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Defence; the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ); the Office of the President; and the President.

The report describes the repressive systems used by the Government to control, silence and isolate individuals, including a pervasive domestic surveillance network in which neighbours spy on neighbours and even family members mistrust each other.

"As a result of this mass surveillance, Eritreans live in constant fear that their conduct is or may be monitored by security agents and that information gathered may be used against them, leading to arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, disappearance or death," it says.

The judicial system in the country lacks independence and the administration of justice is "completely deficient," the report says. Arbitrary detention is ubiquitous and conditions of detention in the country's vast network of jails are extremely harsh. Holding prisoners incommunicado is a widespread practice, and many detainees simply disappear. In addition, many detainees have no idea why they are being held, nor of the length of their imprisonment.

"The commission finds that the use of torture is so widespread that it can only conclude it is a policy of the Government to encourage its use for the punishment of individuals perceived as opponents to its rule and for the extraction of confessions," the report says. "Monitoring of detention centres is non-existent and perpetrators are never brought to justice."

The report also describes how the Government, under the pretext of defending the integrity of the State and ensuring national self-sufficiency, has subjected much of the population to open-ended national service, either in the army or through the civil service. When they turn 18 or even before, all Eritreans are conscripted. While national service is supposed to last 18 months, in reality conscripts end up serving for an indefinite period, often for years in harsh and inhumane conditions.

Thousands of conscripts are subjected to forced labour that effectively abuses, exploits and enslaves them for years. Women conscripts are at extreme risk of sexual violence during national service.

men for , earlier women conscripts are at extreme risk of sexual violence during national service.

Many others – detainees, students, members of the militia - are also subjected to forced labour: “The use of forced labour is so prevalent in Eritrea that all sectors of the economy rely on it and all Eritreans are likely to be subject to it at one point in their lives,” the report says.

“The commission concludes that forced labour in this context is a practice similar to slavery in its effects and, as such, is prohibited under international human rights law.”

[Full report and supporting documentation](#)

END

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## Press Release: Eritrea in Focus

PR 11/2015

11 June 2015

### EASO publishes a Country of Origin Information report on Eritrea: Country Focus

*Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a new [Country of Origin Information \(COI\) report entitled 'Eritrea Country Focus'](#). The report provides information on a selection of topics relevant for international protection status determination in regard to Eritreans.*

Between 2013 and 2014, the number of Eritrean applicants in the EU+ countries (EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) more than doubled, rising from 20 295 applicants registered in 2013 to about 47 125 in 2014, a 132 % increase. 2014 was characterised by a strong rise in applicants throughout the second quarter, reaching a high of 7 875 registered in the month of July. Although the inflow of Eritrean applicants in the EU+ fell sharply from August 2014, recently figures show that the numbers of Eritrean applicants are again on the increase. Moreover, the stock of pending cases remained at over 30 000 at the end of April 2015 at EU+ level – possibly indicating difficulties in making decisions on Eritrean applications, including a lack of COI.

The most recurrent asylum motives brought forward by Eritrean applicants in EU+ countries relate to open-ended national service (and those fleeing it such as deserters, draft evaders, or their family members); fear of persecution on the basis of religion (e.g. of Jehovah's witnesses, Pentecostals, etc.); consequences of illegal departure in case of return; and harsh treatment during detention.

The [Eritrea Country Focus](#) aims to provide information on these subjects. The report first provides a chapter on general country information and state structure, including the political system. This is then followed by a description of national service (structure, exemptions, civil and military service, recruitment, duration, desertion and draft evasion); prisons and detention; religion; identity documents and; exit (illegal and legal).

The report covers the period up until April 2015. [The Country Focus](#) is based on publicly available reports of COI units, UN agencies, human rights organisations, scholars, official and NGO papers, government and diaspora media. The [Eritrea Country Focus report](#) was written using the EASO network approach whereby networks of national COI experts work jointly to provide common COI at EU level in accordance with the EASO [COI Report Methodology](#). The report was drafted by a researcher from the Analysis and Services Division of the State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland and reviewed by COI experts on Eritrea from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, an external expert, and EASO in order to check and ensure quality.

EASO will continue to produce such reports on important countries of origin and to update them on a regular basis in order to raise and harmonise COI standards in the EU and use of common COI to further support the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.

**Quick links:** [Country of Origin Information \(COI\) report entitled 'Eritrea Country Focus'](#)

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: [jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu](mailto:jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu)

## NEWS

April 20, 2016

# 2016 World Press Freedom Index – leaders paranoid about journalists

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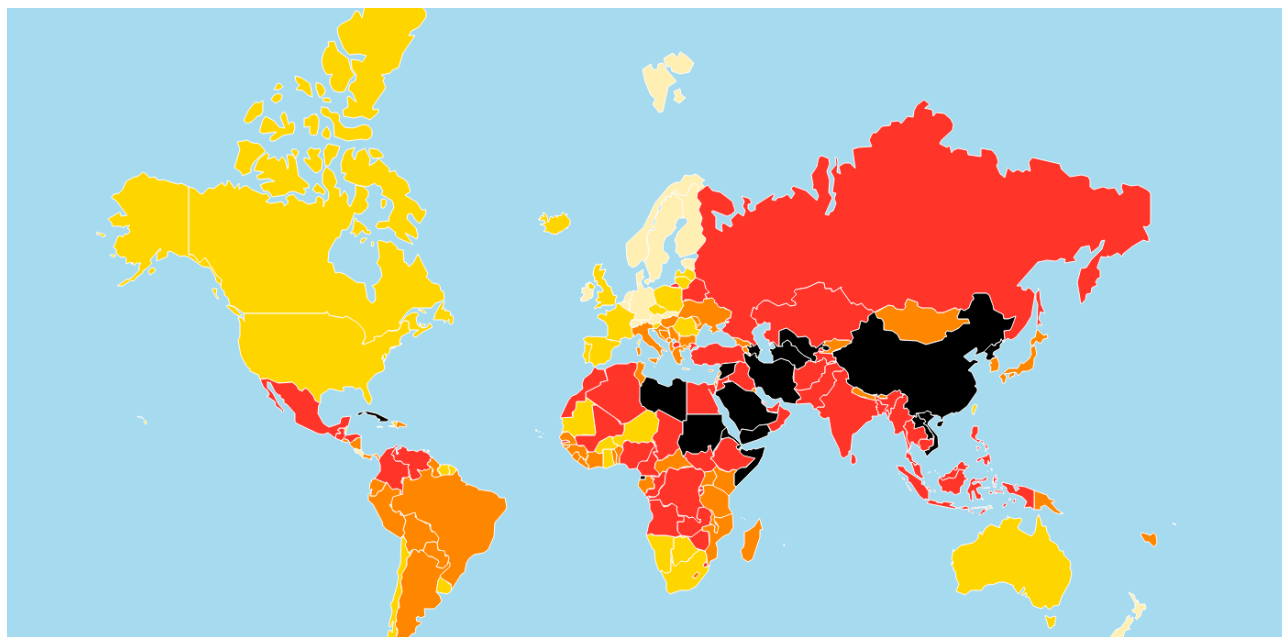
Most of the movement in the World Press

Freedom Index unveiled today by Reporters Without Borders is indicative of a climate of fear and tension combined with increasing control over newsrooms by governments and private-sector interests.

The 2016 World Press Freedom Index reflects the intensity of the attacks on journalistic freedom and independence by governments, ideologies and private-sector interests during the past year.

([https://rsf.web3.rsf.typhon.net/sites/default/files/cp\\_general\\_classement\\_2016.pdf](https://rsf.web3.rsf.typhon.net/sites/default/files/cp_general_classement_2016.pdf))

Seen as a benchmark throughout the world, the Index ranks 180 countries according to the freedom allowed journalists. It also includes indicators of the level of media freedom violations in each region. These show that Europe (with 19.8 points) still has the freest media, followed distantly by Africa (36.9), which for the first time overtook the Americas (37.1), a region where violence against journalists is on the rise. Asia (43.8) and Eastern Europe/Central Asia (48.4) follow, while North Africa/Middle East (50.8) is still the region where journalists are most subjected to constraints of every kind.



Three north European countries head the rankings. They are Finland (ranked 1st, the position it has held since 2010), Netherlands (2nd, up 2 places) and Norway (3rd, down 1). The countries that rose most in the



Index include Tunisia (96th, up 30), thanks to a decline in violence and legal proceedings, and Ukraine (107th, up 22), where the conflict in the east of the country abated.

The countries that fell farthest include Poland (47th, down 29), where the ultra-conservative government seized control of the public media, and (much farther down) Tajikistan, which plunged 34 places to 150th as a result of the regime's growing authoritarianism. The Sultanate of Brunei (155th, down 34) suffered a similar fall because gradual introduction of the Sharia and threats of blasphemy charges have fuelled self-censorship. Burundi (156th, down 11) fell because of the violence against journalists resulting from President Pierre Nkurunziza's contested reelection for a third term. The same "infernal trio" are in the last three positions: Turkmenistan (178th), North Korea (179th) and Eritrea (180th).

"It is unfortunately clear that many of the world's leaders are developing a form of paranoia about legitimate journalism,"

RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire

"The climate of fear results in a growing aversion to debate and pluralism, a clampdown on the media by ever more authoritarian and oppressive governments, and reporting in the privately-owned media that is increasingly shaped by personal interests. Journalism worthy of the name must be defended against the increase in propaganda and media content that is made to order or sponsored by vested interests. Guaranteeing the public's right to independent and reliable news and information is essential if humankind's problems, both local and global, are to be solved."

Published annually by RSF since 2002, the World Press Freedom Index is an important advocacy tool based on the principle of emulation between states. Because it is now so well known, its influence over the media, governments and international organizations is growing.

The Index is based on an evaluation of media freedom that measures pluralism, media independence, the quality of the legal framework and the safety of journalists in 180 countries. It is compiled by means of a questionnaire in 20 languages that is completed by experts all over the world. This qualitative analysis is combined with quantitative data on abuses and acts of violence against journalists during the period evaluated.

The Index is not an indicator of the quality of the journalism in each country, nor does it rank public policies even if governments obviously have a major impact on their country's ranking.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

### **A sophisticated methodology**

To compile the Index, a sophisticated and rigorous methodology is used. It is based on scores calculated from a series of indicators. (<https://rsf.org/en/detailed-methodology>)

### **A general decline**

The global indicator and the regional indicators show that there has been a deep and disturbing decline in respect for media freedom throughout the world. (<https://rsf.org/en/deep-and-disturbing-decline-media-freedom>)

### **Focus on the regions**

Africa's journalists, victims of terrorism, armed conflict and election crises (<https://rsf.org/en/africas-journalists-victims-terrorism-armed-conflict-and-election-crises>)

Reporting constrained by terror in the Middle East and North Africa (<https://rsf.org/en/reporting-constrained-terror-middle-east-and-north-africa>)

Journalism under the gun and club in the Americas (<https://rsf.org/en/journalism-under-gun-and-club-americas>)

A nice postcard from the Pacific, but not Asia (<https://rsf.org/en/nice->

## Eritrea's drought – '100% crop failure' in key breadbasket

**Martin Plaut** / 28/03/2016

Berhanu Nega, an Ethiopian opposition leader based in Eritrea, has confirmed that the drought which has hit the whole of the Horn has taken a terrible toll on Eritrea as well.

In a speech broadcast on his own television station he said that Eritrea experienced a complete crop failure in the [Gash-Barka](#) region last summer. Famine has only been averted by purchasing vast quantities of imported food.

Berhanu Nega – the [leader of Ginbot 7](#) – won the 2005 election in Addis Ababa, but was not allowed to take up his post as mayor of the capital.

Below is a translation of his speech.



Starting at 17:08 he contrasts the way Ethiopia's ruling party (the EPRDF) is coping with the drought with the Eritrean ruling party (the PFDJ). He adds the caveat that he is not here to praise Eritreans.

17:12

He says: The most amazing thing is this: now you don't hear the Eritreans talk about this [drought]. I am not hear to talk about how good they are or anything like that but, I find this fascinating in relation to this situation.

17:18

This year there has been a 100% crop failure in Eritrea. They haven't produced anything

17:32

The el Nino effect has been such that there is a complete drought.

17:41

The main productive region – the Gash Barka region – has produces nothing; absolutely zero harvest.

17:44

But in Eritrea you hear nothing about the drought, the hunger or the usual consequences of drought: a price hike of food etc. That discourse doesn't exist

18:00

This struck me and I spoke to one of the leaders,

18:06

He told me 'in July when we realise that the rain had totally failed, we bought food to feed everyone for a whole year. We have stopped everything else [to enable us to do this]

18:29

By doing this they managed to feed people and also control the market.

18:39

So you don't hear anything about drought now

18:40

I am saying this because drought and famine are two different things. Drought is something that occurs occasionally and is natural but famine is invariably an administrative and a consequence of lack of accountability.

## Background

Previously I published the information below about drought in Eritrea.

# Will Eritrea's drought turn into a silent famine?

**Martin Plaut** / 14/12/2015

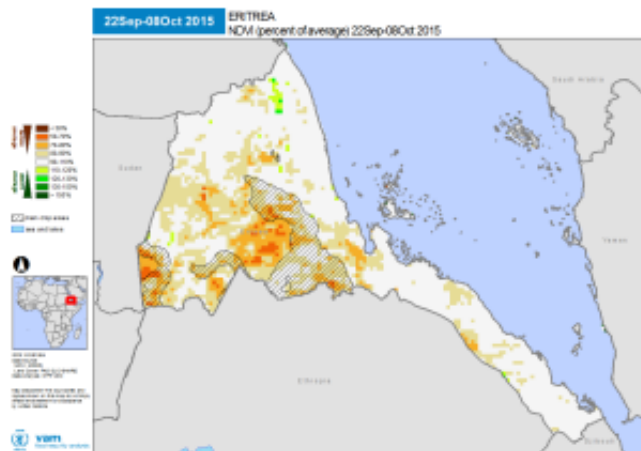
Martin Plaut and Mirjam van Reisen

The Horn of Africa is facing its most severe drought in decades. 'The worst drought in Ethiopia for 50 years is happening right now', warned John Graham, Save the Children's Country Director in Ethiopia.[\[1\]](#)

More than 10 million people will face severe food shortages in 2016. It is a message echoed by aid agencies and the United Nations.

The BBC Clive Myrie to report from northern Ethiopia. 'This year the rains failed,' he told audience from the town of Kobo.[\[2\]](#) 'The UN says in one area two babies are dying every day.'

TV footage has been accompanied by urgent appeals for aid, similar to those issued during the last great famine in 1984-85.



But drought is no respecter of borders. While Ethiopia has faced up to the scale of the crisis not a single word has been issued by neighbouring Eritrea. Yet the evidence is beginning to mount up that the country is facing a similar crisis.

This can be gleaned from a number of sources. The

latest satellite imaging from the World Food Programme shows areas of the Eritrea's highlands and western lowlands in deep orange. Here crops are somewhere between 50% and 70% below normal.

The UN humanitarian outlook report which has just been released underlines this. [\[3\]](#) While its main commentary provide no insight into the situation in Eritrea[\[4\]](#) – which is left blank on several maps – it does begin to lift the lid on what is taking place.

The report accepts that drought may be 'affecting both cereal production and pastures in different parts of the country. According to satellite-based monitoring, significant soil moisture deficits persist in most Red Sea coastal agro-pastoral areas and are expected to negatively affect most of



these livelihood systems.' The UN describes drought as a 'medium risk' but says it 'could have a strong impact,' without elaborating on either statement.

It is the Eritrean government's reaction to these kind of reports that explains why this silent crisis has been allowed to develop. As the UN notes starkly, unlike other countries in the region: 'There is no official national or UN El Nino contingency plan for multi hazard in Eritrea.'[\[5\]](#)

The unwillingness of the Eritrean authorities to even begin discuss its predicament with any outside body lies behind the reticence of the international community to speak out.

Under President Isaias Afewerki the country has become one of the most isolated and secretive in the world. There are no independent sources of information, with the free press silenced since a government crackdown on the opposition in 2001.

International NGO's, some of whom backed Eritreans during their 30 year fight for independence, have been excluded from the country. The authorities – claiming that Eritreans should be self-reliant – first restricted the work of NGO's and then began taxing their activities. In May 2005, with a quarter of the population reliant on food aid, the government unveiled an NGO law which required them to pay taxes on all imports – including food and medicines.

Further restrictions were imposed on what kinds of development might be permitted. In February 2006 six Italian aid agencies were asked to leave the country and others were soon told to close down. Even UN agencies found their work curtailed, which is why few have more than skeleton operations inside Eritrea.

This explains why the response from the international community has been so hesitant. Contacts inside the country say that food is hard to come by and prices are high. Government subsidised essentials are difficult to obtain and when they are available are strictly rationed.

During a recent visit to Ethiopian refugee camps women described how they had left Eritrea after being denied government food vouchers. This was a routine reprisal – they said – after a relative fled the country to escape conscription. These stories are borne out by evidence collected by the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>[6]</sup>

This information comes mainly from the urban areas of Eritrea. What is happening to the millions in the rural areas is a closed book. But even in a good year nutrition is poor and many go hungry. Only if the drought turns to famine and the bodies start piling up are we likely to hear cries for help. By that time it may well be too late.

[1] <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2015-12/ethiopia-drought>

[2] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34770831>

[3] <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-outlook-horn-africa-and-great-lakes-region-october-december-2015>

[4] Page 20 – 21 Food Security Map

[5] Page 29

[6] United Nations Human Rights Council (2015), Report of the detailed findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, p. 98-98:  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/ColEritrea/Pages/ReportColEritrea.aspx>

## Update on Eritrea drought



This answer has been provided by the British government to a question in Parliament. I have added information from UN below.

Martin

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of (a) the effect of the drought in the Horn of Africa on Eritrea and (b) the response of the Eritrean government and the international community to that drought. (19567)

Tabled on: 10 December 2015

Answer:

Mr Nick Hurd:

Official food security and nutrition data for Eritrea for this year has not yet been released, but the late onset of rains, relatively low volume of rainfall, and significant soil moisture deficits are likely to have had a negative impact on both farming and pastoral communities. The country and regional offices of the World Food Programme and UNICEF are monitoring the situation closely.

DFID is funding nutrition support activities in areas affected by El Nino in the Horn of Africa through UNICEF's regional programme, which covers Eritrea

The answer was submitted on 15 Dec 2015 at 16:42.

### UN [update](#)

Page 16 of the report notes that between 2011 and 2013 WFP reported that 60% of Eritreans were undernourished. At the present time 1.2 million people need food aid.

And – “Operations and the maintenance of established humanitarian systems remain a significant challenge.”

In other words, the Eritrean government refuses to allow these normal procedures to be established and maintained.

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# Official trip finds few rights improvements in Eritrea

MAY 9, 2016 - 11:00

Following a fact-finding mission to Eritrea, Swiss authorities have determined that the human rights situation has not improved for the thousands of Eritreans who make up the largest group of asylum seekers in Switzerland.

Mario Gattiker, the head of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), told the Tages-Anzeiger newspaper on Monday that although there had been indications that Eritrea had lowered its required military service to a term of 18 months, "those hopes did not turn out to be true".

"Eritrea officially went back on its promise of shortening the required national military service," Gattiker said. "And the proof of improved human rights conditions is still missing."

In order to improve dialogue with Eritrean authorities, Gattiker said Switzerland hopes Eritrea will send an ambassador to Geneva. He said the decision of whether to send a Swiss ambassador to Eritrea lies with the Foreign Ministry.

Gattiker added that the migration officials – two Swiss and one German – who toured Eritrea in March were not allowed to see prison or military facilities. Accompanied by Eritrean officials, they visited cities, towns and schools during the two-week trip to



Eritrea's human rights situation has long been a source of contention. Eritreans gathered in Geneva last year to protest the country's human rights review, which they consider to have been falsified.

(Keystone)

gather information that could help them better understand the situation in the country and verify asylum seekers' stories.

Around 28,500 Eritreans live in Switzerland, which has a population of 8.2 million. About a quarter of them arrived as asylum seekers in 2014. Around 10,000 Eritreans applied for asylum in 2015.

Currently, about 12% of asylum seekers from Eritrea in Switzerland are sent to other countries, either back to Eritrea or, more commonly, to their first point of entry into Europe under the Dublin accord. Gattiker said it "remains to be seen" whether Swiss migration authorities will adjust their asylum practice with regard to Eritrea.

"We are checking whether people who go back to Eritrea after having left illegally could still face draconian punishments," he said.

However, Gattiker also said the situation in Sri Lanka – another country from which a large number of asylum seekers have come to Switzerland – seems to have partially improved since a regime change in 2015.

"As soon as we have re-analysed the situation, we will decide whether to adjust our asylum practice for people from Sri Lanka," he said.

### **Dublin accord crucial**

Although Gattiker admitted that the Dublin agreement "has worked less well in the last two years than previously," he said it remains crucial for Switzerland to be able to send asylum seekers back to their first countries of entry into Europe.

"No other country profits from the Dublin agreement as much as Switzerland," he said, adding that the difficulties with the accord in recent years speak to the need for a revised Swiss asylum law, which voters will have a say in on June 5.

"The more asylum cases Switzerland has to handle itself, the more crucial it is to have a good and efficient asylum practice," he said.



ASYLUM POLICY

## Switzerland's defence of the Dublin accords is not a coincidence

*By Duc-Quang Nguyen and Stefania Summermatter*

What sort of welcome do migrants receive in Europe? While Italy is vociferously calling for the abolition of the Dublin accords, Switzerland and ...

*swissinfo.ch and agencies*

**Isabella Wegscheider** May 14, 2016 10:15 PM

Everybody knows, that Eritrea is not able to cut the national service, as long as Ethiopia is not willing to accept the borderline, that was fixed „final and binding“ by the international border – commission (EEBC) in 2002.

While Switzerland constantly repeats claims other nations, like Norway or Japan, find precious ways to support the Eritrean Youth

Goggle: Vocational training to enhance employment skills for youth in Eritrea/UNDP in Eritrea



## Questionable Deal: EU to Work with African Despot to Keep Refugees Out

By *Jürgen Dahlkamp* and *Maximilian Popp*



Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir may be Europe's next partner in fighting migration from Africa. He's wanted on war crimes charges. REUTERS

**In an effort to help keep refugees from Africa at bay, the EU is planning to deliver personal registration equipment to Sudan, whose president is wanted on war crimes charges. Germany is leading the way.**

May 13, 2016 – 06:02 PM

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The article you are reading originally appeared in German in issue 20/2016 (May 14th, 2016) of DER SPIEGEL.

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The ambassadors of the 28 European Union member states had agreed to secrecy. "Under no circumstances" should the public learn what was said at the talks that took place on March 23rd, the European Commission warned during the meeting of the Permanent Representatives Committee. A staff member of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini even warned that Europe's reputation could be at stake.

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Under the heading "TOP 37: Country fiches," the leading diplomats that day discussed a plan that the EU member states had agreed to: They would work together with dictatorships around the Horn of Africa in order to stop the refugee flows to Europe -- under Germany's leadership.

When it comes to taking action to counter the root causes of flight in the region, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said, "I strongly believe that we must improve peoples' living conditions." The EU's new action plan for the Horn of Africa provides the first concrete outlines: For three years, 40 million (\$45 million) is to be paid out to eight African countries from the Emergency Trust Fund, including Sudan.

Minutes from the March 23 meetings and additional classified documents obtained by SPIEGEL and the German public television station ARD show "Report Mainz" show that the focus of the project is border protection. To that end, equipment is to be provided to the countries in question.

### War Crimes and Torture

The International Criminal Court in The Hague has issued an arrest



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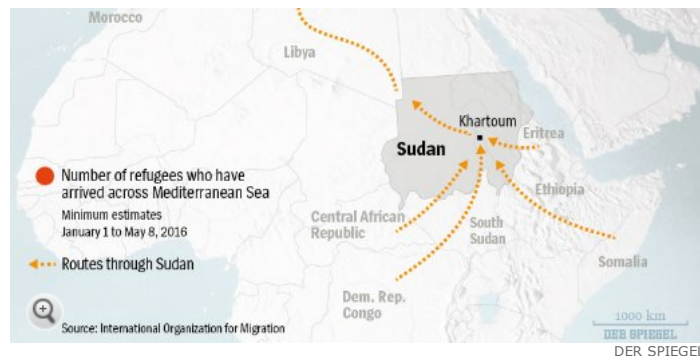
warrant against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on charges relating to his alleged role in genocide and crimes against humanity in the Darfur conflict. Amnesty International also claims that the Sudanese secret service has tortured members of the opposition. And the United States accuses the country of providing financial support to terrorists.

Nevertheless, documents relating to the project indicate that Europe want to send cameras, scanners and servers for registering refugees to the Sudanese regime in addition to training their border police and assisting with the construction of two camps with detention rooms for migrants. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has confirmed that action plan is binding, although no concrete decisions have yet been made regarding its implementation.

The German development agency GIZ is expected to coordinate the project. The organization, which is a government enterprise, has experience working with authoritarian countries. In Saudi Arabia, for example, German federal police are providing their Saudi colleagues with training in German high-tech border installations. The money for the training comes not directly from the federal budget but rather from GIZ. When it comes to questions of finance, the organization has become a vehicle the government can use to be less transparent, a government official confirms.

## Important Route

An important refugee route runs through Sudan, Africa's third largest country. Migrants from Eritrea, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic all seek to make their way via Khartoum to Libya, where they catch boats to Europe. The United Nations says that there are currently 4 million people in flight in the area.



Routes through Sudan

In recent years, Europe has delegated responsibility for those seeking protection to third countries, like Morocco, [Ukraine](#) and, more recently, [Turkey](#). Now, with al-Bashir, the job of controlling migration is being turned over to a suspected war criminal. "A regime that destabilized the region and drove hundreds of thousands of people to flee is now supposed to stem the [refugee problem](#) for the EU," criticizes Marina Peter, an expert on the Horn of Africa region at the German relief organization Bread for the World.

The plan is also controversial within the EU. The "risks" listed in the action plan includes the fact that equipment financed by the Emergency Trust Fund could be abused by repressive regimes and used in the oppression of the civilian population. A general with Sudan's Interior Ministry told SPIEGEL and ARD that technology would not just be used to register refugees, but also all Sudanese. The regime's goal appears to be the absolute surveillance of its people.

## Can Sudan Be a Serious Partner?

Experts like Peter also express doubts about whether Sudanese leader al-Bashir is prepared to take serious action against migrant smugglers. Human Rights Watch has claimed in reports that the Sudanese regime itself works together with criminal networks. The report alleges that the police and military have sold refugees to human traffickers. The European Commission, meanwhile, has warned EU ambassadors in a

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classified memo that Sudan is primarily interested in polishing its image abroad.

Germany and the other EU member states nevertheless seem determined to push ahead with their pact with the despot. Sudanese authorities say there have been numerous visitors from Germany in recent weeks who were there to discuss the construction of closed camps. When questioned about its role, Germany's GIZ issued a written reply that there were no concrete plans in the country yet.

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Photo: Participants in the 'Cycling Tour for Truth, Peace, Justice and Eritrea' at the 11th Annual Euro-YPI Conference In Germany in April 2015 | Credit: [eritrean-smart.org](http://eritrean-smart.org)

# Behind Eritrean Diaspora's Attacks on the Dutch Media



Analysis by Martin Plaut \*

BRUSSELS (IDN) - "I have never experienced anything like it," says (<http://www.volkskrant.nl/media/peach-and-black-kort-geding-en-goederen-a4287824/>) Philippe Remarque, editor in chief of *De Volkskrant*. The paper – the Netherlands' largest broadsheet – has been taken to court by a man Remarque describes as an "operative working for the benefit of the awful Eritrean dictatorship". On May 13 the newspaper received a verdict in the second case in which the court ruled once more in favour of the newspaper.

There is a large, and growing, Eritrean community in the Netherlands. Eritreans flee their country at a rate of 5,000 a month – the largest number of refugees crossing from Libya to Italy. More than 38,000 made the dangerous voyage in 2015, according to the European border agency, Frontex ([http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annula\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2016.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annula_Risk_Analysis_2016.pdf)).

Those who arrive in the Netherlands seek refugee status. They discuss their cases with the Dutch immigration agency, only to confront a problem. According to a Dutch based website, *Oneworld*, refugees found that they were speaking through official translators who had close links with the Eritrean government.

This allegation was published (<https://www.oneworld.nl/wereld/ind-laait-aanhangers-eritrese-regime-nog-steeds-tolken>) in *Oneworld* last year. The article quoted a leading scholar on the Horn of Africa, Professor Mirjam van Reisen, who said (<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/webwijs/show/m.vanreisen.htm>): "The interpreters are linked to the centre of [Eritrean] intelligence in the Netherlands and in Europe."

Professor van Reisen was sued by Meseret Bahlbi, the chairman of the youth wing of Eritrea's only legal party – the PFDJ. His brother and sister had been acting as translators. When their family's relationship with the Eritrean state became known, the work was withdrawn, since Dutch regulations demand that translators are strictly neutral.

*De Volkskrant* took up the story in early 2016 and was promptly sued by Meseret. He demanded €50,000 damages - of which €15,000 to be paid immediately - and a correction on *De Volkskrant's* front page. The paper refused to comply and the matter went to court.

**Threatening freedom of expression**

Eight court cases were opened by the Eritrean and his supporters. These included actions against Professor van Reisen, a radio station and the Dutch immigration service. *Oneworld* received a writ, but so far no further legal action has been taken.

ARTICLE 19 (<https://www.article19.org/>) – the international organisation defending freedom of expression – told the *New Statesman* it is worried by the development.

“These vexatious civil defamation lawsuits in the Netherlands' courts are an attempt to silence criticism and debate, to prevent journalists and academics from revealing the truth, and to intimidate the Eritrean diaspora,” said Thomas Hughes, executive director of ARTICLE 19. “This is a violation of the right to freedom of expression – which defends critical and investigative journalism that is in the public interest, as well as academic freedom.”

All the cases on which judgement has so far been delivered have failed, with the Dutch courts comprehensively rejecting the allegations. This has not halted the tide of legal action. Professor van Reisen faces an appeal against the judgement in her favour.

This is not some random act of a frustrated member of the Eritrean diaspora, but a well-planned state strategy.

### **Eritrean government's hand**

Philippe Remarque says there are clear links between Meseret Bhalbi and the Eritrean regime. “Our lawyers proved that connection in great detail.”

The Eritrean government has orchestrated the international campaign to silence its critics.

Last year Yemane Gebreab, President Isaias's closest adviser, told (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgybg30fyRo>) 550 young Eritreans attending the party's youth rally in Germany that fighting the country's 'enemies' was their top priority.

“We have to remember, always remember, that we have still enemies who plot on a daily basis,” Yemane told the conference.

“Enemies who don't tire and don't sleep, who try to bring our downfall ... Therefore, our first objective... the objective which still remains at the very top of the list, is to conclusively defeat this hostility hovering over of our nation. That remains the job.”

Despite the court defeats, pro-government Eritrean websites continue to celebrate the legal action. “Your academic licensee does not give you a green light and you can flaunt the ruling as a victory but it is very far from the truth and you know it,” declared one site (<http://www.tesfanews.net/truth-prevailed-mirjam-van-reisen-know-it/>).

While Meseret Bhalbi receives legal aid from the Dutch government to bring the cases to court, the defendants do not.

The aim appears to be to use the legal system to drain the resolve and the funds of those they are attacking. By taking up the time and the financial resources of their critics, the Eritreans are attempting to dissuade Dutch newspapers, media outlets and academics from undertaking further investigations into the Eritrean government's activities against the growing exile community.

\* Martin Plaut is a journalist specialising in the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa. [IDN-InDepthNews – 16 May 2016]

IDN is the flagship of International Press Syndicate (<http://www.international-press-syndicate.org/>).

Photo: Participants in the 'Cycling Tour for Truth, Peace, Justice and Eritrea' at the 11th Annual Euro-YPFDJ Conference In Germany in April 2015 | Credit: eritrean-smart.org

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## Eritrea: the battle for international opinion

**Martin Plaut** / 3 days ago

A fierce contest for international public opinion is under way among Eritreans across the world.



The trigger for this activity is next month's publication of a U.N. Commission of Inquiry report into the state of human rights in the Red Sea state.

The Commission [was required by the U.N. to](#): "investigate systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in Eritrea with a view to ensuring full accountability, including where these violations may amount to crimes against humanity."



This instruction – issued by the U.N. on 22 July 2015 – was a considerable blow to the Eritrean regime: especially the suggestion that the abuses might be so severe that they amount to ‘crimes against humanity’.

To try to undermine the Commission’s creditability President Isaias Afwerki has been mobilising the Eritrean diaspora and a group of his international allies.

This is no spontaneous outburst of public anger against the U.N.: it is a show of strength, carefully organised by the Eritrean government.

Martin

### **The government offensive**

Documents leaked from the Eritrean capital provide an insight into the scale of the official operation.

The government’s plan is to collect 300,000 signatures to present to the UN protesting against the work of the Commission.

News of this development has been revealed by a [whistleblower in Asmara](#), who goes by the name of ‘Samuel’.

### **Quotas and pressure**

On April 20, Samuel’s Facebook page [SACTISM](#) posted a seven-page [document](#) in Tigrinya. It was a letter from Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs detailing a the government’s strategy to denounce the UN Commission of Inquiry and its ‘fabricated’ reports. Each Eritrean foreign mission is required to fulfil an allocated ‘quota’. [See below]

The letter, dated 12th of April 2016, is addressed to “*All Eritrean missions*” and to “*Eritrean consulates in Canada and Australia*” with copies to “(1) *Coordinating committee*; (2) *Coordinator of Action Europe, Ambassador Fisehatsion Petros*; and (3) *Eritrean permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Ghirma Asmerom*.”

The letter urges those it addresses to collect signatures from 16th of April until 27th of May 2016 to fulfil their respective country’s ‘*quota*’. The document lists 25 countries including the Scandinavia region and sets the target number of signatures for the petition.

For Eritreans in the diaspora **this is not a mere request**.

Living – as many of them do – in countries like Sudan, they are open to real pressure to comply with this request for support. Refusal would leave the exiles open to accusations of being unpatriotic, which would result in them being denied all official assistance from any Eritrean embassy. This would prevent this vulnerable community from obtaining passports, visas or any other form of official

documentation or permission.

## **Documenting the Eritrean regime's global reach**

What the Eritrean government instructions indicate is just how extensive and complex the regime's hold really is.

A translation of the document, revealed on 'Samuel's' Facebook page, is provided below.

It shows in detail the clear line of control from President Isaias Afwerki and his closest circle of advisers, through the embassies and into the ruling party's network in each country, to members of the Eritrean exile community.

It confirms, for example, that Meseret Bahlbi, who had [brought cases](#) against academics and newspapers in the Netherlands as an individual, is in fact on the ruling party's European Central Committee.

As a Dutch judge [ruled recently](#): "...it can be assumed that [the plaintiff] is linked to the Eritrean regime and the political ideology of this regime actively supports."

## **International 'friends' of the regime**

What the documents also reveal is the network of the Eritrean governments closest international supporters.

Of these Herman Cohen (the former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 1989 to 1993) is probably the most important. He has intervened in support of Eritrea on several occasions.

In December 2015, for example, he called for UN sanctions against the regime [to be lifted](#). He previously [called for](#) Eritrea to be 'brought in from the cold.'

This is the full list of these international allies of President Isaias.

- Ambassador Herman J Cohen (United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 1989 to 1993.)
- Emilio De Luigi (Author, born in Eritrea)
- Charles Cantalupo, (Professor of English, Comparative Literature and African Studies, Penn State Schuylkill)
- Samuel Mahaffy (Eritrean born consultant and lobbyist)
- Peter Schwidtal (Founder of the Project Eritrea in 1995, Chairman of the Organization ARCHEMED)
- Toni Locher (Member Friends of Eritrea club)

## **Resisting the government's campaign**

The Eritrean government is not having thing all its own way. The Eritrean opposition is [mobilising its supporters](#) to show their backing for the U.N. Commission of Inquiry.

“Thousands of Eritrean refugees and European-Eritreans from all over Europe will be marching in Geneva, on the 23rd of June 2016,” the exiles say.

Last year saw clashes in the Swiss city between supporters and opponents of the Eritrean regime. The U.N. Commissioners [were threatened](#) with violence.

**Joachim Rucker**, the president of the UN Human Rights Council, started his opening statement by saying:

*“It has been brought to my attention that the members of the commission of inquiry on Eritrea have been subjected to various threats and acts intimidation in their hotels and in the streets since their arrival in Geneva. Security around members of the commission has had to be redoubled and contacts established with the hosts country’s police. We have also taken security measures to ensure that the interactive dialogue proceed with calm and dignity. Substantive disagreement with members of the Col or other mandate holders can always be expressed. It is however totally unacceptable for them to be subjected to threats and intimidation in the context of discharging their mandates which are established by the United Nations Human Rights Council”.*

Hopefully this will not be repeated, but competing demonstrations are almost certain to take place in Geneva again this year.

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## Documents translated from [leaked](#) Eritrean government documents

### Eritrea: Petition against the Commission of Inquiry

A recent document sent by the PFDJ to force Eritreans in the diaspora to “petition against the unjust position against Eritrea of the Commission of Inquiry and Special Rapporteurs” was leaked and posted on Facebook on April 19.

Before it was launched an emergency meeting was held.

At the meeting were present:

- The Director of the Office of the President and Minister of Information Yemane GebreMeskel,
- Minister of Energy and Mines General Sibhat Efrem,
- Chief of Staff of the Eritrean Defense Forces General Filpos WeldeYohans,
- Chief of Foreign Intelligence Colonel Gaim TesfaMikael,
- Temporary Coordinator of the Higher Commission for Human Rights Ambassador TesfaMikael Gerahtu and
- Chief of Police and Security Forces Brigadier General Sm’on GebreDngl.

### Committees for the petition

The committees for the petition have started work in Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya,

Uganda and South Africa.

To make the campaign successful the following ambassadors and YPFDJ members have already started a busy schedule in Europe. Embassies in Europe and Africa have been ordered to draw a target and action plan document within four days and present it to the Political Adviser to the President Yemane Gebreab. Organization and financial issues will be the responsibility of Ambassador Fs'hazion Petros and Ambassador Grma Asmerom, Permanent Representative of the State of Eritrea to the UN. Below are listed the names of the organizing diplomats and YPFDJ members.

1. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs
2. Hanna Simon, Eritrean Ambassador to France
3. Secretary of the Eritrean Embassy to the Scandinavian region, Yonas Manna
4. Stifanos HabteMariam, Eritrean Ambassador to the UK
5. Petros Tsegai, Eritrean Ambassador to Germany
6. Fs'hazion Petros, Eritrean Ambassador to Italy

Yemane Gebreab has selected YPFDJ members to facilitate the campaign. Some of them are listed below.

**Members of the Central Committee of YPFDJ Europe:**

1. Zer'ay Tekle, Chairman of YPFDJ Europe
2. Eden Kebede
3. Solomon SeregeBrhan
4. Yodit Tekeste
5. Tedros Yared, YPFDJ Norway
6. Senai Solomon, YPFDJ Denmark
7. Sirak Bahlbi, PFDJ Europe
8. Redi'et Kfle, YPFDJ America
9. Semhar Brhane, YPFDJ Germany
10. Meseret Bahlbi, YPFDJ Holland
11. Biniam Tareqe, Amanuel Mengstu, Dejen Melles, Millen Daniel YPFDJ Sweden
12. Semhar GebreAb, YPFDJ Germany
13. Benhur Grma, YPFDJ Canada
14. Mikael Haile, YPFDJ America
15. Sm'on Tesfamariam, YPFDJ and Red Sea Institute
16. Daniel Goit'om, YPFDJ Europe
17. Ft'hawi Mehari, YPFDJ Europe
18. Saul Bahta, YPFDJ Switzerland

The following friends of the regime have been selected to work with members of the diaspora raised youth:

- Ambassador Herman J Cohen (United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 1989 to 1993.)
- Emilio De Luigi (Author, born in Eritrea)

- Charles Cantalupo, (Distinguished Professor of English, Comparative Literature and African Studies, Penn State Schuylkill)
- Samuel Mahaffy (Eritrean born consultant and lobbyist)
- Peter Schwidtal (Founder of the Project Eritrea in 1995, Chairman of the Organization ARCHEMED)
- Toni Locher (Member Friends of Eritrea club)

Dr Gidewon Abbai, Sofia TesfaMariam, Dr Tesfai Aradom, Saba GebreGiorgis are among the 17 people have been tasked with facilitating communication between the friends of the regime. Sofia TesfaMariam and others have studied and approved the identities and backgrounds of the following and many others.

1. Habtom Kidane, Uganda
2. Afwerki Kehase Ar'aya, Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya
3. Mengst'Ab (Godney) Berekhet, Uganda
4. Samuel Jimie, Kenya
5. Dawit Agefa, Uganda
6. Berekhet Yemane, Uganda
7. FreWeyni Kahsai, USA
8. Fshaie Tseggai, USA
9. Aster Tekle, USA (Member of the National Union of Eritrean women, Virginia, USA)
10. Yodit Negassi, USA
11. Yemane Fqadu, Seattle, USA
12. Grmai GebreMariam
13. Rahel Abrha Zekarias, USA, (Washington DC)
14. Hanna AndeMariam, USA
15. Akhbret, USA (Minnesota)
16. Almaz Nabu, USA
17. Biniam Hruy, UK

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## **The State of Eritrea**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

April 12 2016

To: All Eritrean Missions and Eritrean Consulates in Canada and Australia

Copies: To members of the organizing committee

Petition Organizer Europe Ambassador Fs'hazion Petros

Permanent Representative for Eritrea at the Un Ambassador Grma Asmerom

As can be remembered the need for a global Eritrean defensive effort has been discussed the launch has been decided after it was demanded by the people in

protest of the unjust reports and authority of the Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea. An outline and orientation document prepared by the Global Eritrean Action for Justice is hereby attached. Eritrean Global Action for Justice will send a form to be filled on the internet. Accordingly I give the following reminders:

1. This should be given priority focus according to the outlined aims and organization as a high priority challenge and public diplomacy campaign.
2. Every mission will prepare an action plan that shows the target and organization of their campaigns in accordance with the orientation documents and will submit them until Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2016.
3. Keeping this in mind, ideas and experience can be added and organized efforts should be made for all missions to work together and create an organized network for greatest success.
4. Many citizens will travel to the country for the 25<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebrations and so a special organization should be adopted to collect their signatures before they leave for Eritrea.

In relation to this according to the decisions taken at all Eritrean organizations peaceful demonstrations will be arranged. To allow time to begin the preparations from now Eritrean Global Action for Justice is preparing the guidelines. June 21-23 2016 should be assumed the scheduled date although further information will follow about the exact date.

Victory to the Masses

(Signed, sealed)

Secretary of the Organizing Committee

Global Eritrean Action for Justice

Guidelines and general instructions for the petition against the unjust position against Eritrea of the Commission of Inquiry and Special Rapporteurs

Schedule:

1. The petition effort starts on April 16 and ends on May 27 2016.
2. From May 31 to June 6 the collected petitions will be sent to the outlined addresses (The 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Human Rights Council will commence on June 13 The Commission of Inquiry report can be expected to be presented from June 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>)

Method:

3. The forms can be filled on paper and online
  - Contents of the form

- Every individual participant fills their names, addresses, and signatures (guidelines have been prepared and should be translated into Tigrinya and Arabic)
- Any information and signatures should be filled clearly and carefully
- Nine people sign on every single form
- The part for serial numbers will be left blank to be filled later
- Signed forms are to be collected as soon as possible, scanned and sent to the provided addresses (check attachment #3 for details)
- Scanned forms are kept in the following manner
- It's saved as ***EritreaPetition2016***
- Which country and city it is collected from
- Page numbers (from-to)
- Scanned forms are sent from each city to [eritreanglobalmekete@gmail.com](mailto:eritreanglobalmekete@gmail.com)
  - Online Forms
- The designated websites will be notified and similar instructions as above are followed. Information about the websites will be sent out until April 17 2016.
- Online petitions are registered with individual names
- All the petitions collected online will be collected in excel sheets, printed and sent to the specified addresses
- The collected excel sheets are also sent to Global Eritrean Action for Justice [eritreanglobalmekete@gmail.com](mailto:eritreanglobalmekete@gmail.com)
  - Global Eritrean Action for Justice will as soon as possible present the method and form with which it will present the petitions to the UN headquarters at Geneva

## Mobilization and Targets

4. In every country a schedule for the greatest success of the plan will be drawn and people will be organized on the smallest scale down to families. Organizers, promoters and assistants will be assigned.
5. In consideration of the planned number of half a million signatures and the targets the work will be arranged accordingly (see attachment #1 for country quotas). Weekly reports of daily follow-ups will be sent to Global Eritrean Action for Justice.
6. Every citizen takes forms and gives it to their family, relatives, friends, colleagues, etc... and helps others to fill the forms. Groups, organizations, communities take responsibility and lead this action in their respective countries. Reports of all the citizens who were able to make others fill the forms and returned them, promoters (agitators) and organizers will be kept properly.
7. Petitions can be filled by Eritrean associations and organizations and should be registered as 'Eritrean Organizations'.
8. Partner organizations and pro-Eritrea individuals are registered as 'Partner Organizations' and efforts should be made to collect the signatures of other individuals and organizations that stand for justice.

## Addresses for sending the petitions

9. The filled forms with the accompanying reminders are sent to Secretary General of the UN, High Commissioner for Human Rights, President of the Human Rights Council, Members of the Human Rights Council (the addresses for the countries will be sent by the Eritrean Global Action for Justice), four bodies of the European Union, the Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea and the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea.
10. The signed petitions are also to be sent to the foreign ministers of the countries where Eritreans live.

## Evaluation and report

11. Evaluations for cities and countries are to be sent until June 30<sup>th</sup>

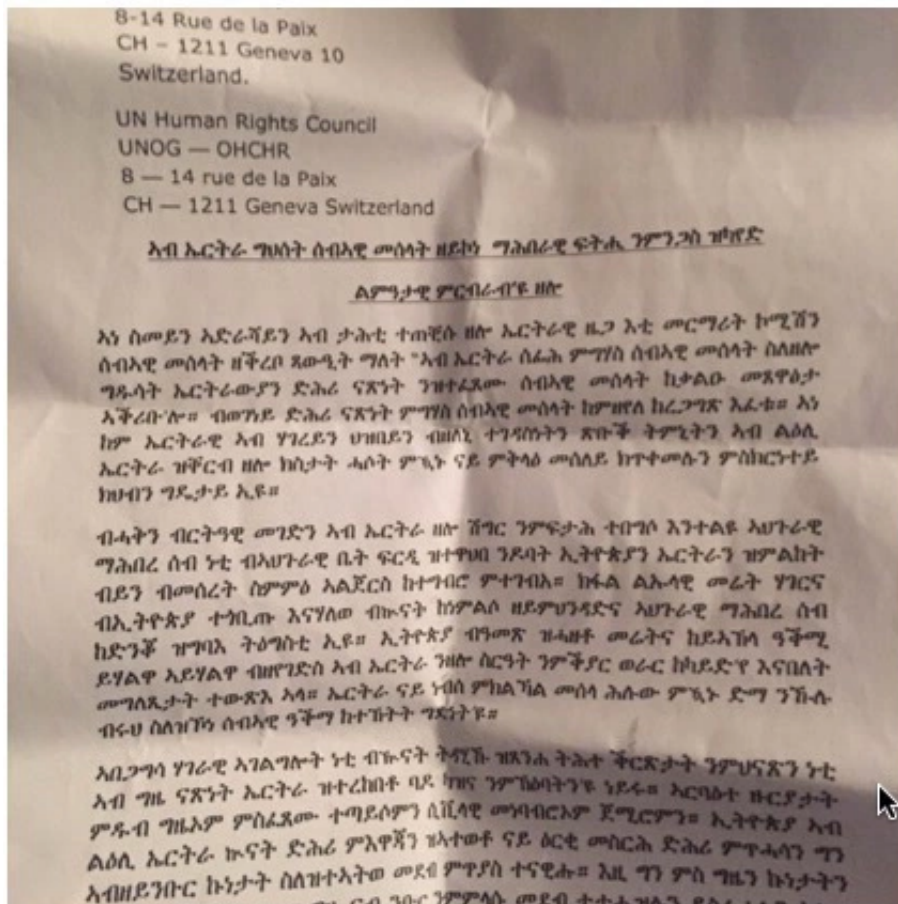
Victory to the Masses!!!

---

## 1. Letter with a suggested critique of the U. N. Commission on Inquiry

(copy from Israel, but apparently these forms are available in many different countries)





## Translation

### 1. Personal Information

- Full name
- Sex
- Address (Street, Zip Code, City, Country)
- E-mail and telephone

### 1. Confidentiality

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I do not want my information to be provided to other organizations or persons.

If my testimony is needed and if my safety is guaranteed I can, of my own volition, testify before the Commission of Inquiry.

- Testimony
- How you left the country, the journey you went through and things that happened there
- The reasons for leaving the country
- The pressures and violations you endured in the countries you passed through to get to Israel
- The pretexts you used to get residence papers in this country and the present

status of your papers

- Mention names and addresses of non-Eritrean asylum seekers you know who have acquired papers by presenting themselves as Eritreans

#### 1. Exposing lies and accusations

(Using your experiences and the experiences of others to expose these lies and accusations)

- Sexual violations and torture on women
- Government policies on the equality of women like equal participation, equal education, equal job opportunities, and equal land use rights, the illegalization of female circumcision, etc.
- Mention the respect that our society has for women
- Mention that rape is not acceptable in our culture and society and that it is illegal, and it is punished by law on the rare occasion it happens
- When women write this they should mention the respect and treatment of their fellow men

#### 1. Forced labor and National Service

- Mention in which round of national service you did your national service, the work campaigns that you participated in for the good of the people and what satisfaction that gave you
- The knowledge, education, profession, experience, care, harmony, and discovery of other ethnic groups and parts of society

#### 1. Murder everywhere

- Mention that the Eritrean people naturally do not have a culture of murder
- That peace and stability has progressed in Eritrea
- Mention that murder is punished by law by accompanying with examples you know
- Mention that the Commission of Inquiry's report that murder happens everywhere is a complete lie
- Repression and violations
- Mention that there are no human rights violations or crisis in Eritrea
- Mention that the people and the government live by mutually supporting each other; for example mention that the people participate in government work projects with awareness and with the belief that those projects belong to them
- Whenever any rights violations happen the people notify the concerned authorities and that they correct the wrong doers, and moreover receives due legal treatment in a court of law

- Migration and the criminals who ran migration
- Mention that Eritrean youth have become the victims of human traffickers by

- accompanying your experiences and the experiences of others you know
- The suffering, torture and death and the huge amounts of money asked of migrants on the journey by accompanying it with your experiences and the experiences of others you know
- Mention human traffickers and their associates that you know
- Mention the measures that the government has taken against human traffickers and their associates

#### 1. Development in Eritrea

- Mention the peace, stability, social harmony, and mutual respect, unity of the people, work and dedication in Eritrea. Mention the rights and opportunities for women, children and the disabled.
- Projects that have shown results in changing the economy and lives of the people in education, health, clean drinking water, transport, agriculture,
- The closing of the gap between urban and rural areas, between near and far
- Strengthening the rule of law, mention that the recent proclamation on the rights of the people have helped people understand their rights

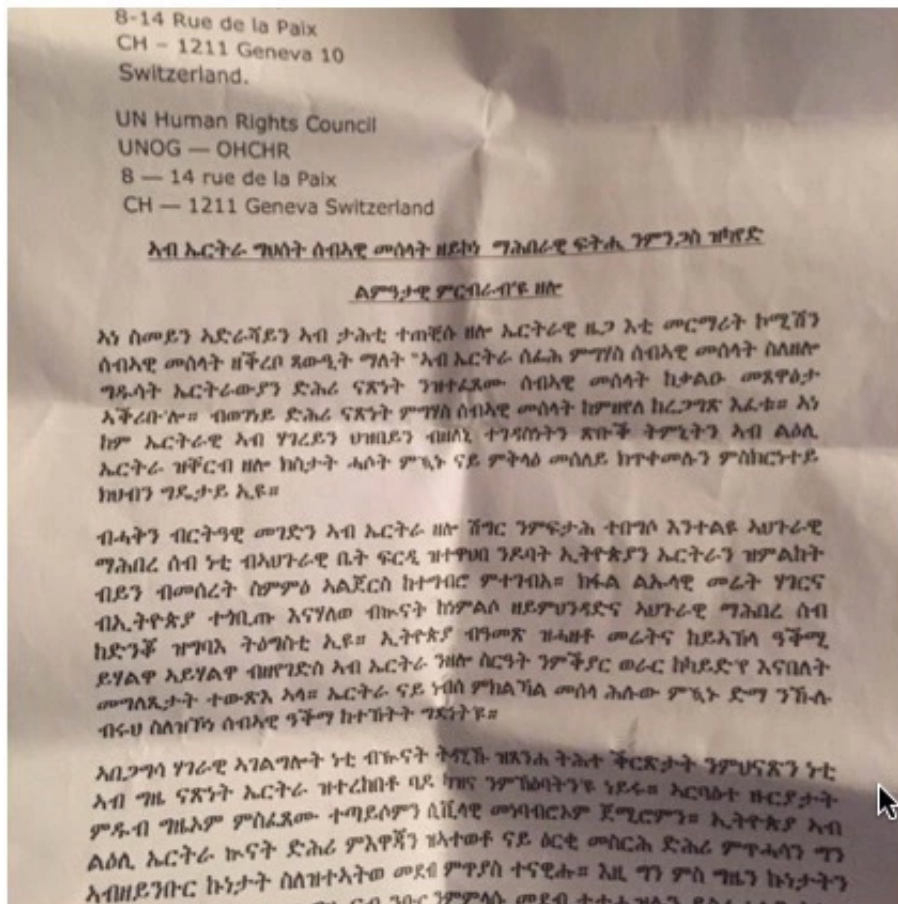
#### 1. The influences of external conspiracies

Mention the external conspiracies against Eritrea, Ethiopia's refusal to move out of sovereign Eritrean land, the silence of the international community, illegal and unjust sanctions, that are trying, hate policies and actions

#### 1. Opposing the mistaken aims of the Commission

I testify that according to my knowledge and experience the accusations against Eritrea by the Commission of Inquiry are baseless lies. (Write by mentioning some of the accusations)

## 2. Letter from the Netherlands



To: The Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea

UNOG – OHCHR

8-14 Rue de la Paix

CH-1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

UN Human Rights Council

UNOG – OHCHR

8-14 Rue de la Paix

CH-1211 Geneva Switzerland

**In Eritrea There is No Violation of Human Rights, but a Strong Drive for Development Aimed at Ensuring Social Justice**

I, the undersigned Eritrean citizen, in regard to the call made by the Inquiry Commission for Eritrean citizens to give their testimonies about the alleged human rights violations in Eritrea that have existed since the country's independence, give

my testimony as follows.

I would like to say that there have not been any human rights violations in Eritrea after its independence. As an Eritrean who has respect and goodwill for my people I must use my rights to expose the false accusations against my country and give my testimony as such.

In truth and justice, if there is a desire to improve the situation in Eritrea, the international community should have helped to uphold the international court ruling that was reached in accordance with the Algiers Agreement. The fact that we have not chosen war to reclaim our invaded sovereign territory that is still under Ethiopian control should have served to bring the admiration of the international community. On top of still having invaded our sovereign land, Ethiopia, regardless of its capabilities, is promising now and again that it will invade Eritrea and bring a regime change. Eritrea has a right to protect itself, and it is therefore a must that it has to enlist its citizens for defense.

National service was launched to rebuild the war torn infrastructure and to revive the dead economy that the new state inherited from the previous government. Four rounds of national service finished their stay within the standard schedule and went back to their civilian lives. But after Ethiopia declared war on Eritrea and after it disregarded the international boundary ruling the time for repatriation for national service recruits was extended. But this can be improved with time. There are no plans and work is being done to take national service back to its normal duration in the near future.

In connection to this, I call on the international community to find, in accordance with the Algiers Agreement, a solution to the problem that exists between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

To understand socio-economic development in Eritrea, the testimony of officials who visit Eritrea, representing the European Union or their individual countries, is enough. To mention some: members of UK and Danish parliaments, European Union representatives, European Union commissioner representatives, diplomats and UN officials posted in Asmara can be mentioned. The aid agreement reached between the EU and Eritrea is a good example of this.

Of the many achievements that the people and the government of Eritrea are accomplishing through the policy of self-reliance, the following can be mentioned. Even remote villages have been linked with roads, clean water and electricity have been provided and more work is underway to reach those remaining without these services, that clinics and hospitals have been built to provide people with medical services and that they are saving many lives; that universal education, which is not common in many other countries, is provided by the government up to the end of secondary education can be mentioned as some of the many admirable achievements of the Eritrean government. The aim of the government of Eritrea is to ensure social justice, and regarding the issue of human rights, the government is making great efforts to provide food for cheap and fair prices and to provide job opportunities. The government is also working on building infrastructures like dams,

reservoirs, the improvement of farm land, setting up of factories, etc... that can help to ensure human rights. Because of this Eritrea has repeatedly been known as a green island in a region constantly under attack by drought and whose peoples have been attacked by hunger and become the victims of begging and aid.

In the fight to ensure national development the benefits of the progress in mining is showing results as it is a source of our progress. Successful national development projects develop the national economy, and a developed economy has a great input in bringing national justice. And this is why the Eritrean people stand by their government to work to ensure the success of development projects.

The exodus of our youth is getting worse because of the red carpet reception by developed nations. But the exaggerated numbers of our refugees are because of other refugees from neighboring countries and other African countries who are hiding their identities and presenting themselves as Eritreans. The Austrian ambassador to Ethiopia's statement, which said that "40% of asylum seekers who present themselves as Eritreans are Ethiopians," is enough proof of this. In addition to Ethiopians, it is becoming clear that many Sudanese and Somali nationals are presenting themselves as Eritreans to find asylum.

According to the reasons I mentioned above, I humbly give my testimony that the people and the government of Eritrea are working to ensure the success of their development programs and that there is no torture or human rights violations that the government commits against its people.

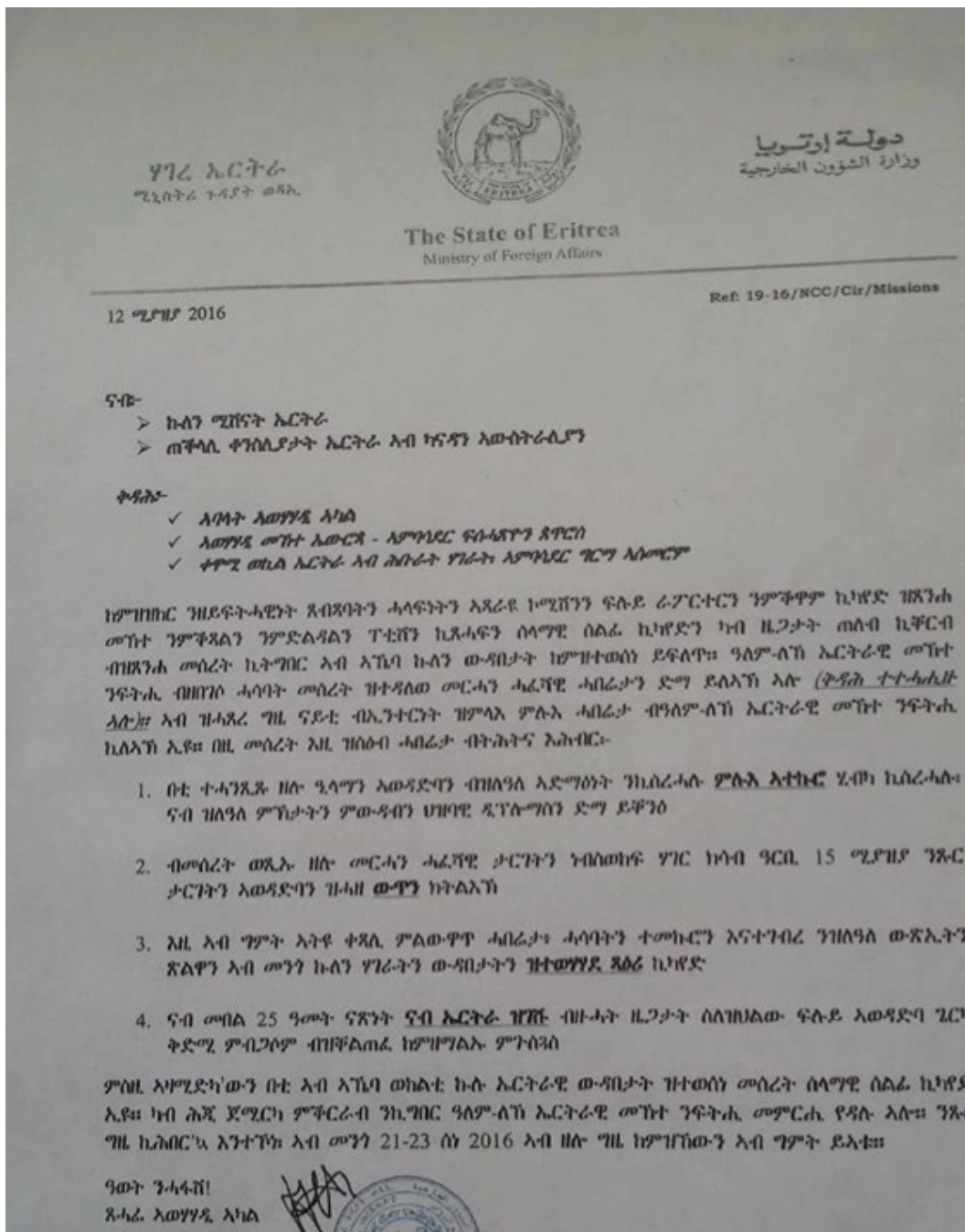
Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Petition against against the Commission of Inquiry and the Special Rapporteur



A document distributed by the ruling party (PFDJ) regarding the organization of a campaign against the Commission of Inquiry to force Eritreans in the diaspora to “petition against the unjust position against Eritrea of the Commission of Inquiry and Special Rapporteurs” had been leaked and posted on Facebook on April 19 2016 on the site Sancticism.

4. Photographs of the mass signing of petitions attacking the Commission of Inquiry





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iat=feed&amp;type=rss)

## VIDEOS



**IN LOVING MEMORY OF ISSAC AMAI**  
 (/OBITUARIES/4457-IN-MEMORY-C

ASMARINO FUNDRAISING: BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO BE DONE!

PLEASE CLICK HERE TO SIGN to be a signatory of a call that we will soon issue to all Eritreans in the  
 Diaspora -



> ([https://www.change.org/p/global-initiative-to-empower-eritrean-grassroots-movement-gieegm-an-urgent-call-to-all-eritreans-worldwide?](https://www.change.org/p/global-initiative-to-empower-eritrean-grassroots-movement-gieegm-an-urgent-call-to-all-eritreans-worldwide?recruiter=268642856&utm_source=petitions_show_components_action_panel_wrapper&utm_medium=copylink)  
 recruiter=268642856&utm\_source=petitions\_show\_components\_action\_panel\_wrapper&utm\_medium=copylink)

## Eritrean Anti Slavery Campaigners Appalled by Regime's lies (/press-releases/4572-eritrean-anti-slavery-campaigners-appalled-by-regime-s-lies)

Like 91 Tweet

8

by S S C on 09 May 2016 in Press Release (/press-releases)

7 (<http://www.asmarino.com/press-releases/4572-eritrean-anti-slavery-campaigners-appalled-by-regime-s-lies#di>)

Print (/press-releases/4572-eritrean-anti-slavery-campaigners-appalled-by-regime-s-lies?tmpl=component&print=

Email (/component/mailto/?tmpl=component&template=ja\_fubix&link=10c951d055f2634fd7a6c4a3b854117c4e2f



Former recruits of the Indefinite National Service in Eritrea are appalled by the finding that the regime in has now officially reneged its promises to reinstate the national service to the legally sanctioned 18 months period.

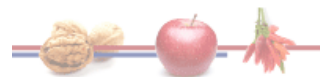
Swiss Authorities on a fact-finding mission to Eritrea, found that the human rights situation has not improved and that the Eritrean regime has now officially gone back on the promise to reinstate the indefinite national service to the legally sanctioned 18 months.

The promise announced by Yemane Gebreab- the Presidential Advisor and repeated by various diplomats was announced about two years ago, although the president refused to make it official or announce it in local media. However despite the lack of policy clarity the promise was a centrepiece in EU-Eritrea aid package discussions, that resulted in the Eritrean regime gaining €200m worth of aid package.

Stop Slavery in Eritrea, a campaign group coordinated by former recruits of the indefinite national service have today called for a review of the aid package, in light of the findings of the Swiss Mission which has confirmed that the Eritrean regime has no intentions in stopping the modern day slavery in the guise of national service that it has subjected all Eritreans over the age of 18 to.

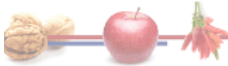
More than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe in 2015, sparking a crisis as countries struggled to cope with the influx. The vast majority arrived by sea. 135,711 people have reached Europe by sea since the start of 2016, according to the UNHCR. Eritrea, despite its small population and the fact that

Wij zoeken een (m/v):  
**IT-specialist**

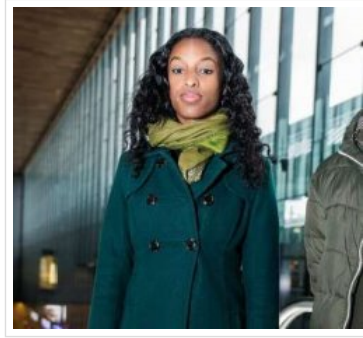




Wij zoeken  
een (m/v):  
**IT-specialist**



there is no active conflict, is currently in the top seven countries where migrants originate. According to the IOM, more than 3,770 migrants were reported to have died trying to cross the Mediterranean in 2015. Most died on the crossing from North Africa to Italy. In 2013 a single boat accident off the coast of Lampedusa claimed the lives of over 365 Eritreans and there were many similar incidences since and before that widely reported tragedy



Veronica Almedom

Veronica Almedom a Geneva based activist for the Stop Slavery in Eritrea Campaign said 'I am appalled at the Eritrean regime, however unfortunately it was always clear to us that, good will on behalf of the EU alone isn't going to solve the problem inside Eritrea, every member of the Eritrean public knew two years ago that the regime had no intentions of instating the national service to 18 months, that is why the number of refugees fleeing the national service didn't go down. Infact figures from the refugee camps in the region indicate that younger and more vulnerable children are fleeing ahead of conscription or as a result the crisis of the national service. It is time to look

for realistic solutions to the refugee crisis and appeasing the regime isn't one. We call on the EU to revise the aid package negotiated on the back of this promise'.

It is to be noted that last year a UN Commission into human rights in Eritrea presented its findings indicating 'possible crimes against humanity' and that 'Eritrea is ruled by fear and not law'. The mandate was then extended for another year and will be presenting a second report next month in Geneva.



Join the discussion...

**Michaelinlondon1234** • a day ago

After 12 months of reading what you folk write I think you are a group of thieves.  
As a fantasy piece by someone who has no idea of how civilisations are made it is sad.

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Sahay Erican** → Michaelinlondon1234 • 21 hours ago

ኣይተ ምቹኤል,

ንምሉእ መንእሰይ ኤርትራ ኣብሪሱን ንስደት ኣባሪሩን ንብረት ህዝቢ ዘሚቱን ዝነበር ዘሎ ኣብ ምሉእ ዓለም ዝተኾነ ሰራቂ "ሰራቂ" ዘይበልካዮስ ነዞም ዓገብ ኣንብል ደቂ ሃገር ሰራቂቲ ከትብለና፡፡ ደምበርክ ብዓል ክልተ ኣኣጋርን ክልተ ኣኣዳውን ሓደ ርእሰን ዘለዎ ሰብ ኢኻ? ዝገርምዮ፡፡ እቲ ኤርትራዊ ዝባሃል ሰብ ጠፊኡስ፡ ብኸምዚ ከማኻ ሰብ ዝመስሉ ኣንስሳታት ተተኪኡ፡፡

(Tsehay: the peasants' son)

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Michaelinlondon1234** → Sahay Erican • 21 hours ago

Could you translate that in to English please.

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Sahay Erican** → Michaelinlondon1234 • 17 hours ago

English? How about you ask your daddy to translate it to you?

Addis, could you help him please?

(Tsehay: the peasants' son)

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Samson** → Sahay Erican • 14 hours ago

ሰራሕካሉ፡ ኣንታይ ገዲፍካ፡ ኣቦኽ ኣለዎ ዶ ኢላካዮ ኢኻ፡ ዘተርጉም?

1 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Addis Alem** → Sahay Erican • 16 hours ago

Sorry, dear Sahay, I can't help with this, and it's your own fault  
....

You made me laugh so hard that I can hardly stop shaking, or  
keep my eyes open!

Who knew you can deliver such unexpected, body shaking  
punches! But I so loved it! :)

1 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Michaelinlondon1234** → Sahay Erican • 15 hours ago

I was polite.....Now stop being so childish..

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

## ALSO ON ASMARINO INDEPENDENT

**Hundreds of thousands have fled this country. This ghastly massacre is a**

1 comment • a month ago

Kalihari Snake — .

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ሙዚቃ ምርኢት ኣካይዱ፡፡

10 comments • 16 days ago

Sahay Erican Dear MW It is so good

BLOG COMMENTS POWERED BY DISQUS (<http://disqus.com>)

ህጹጽ ጸውዒት ንኹሎም ኣብ ስደት ዝነበሩ  
ኤርትራውያን ደለይቲ ፍትሒ/ نداء عاجل لجميع

1 comment • 19 hours ago

Bereket halyot,lewhat — God bless  
Eritrea**Video: A visa for Eritrea, the 'African North Korea'**

26 comments • 6 days ago

Zake Lakasa Dear Samson I am

No **google phone** or **VOIP phone numbers** are allowed. Each submission must have the following line: **contact information** followed by a telephone number, your full real name; that is, even if you desire to use a different "pen name".

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**From now onward, we are not going to accept multiple postings of articles. Exceptions will be made when an article is also posted at another website with a different audience, with little or no overlap with asmarino audience.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

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# Should Europe pay to stop refugees fleeing oppressive Eritrea?

As politicians grapple with the migrant crisis experts say cash will only prop up the abusive regime  
- not stop the exodus

Nell Frizzell

Thursday 28 April 2016 08.00 BST

The migration crisis has dominated headlines and confounded politicians, but still very little is known about Eritrea, a country from which an estimated 5,000 people are fleeing each month.

Despite unaccompanied children from Eritrea being the largest group to seek refuge in the UK, and despite Eritreans being one of the largest groups entering Europe in 2015 after Afghans and Syrians, even the well-informed ask, why? Why Eritrea? What's happening there?

It's a pertinent question, particularly since the EU has agreed to give €200m in aid to the Eritrean government. But sounds like a solution is, campaigners say, just going to exacerbate the problem. Because it is the Eritrean government itself which is accused of gross human rights abuses, with reports of routine extra-judicial executions, torture and arbitrary detention.

Many Eritreans claim to have spent more than 20 years in slave-like, unpaid national service. Give aid to the Eritrean regime and campaigners say that instead of halting the exodus, it will only make it worse.

"It feels like the oppressors are getting a reward from the European Union for oppressing their own people," says Meron Estefanos, the director of the Eritrean Initiative on Refugee Rights. "There is no accountability. It seems to me that the EU is very naive."

For Martin Plaut, former Africa editor for the BBC, the issue isn't naiveté. He says the plan shows just how split the EU is over migration. "You have two completely different forces," he explains. "You have the European parliament, which is made up of people with their own individual views and concerns about their constituents. Then you have the commission, which is really answerable to a council of ministers. They have a completely different set of agendas." When it comes to Eritrea, he argues, those different agendas breed serious policy problems.

When announcing the new programme on behalf of the European Union, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said "... We have agreed to promote activities with concrete results for the [Eritrean] population, such as the creation of job opportunities and the improvement of living conditions," but

claimed at the same time the EU would insist on “full respect of human rights”.

But many remain sceptical. Former MEP Baroness Glenys Kinnock, now chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Eritrea, is robust in her criticism of the EU aid deal. “I’m horrified that, as Europeans, we’re offering any kind of support to President Isaias Afewerki,” she says.

“It will never reach the people and it will never improve their lives while he is there. It absolutely flies in the face of any claims we make as Europeans that we’re fighting for the rights and freedoms of the people of Eritrea.”

Abraham Zere, the director of PEN Eritrea in Exile who was forced to flee in 2011, says that many refugees living in the diaspora agree that the aid funding will do little more than prolong the life of dictatorship.

“The minimum services like electricity, water supply and food are lacking [there],” he explains. “Not because of lack of resources - but mainly through an utterly failed administration. Aid will not help the destitute population.”

## **Controversy**

This isn’t the first time that EU aid and development spending has been seen as controversial. Funding for Sudan - announced at the same time as the Eritrea grant - was deemed “almost satire” by Ahmed Adam from the Institute for African Development at Cornell University, for essentially rewarding a migrant-producing regime while claiming to help stem the flow. .

Similarly, after 12 years of sanctions the EU is once again giving development support to Zimbabwe, while last month the EU suspended direct funding for the government of Burundi after they were judged to have not done enough to stop the current conflict.

The MEP and chair of the Committee on Development, Linda McAvan, is also sceptical about the aid plan, but emphasises that no money has yet changed hands.

“We’ve made it clear that we are very sceptical, as a European Parliament, about funding the Eritrean government in any way. There has been talk of them getting rid of their national service, which isn’t a national service - it’s a lifetime conscription by the government - but it hasn’t happened,” she says.

Although many MEPs in the European parliament have strongly objected to the plan, they don’t have the power to block the proposed payments completely.

## **Refugee policy**

Kinnock, who is trying to raise a debate in the House of Lords on the subject, also points to the “clearly untenable and unreasonable” policy on Eritrean refugees.

Under the new EU migration deal, Eritreans - and other non-Syrians - reaching Greece are to be sent back to Turkey where the government have begun negotiations to readmit refugees and migrants with a host of countries, including Eritrea.

The UK government has also changed the country code guidance for Eritrea, so that while in the past 95% of Eritreans had their asylum applications accepted, it’s now down

to 28%.

“As I’ve said before, [the EU migration deal] is life-threatening to them. They can’t go back,” says Kinnock. “I know families who have used every resource they’ve got to pay smugglers to take their children across the border into Sudan or Ethiopia, even though the government have a shoot to kill policy on those borders; they deserve our support, not increasing the threats to them.”

As warmer weather approaches, the Mediterranean migration route is expected to become more popular again - putting Eritreans and many others at increased risk as they try to reach Europe.

“I was speaking to UNHCR yesterday asking if there was any diminution in the 4,000-5,000 people fleeing Eritrea every month and they said no,” says Plaut.

Daniel Mekonnen, a prominent Eritrean human rights lawyer living in Geneva, warns that a time of increased urgency, the aid deal could severely discredit the EU. “By dealing with such a regime, in a strangely non-transparent and non-accountable manner, the EU risks the danger of portrayal as complicit in the perpetration of gross human rights violations, including a possible situation of crimes against humanity, as concluded in June 2015 by a UN commission of inquiry.”

The Eritrean regime, argues Mekonnen, is not going to change because of EU funding. “I liken the [government] with a habitual offender, a serial killer, or offender of the worst type, who has zero chance of rehabilitating,” he says.

More analysis

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**THE EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR STABILITY AND  
ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND  
DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA**

**Action Fiche for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window  
T05 – EUTF – HoA – REG - 09**

**1. IDENTIFICATION**

Title/Number	<b>BETTER MIGRATION MANAGEMENT (KHARTOUM PROCESS)</b>		
Total cost	Total estimated cost: EUR 40 million  Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: EUR 40 million		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Indirect Management – Delegation Agreement (PAGODA IMDA) with a consortium of EU Member States Agencies		
DAC-code	150	Sector	

**2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT**

**2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives**

The project is **based on the third objective within the EU Trust Fund**, namely improved migration management in countries of origin and transit. **It is also contributing to the second objective of the EU Trust Fund**, that is Strengthening resilience of communities and in particular the most vulnerable, as well as refugees and displaced people.

The project will contribute to the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan, and in particular its priority domains (2) "Legal migration and mobility", (3) "Protection and asylum", and (4) "Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings".

**The project is regional.** It will provide capacity building to improve migration management, in particular to prevent and address irregular migration, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. The intervention logic is based on four components: (1) capacity building in the form of training and technical assistance and the provision of appropriate equipment; (2) support for policy development and implementation for better migration and border management; (3) support to the identification, assistance and protection of people in needs; and (4) awareness-raising about the dangers of irregular migration and the benefits of alternative options. Activities will be conducted in full respect for human rights of migrants and for the needs of vulnerable groups, such as children, women, old



people, victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants, people living in refugee camps and slums, and people who have become targets of xenophobia.

This project will be fully aligned with the Khartoum process, which will define the intervention. Support under components 1 and 2 will go to the Governments participating in the Khartoum Process i.e. Djibouti, Egypt<sup>1</sup>, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and Tunisia<sup>2</sup>, as well as to Uganda, which is hosting refugees from South Sudan, and Libya<sup>3</sup>, which is a country of transit for refugees and migrants from the region.

Country specific needs will be taken into consideration, but **the main logic in the implementation of the project** will be to find commonalities that offer a region-wide answer to a region-wide problem, and to foster greater coordination among beneficiary countries. This multi-level approach is coherent with the logic behind the EU Trust Fund, which envisages actions on a country, regional and cross-regional basis (in this case including Egypt and Tunisia, which are not part of the Fund's Horn of Africa window, but are members of the Khartoum Process, as well as Libya<sup>4</sup> and Uganda, which are not part of the Khartoum process).

## 2.2. Context

### 2.2.1. Regional and/or country context

The scale and nature of migration and displacement calls for cross-border solutions. The Khartoum Process is a regional dialogue on migration between the EU and countries of origin, transit and destination in the Horn of Africa, with an initial focus on addressing trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, including through the identification of concrete projects. The *Better Migration Management (Khartoum Process)* project will respond to needs identified by participants at the Khartoum Process first Steering Committee meeting<sup>5</sup>, which have been further elaborated by a needs assessment in summer 2015. The project presents a comprehensive answer to put into effect the conclusions reached.

While taking a regional approach with a view to greater harmonisation of national policies and legislation, regional cooperation and coordination, as well as exchange of information and good practices, the project will remain flexible as regards issues particular to individual countries, and specific national actions are envisaged, as listed below. Some countries present particular complexities that will require additional efforts, both in terms of resources and political will, to manage migration, and in particular to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings effectively, as well as to protect and assist victims of trafficking and vulnerable groups of migrants and displaced persons.

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<sup>1</sup> Participation of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia is foreseen for activities of a regional nature within the limits of Article 6.4 of Annex IV of the Cotonou Agreement

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>4</sup> NB footnote 1

<sup>5</sup> Sharm El-Sheikh, 23-24 April 2015.

### 2.2.2. Sector context: policies and challenges

Most countries within the Khartoum Process region are places of origin, transit and destination for migrants. The mobility of persons varies from country to country: for migration within the region in some cases, and for migration outside the region in most cases, people rely on smugglers, and risk falling prey to traffickers who can easily target vulnerable groups, like IDPs (internally displaced persons), refugees, women and unaccompanied minors. Smuggling and trafficking networks in the region are highly organised and sophisticated, often with the complicity of officials.

The legal frameworks (and accordingly the legal protection for smuggled and trafficked people) vary considerably within the countries of the region. Common needs have been expressed by concerned governments in terms of capacity building (border management, improved data collection<sup>6</sup>, provision of equipment, judicial systems), raising awareness (particularly in the media and civil society at large, but also at local, regional and ministerial levels) and protection of and assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable smuggled migrants.

## 2.3. Lessons learnt

One of the objectives of the €5 million DCI-funded project *Addressing mixed migration flows in Eastern Africa* is to support and facilitate the fight against criminal networks by providing capacity building and assistance to partner countries in developing evidence-based policies and conducting criminal investigations, notably by collecting and analysing information on criminal networks along the migration routes. A needs assessment conducted over the summer of 2015 to prepare this project had extensive consultations with stakeholders in the region i.e. representatives of government departments, international organisations, EU Member States and civil society organisations. It identified a number of requirements common to two or more governments, such as resources for general capacity building for front-line organisations, provision of equipment and training in law enforcement and data collection, protection of vulnerable groups and actions targeting media, civil society and other stakeholders to sensitise them to the risks of irregular migration.

EU Delegations in the countries participating in the Khartoum Process have contributed to a survey on migration-related issues and on the Khartoum Process. The survey provides further detail on attitudes, trends and the legal basis for migration in each country.

A number of project proposals were presented by both African and European governments at the first meeting of the Khartoum Process Steering Committee in Sharm El-Sheikh in April 2015. The proposals varied considerably in terms of detail, but common themes were capacity building, especially in relation to human trafficking and smuggling, and awareness raising.

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<sup>6</sup> Some aspects of data collection (not yet defined) may be financed through the *Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in East Africa* project and possibly also the *Enhancing African capacity to respond more effectively to transnational organised crime* project.

## 2.4. Complementary actions

Complementarity will be ensured both with the other support programmes and with the various political dialogues.

Several programmes being implemented under various EU funding mechanisms are providing support for the Khartoum Process or for related activities. These include:

- *Support for the EU-Africa Dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Development* (€18.5 million, Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) Pan-African Programme);
- *Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in East Africa* (€6 million, DCI Global Public Goods and Challenges - GPGC);
- *ACP-EU Action on Migration* (European Development Fund - EDF);
- *Support to the reintegration of returnees and to the management of labour migration in Ethiopia* (€10 million, EDF, Ethiopia national indicative programme - NIP);
- Information campaign implemented by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ethiopia (€1 million, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund);
- *Facilitating movement of persons in the IGAD region for enhanced integration* - expected to be launched in 2016 (€10 million, EDF, EU Trust Fund);
- Support for EU law enforcement cooperation with Khartoum Process countries – call for proposals to be launched before the end of 2015 (EU Internal Security Fund on police cooperation).

It will also be necessary to coordinate with the Pan African Programme-financed *Enhancing African capacity to respond more effectively to transnational organised crime* which will improve the data and analysis available on transnational crime, including trafficking in human beings, and build capacity to research, collect and interpret data on crime and elaborate more efficient and effective responses.

Furthermore, two major initiatives led by the EU are the Regional Development and Protection Programmes (RDPPs) which are being rolled out in North Africa and the Horn of Africa and encompass several of the countries taking part in the Khartoum process.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNHCR and several local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are delivering a number of related initiatives, including training for officials and judicial officers, policy development, protection initiatives for vulnerable groups, and awareness-raising initiatives. The scale and intensity of these activities differ considerably from one country to another.

As for the political dialogue; there are at least three separate migration-related dialogues in the region:

- the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route or Khartoum Process, is a regional dialogue among countries of origin, transit and destination along the East Africa migratory route, launched at a ministerial conference in Rome in November 2014, with an initial focus on preventing and tackling human trafficking and smuggling of migrants;
- the Migration and Mobility Dialogue provides a framework for dialogue and cooperation on migration issues between the EU and all African states, with the African Union Commission as the main interlocutor;
- the IGAD Regional Consultative Process<sup>7</sup> aims to facilitate dialogue and regional co-operation in migration management, by creating a platform through which information is exchanged, best practices shared and solutions to common challenges are pursued. The Regional Consultative Process brings together IGAD member states, relevant transit and destination countries beyond the IGAD region, international organisations and other stakeholders to exchange information on migration issues of common interest. National Consultative Mechanisms are currently being established by all IGAD member states, and a migration action plan 2015-2020 has been developed. It will be important to work closely with IGAD in delivering the programme, although Eritrea, Egypt, Libya or Tunisia are not members of IGAD, and special arrangements will need to be made for Eritrea in particular.

In addition to these regional initiatives, a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility was signed with Ethiopia in November 2015 in Valletta.

Moreover, in La Valletta, the EU, its Member States and African partners agreed an Action Document with 5 priority domains and 16 priority interventions in the area of migration.

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<sup>7</sup> Funded by Switzerland

## 2.5. Donor co-ordination

EU Member States are participants in the Khartoum Process; France, Germany, Italy, UK, Malta along with the EU and the African Union Commission are members of the Steering Committee

Some Member States are implementing migration-related projects in the region, in particular: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands (who are leading the Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Horn of Africa) and the United Kingdom<sup>8</sup>.

The Senior Officials Meeting in the framework of the Khartoum Process will be regularly updated on progress made in the implementation of the project and will provide the project with political guidance and direction. In this framework, coordination will also take place with Norway and Switzerland as they are both observers to the Khartoum Process and will participate in such Senior Officials Meetings.

## 3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

### 3.1. Objectives

The **overall objective** of the programme and the **specific objectives** are as follows:

The overall objective is to improve migration management in the region, and in particular to curb the trafficking of human beings and the smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn. Tackling this problem only at a national level would simply risk displacing the existing smuggling/trafficking routes: this project will therefore target the entire region, while taking into account country-specific needs and issues.

The specific objectives are:

(I) To support national authorities to develop, enact and eventually implement policies, laws, institutional frameworks and procedures for better migration and border management, including on the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, in accordance with the relevant international conventions and standards<sup>9</sup>, and promoting harmonisation and exchange of best practices in these areas.

(II) To strengthen the capacity of all institutions and agencies responsible for migration and border management (such as front-line officials, law enforcement officers, or judicial bodies) notably by training and technical assistance, by improving procedures for investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants; by improving data collection and promoting sharing of information; by supplying government

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<sup>8</sup> Germany and Italy are also envisaging joint projects in Sudan, financed by Germany.

<sup>9</sup> In particular the three Palermo Protocols (adopted in 2005) supplement the *UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (adopted in 2000). The first and second are relevant for the present programme, namely the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* and the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*.

offices and border management posts with essential tools and equipment, and possibly with infrastructure development; by promoting improved coordination between different institutions and agencies involved.

(III) To identify, assist and provide protection for victims of trafficking in human beings and vulnerable smuggled migrants, especially women and children and other vulnerable groups.

(IV) To raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration and the benefits of alternative options.

### **3.2 Expected results and main activities**

The **main activities** are likely to be:

(I) Capacity building support to relevant Khartoum Process countries, in particular Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, in drafting national legislation and policies on migration and border management, including transposition of the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its protocols into national legislation; sensitisation and advocacy of competent authorities on the need to adopt legislation on and to prosecute trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation; measures to harmonise legislation and protocols throughout the region, and to ensure that discrepancies between legislation and practice are addressed.

(II) Capacity-building support, notably through training, technical assistance and provision of relevant equipment, for judiciary and border management authorities to better address migration and border management, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. These support measures could notably focus on tracing and seizing assets and criminal proceeds, as well as on crime investigation and prosecution in full respect of human rights; on special needs of vulnerable categories of migrants and on identification of potential victims of trafficking in human beings; on the collection, exchange and analysis of data on migration, particularly in the case of human trafficking and migrant smuggling; on proactive and reactive investigation methods and judicial treatment of victims/witnesses and assisting in setting up specialised anti-trafficking and smuggling police units; on countering the production and use of forged and fraudulent documents, including by engaging Frontex and Europol; on enhancing operational police and judicial cooperation as well as exchange and analysis of information and intelligence between countries of origin, transit and destination of migration, including, where appropriate, through Joint Investigation Teams with the agreement of countries concerned, and by involving Interpol and Europol whenever relevant; promotion of acceptance amongst political and judicial leaders of the need to fight against corruption at all levels<sup>10</sup>; promotion, launching and financing of national/regional/local task forces against corruption; the establishment of national councils/committees opposing trafficking; promotion of increased joint border management (as already tried between Ethiopia, Djibouti and Sudan); country-level specific training sessions to coordinate the various actors involved (ministries, agencies, police, judiciary and other security providers).

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<sup>10</sup> Corruption is reported to be widespread in almost every beneficiary country, facilitating illegal migration and trafficking through the complicity of ticket bureaux, check-in desks, immigration officers, border patrols etc.

(III) Assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable smuggled migrants to ensure access to appropriate services, including access to justice; support for the establishment of standard operating procedures for the referral of victims of trafficking at national and cross-border levels, and the provision of systematic and predictable consular assistance to stranded migrants, including in regard to the issuance of travel documentation and the facilitation of transit and re-entry into the country of origin; mapping of protection risks; establishment and strengthening of existing safe houses for victims, especially women victims of abuses by smugglers and traffickers<sup>11</sup>; diffusion of best practices for the protection of children<sup>12</sup>; increased identification of traffickers and potential smugglers in selected highly dangerous hotspots<sup>13</sup>; supporting government activities to reintegrate trafficked/smuggled people; support to relevant authorities and civil society organisations to provide protection and rehabilitation services, including in the framework of post-return reintegration, notably medical and socio-psychological counselling, training, requalification and assistance.

(IV) Launch of information campaigns and community conversations<sup>14</sup>, targeting communities of origin and transit of migrants, on risk of irregular migration, including trafficking in human beings and alternatives to irregular migration; launch of information campaigns in countries of transit and destination of migrants and displaced persons to debunk myths about refugees and migrants, to highlight their potential positive impact on hosting countries, and to inform about assistance available to migrants and displaced persons; development of a mentorship programme for students<sup>15</sup>; develop a social media strategy, taking into account that they often are a key motivation for irregular migration; community workshops and sports tournaments<sup>16</sup>; training workshops for journalists to promote accurate reporting on migration and in particular on trafficking and smuggling.

The **expected results** are:

(I) National legislation developed in coherence with international standards; accession to the UN Palermo Protocols; national plans and strategies on migration, and in particular against smuggling and trafficking, developed and fully implemented.

(II) Enhanced capacity of beneficiary countries to manage migration effectively, persons in need identified and assisted; increase in number of trafficking and smuggling cases investigated and brought to court; judicial authorities empowered to prosecute; prosecution procedures harmonised; officials trained in rights-respectful management of migrants, including refugees and irregular migrants; data collection improved and information shared; border management offices adequately equipped; reduced corruption amongst officials.

(III) Improved access to justice and to protection facilities for irregular migrants, prospective migrants, and for victims of trafficking; improved protection for women

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<sup>11</sup> An example of a safe house operated by UNHCR is in Kassala state, Sudan.

<sup>12</sup> A 24 hour free-toll hotline is available in Kenya which receives thousands of calls and provides personalised assistance.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of hotspots are: Bossaso and Obock coastal towns in Puntland and Djibouti, Dabaab and Gadaref refugee camps, the South Sudan-Kenya border point, Addis Ababa central market, Kampala slums, Eastleigh Nairobi;

<sup>14</sup> Activities already in place in Ethiopia.

<sup>15</sup> Activities already in place in Kenya.

<sup>16</sup> Activities carried out in Somalia by IOM.

and children (street children, child soldiers, unaccompanied migrants); recourse to methods that provide alternatives to the use of smugglers; improved and new possibilities for returnees and reintegrated persons.

(IV) Greater awareness of the risks associated with irregular migration and the alternative options disseminated throughout state/subnational/local services and media, as well as in civil society and in educational institutions and to the general public.

Indicators and targets will be detailed in the logical framework.

### **3.3 Risks and assumptions**

The **main risks** are:

(I) Training may take place without follow up or in the absence of institutional will to change; lack of incentives to renounce and fight corruption; inadequate resources to guarantee law enforcement. Messages given by governments may fail to be accepted by mid ranking officials, and the needs of the individuals affected are not met.

(II) Governments unwilling or unable to harmonise their migration-related legislation and supporting systems in line with international standards.

(III) Victims of smugglers and traffickers continue being criminalised for irregular immigration, prostitution, petty crimes and not treated as victims.

(IV) Difficulties in reaching important stakeholders or unwillingness to change understanding of smuggling and trafficking for personal beliefs or for vested interests.

(V) Provision of equipment and trainings to sensitive national authorities (such as security services or border management) diverted for repressive aims; criticism by NGOs and civil society for engaging with repressive governments on migration (particularly in Eritrea and Sudan).

The **assumptions** for the success of the project and its implementation include:

(I) Senior officials and staff of border management or other migration-related agencies are willing to undergo training, to learn new methodologies and to put them into practice.

(II) Political support at the highest level for adapting legislation to meet international standards.

(III) Environments are not too dangerous to establish appropriate facilities and services; international and local organisations are willing to participate in a spirit of genuine cooperation; good coordination between the implementer and other agents on the ground.

(IV) Target population has access to radio and other media and is able to read written information sheets.



**Mitigating measures** have been considered, including:

(I) Senior level buy-in, through high level political dialogue (notably through the Khartoum Process and high level dialogues on migration), to ensure acceptance of new methodologies/practices, including willingness to address corruption at border and transit points; follow up to training to ensure acceptance and assimilation; reliance on well-experienced implementing partner with good political relations with the target countries.

(II) Convince IGAD Member States of the added value of a regional approach to migration; use of IGAD and other regional organisations and interlocutors to stress the regional dimension of the programme and creating positive synergies between partners.

(III) Provision of adequate resources for the protection of people in need; coordination of effort by all departments and agencies concerned.

(IV) Multimedia approach, while targeting at the same time students, local communities and community leaders, journalists and authorities at different levels (local, regional, state).

### **3.4 Cross-cutting issues**

Environmental issues particularly in slums and in the biggest refugees camps, gender concerning women vulnerability while smuggled and trafficked, HIV/AIDS related to sexual exploitation, criminal economies (kidnapping for ransoms).

### **3.5 Stakeholders**

Government ministries, judicial sector, police, border management, individuals affected by trafficking and smuggling, communities, civil society, media, and the general public.

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

### **4.1 Financing agreement, if relevant**

Financing agreements are not envisaged.

### **4.2 Indicative operational implementation period**

The implementation period will be 36 months.

### **4.3 Implementation components and modules**

A Delegation Agreement (PAGODA IMDA) will be concluded with an EU Member State Agency or a consortium of Member States Agencies for the implementation of all results and activities of the project. The Member State Agency or the Consortium may mobilise expertise from other Member States Agencies, relevant international and local organisations and private sector operators. The specific criteria for the

selection of the Member States Agencies will be their long standing presence in the partner country or countries, experience in the implementation of similar objectives and relevant administrative and operational capacities.

GIZ is a suitable EU Member States Agency to be involved in the consortium for the implementation of this project: (1) it provides a unique mix of instruments for implementing this project, including the Civil Peace Service; (2) it has long-standing experience with projects in the area of migration, including to IGAD for the development of a regional migration strategy and framework in the Horn of Africa region; (3) it already has country offices in all of the countries covered by the proposed project, except for Eritrea, Somalia (but is present in Somaliland and soon in Puntland as well) and Libya, as well as representations with the relevant regional organisations.

A Steering Committee chaired by the Trust Fund Manager of the Horn of Africa Window, bringing together the Member States Agencies contributing to the realisation of the objectives of the programme, will be created to guide the implementation, monitor progress and ensure that the required technical expertise is mobilised in a timely manner. The Steering Committee for the Khartoum process will be consulted on key strategic and operational decisions and kept informed about progress of implementation. The Technical Working Group created at the Senior Officials Meeting of the Khartoum Process at its meeting in London on 24 November 2015 will be involved in the priority setting and definition of interventions under the programme to ensure that the needs of the partner countries are fully met.

#### 4.4 Indicative budget

Component	Amount in EUR thousands
Policy harmonisation	5,000,000
Capacity Building	25,000,000
Protection	7,000,000
Raise awareness	3,000,000
Monitoring, audit and evaluation	N.A.
Communications and visibility	N.A.
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>

#### 4.5 Evaluation and audit

If necessary, ad hoc audits or expenditure verification assignments could be contracted by the European Commission for one or several contracts or agreements.

Audits and expenditure verification assignments will be carried out in conformity with the risk analysis in the frame of the yearly Audit Plan exercise conducted by the European Commission. The amount allocated for external evaluation and audit purposes should be shown in the budget at section 4.4. Evaluation and audit assignments will be implemented through service contracts, making use of one of the

Commission's dedicated framework contracts or alternatively through the competitive negotiated procedure or the single tender procedure.

#### **4.6 Communication and visibility**

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner countries and entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be entered into the Agreements concluded by the Commission with the entrusted entities and the partner countries.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

A **logical framework** showing targets and indicators is attached.

## APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY REQUIREMENTS

As identified in Sharm el Sheikh proposals (SeS), the *Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Eastern Africa* needs assessment (AMMF), Sudanese Ministry of Interior proposals (SMoI)

COUNTRY	WHERE IDENTIFIED?	ADDRESSED IN BETTER MIGRATION MANAGEMENT?
<b>DJIBOUTI</b>		
Measures to identify, assist and protect people in need	AMMF	Yes
Assistance and training in data collection	AMMF	Yes*
<b>ERITREA</b>		
Capacity building for the judiciary	SeS, AMMF	Yes
Awareness-raising	SeS	Yes
Measures to identify, assist and protect people in need	AMMF	Yes
Assistance to develop or implement human trafficking regulations	AMMF	Yes
<b>ETHIOPIA</b>		
Assistance for victims of trafficking and stranded migrants	SeS	Yes
Awareness raising	SeS	Yes
Capacity building for investigation and prosecution	SeS, AMMF	Yes
Dialogue and information sharing with member states and other partners	SeS	Yes
Development of national migration policy	SeS	Yes
Assistance and training in data collection	AMMF	Yes*
Equipment and training to improve border surveillance	AMMF	Yes
<b>KENYA</b>		
Measures to identify, assist and protect people in need	AMMF	Yes
Assistance in training in data collection		
Awareness raising for political, judicial and societal actors/civil society and the media	AMMF	Yes
Equipment and training to improve border surveillance	AMMF	Yes
Mapping of national support services	AMMF	Not specifically
Help to operationalise Counter-trafficking in Persons Act	AMMF	Yes (in context of obj I)
<b>SOMALIA</b>		
Assistance and training in data collection	AMMF	Yes*
Assistance to develop or implement human trafficking regulations	AMMF	Yes
Awareness raising for civil society and the media	AMMF	Yes
<b>SOUTH SUDAN</b>		
Assistance and training in data collection	AMMF	Yes
Assistance to develop or implement human trafficking regulations	AMMF	Yes
<b>SUDAN</b>		
Assistance to develop or implement comprehensive migration policy, including human trafficking regulations	SMoI	Yes
Training for immigration and other border management officials and border police officers	SMoI	Yes
Equipment and personnel for regional training centre in Khartoum	SMoI	Yes
More female police officers	AMMF	Not ruled out
Improved border infrastructure at 17 crossing points (computers, cameras, scanners, servers, cars, aircraft )	SMoI	In principle yes but aircraft unlikely
2 reception centres in Gadaref and Kassala, with custody rooms	SMoI	In principle could be funded later
Improved migration management capacity and services (friendly entry and exit processing and assistance for victims and vulnerable people)	SMoI	Yes
Awareness raising and promotion of legal migration (government institutions, civil society and the media )	SMoI	Yes

Better communication with neighbouring countries to identify synergies	AMMF	Yes
UGANDA		
Measures to identify, assist and protect people in need	AMMF	Yes
Equipment and training to improve border surveillance	AMMF	Yes

\* May be addressed principally through the *Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Eastern Africa* project

## BETTER MIGRATION MANAGEMENT: Indicative Logical Framework

### OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To improve migration management in the region, and in particular to curb the trafficking and smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
(I) To support governments to develop, enact and eventually implement policies, laws and procedures on migration management, including dealing with trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, in accordance with the relevant international law and principles, and promoting harmonisation and exchange of best practices.	<p>Number of countries with comprehensive national migration strategies drafted or adopted</p> <p>Number of countries with strategies, action plans and appropriate legislation for addressing trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants</p>	<p>Reports from UN, IOM, UNHCR, UNODC</p> <p>Government reports</p> <p>IGAD reports</p>	<p>Political support at the highest level for adapting legislation to meet international standards.</p>
(II) To strengthen the capacity of all institutions and agencies responsible for migration management (such as front-line officials, law enforcement officers, or judicial bodies) by training officials, by improving procedures for investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants; by improving data collection and promoting sharing of information; by supplying government offices and border management posts with essential tools and equipment, and possibly with infrastructure development; by promoting improved	<p>Number of training courses or regional facilities in place</p> <p>Number of immigration officers, border guards and other law enforcement officials trained on migrants' rights, child protection, prevention of sexual violence</p> <p>Number of government offices and border management posts provided with essential tools and equipment</p> <p>Evidence of coordination between institutions and agencies</p>	<p>Reports by programme implementers</p> <p>User surveys</p> <p>Reports by independent monitors</p>	<p>Senior officials and staff of border management or other migration-related agencies are willing to undergo training, to learn new methodologies and to put them into practice.</p>

coordination between different institutions and agencies involved.			
(III) To identify, assist and provide protection for victims of trafficking in human beings and vulnerable smuggled migrants, especially women and children and other vulnerable groups.	<p>Number of cases of traffickers and smugglers prosecuted</p> <p>Number of cases of victims of human trafficking and vulnerable smuggled migrants identified and assisted</p>	<p>Reports from IOM, UNHCR, UNODC</p> <p>Data generated from programmes implemented under the Trust Fund</p> <p>Reports from independent monitors</p>	<p>Environments are not too dangerous to establish appropriate facilities and services</p> <p>International and local organisations are willing to participate in a spirit of genuine cooperation</p>
(IV) To raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration and the benefits of alternative options.	<p>Numbers of irregular migrants</p> <p>Numbers of regular migrants</p>	<p>IOM, UNODC</p> <p>National statistics</p>	<p>Target population has access to radio and other media and is able to read written information sheets.</p>
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>			
(I) national legislation developed in coherence with international standards; accession to the UN Palermo Protocols; national plans and strategies on migration, and in particular against smuggling and trafficking, developed and fully implemented.			
(II) enhanced capacity of beneficiary countries to manage migration effectively, persons in need identified and assisted; increase in number of trafficking and smuggling cases investigated and brought to court; judicial authorities empowered to prosecute; prosecution procedures harmonised; officials trained in rights-respectful management of migrants, including refugees and irregular migrants; data collection improved and information shared; border management offices adequately equipped; reduced corruption amongst officials.			
(III) improved access to justice and to protection facilities for irregular migrants, prospective migrants, and for victims of trafficking; improved protection for women and children (street children, child soldiers, unaccompanied migrants); recourse to methods that provide alternatives to the use of smugglers; improved and new possibilities for returnees and reintegrated persons.			
(IV) greater awareness of the risks associated with irregular migration and the alternative options disseminated throughout state/subnational/local services and media, as well as in civil society and in educational institutions and to the general public.			

## Finance and Border Crossings: Translated text from Erimedrek

*Translated by Zack 18 May 2016*

The flow of Eritreans across borders with Sudan and Ethiopia is increasing. In the five days between 13 and 17 April, 467 people have been caught in the Tsorona area in southern Eritrea, near the border with Ethiopia. The escaping refugees were captured by border guards and other army units near the town of Tsorona.

The captured include children as young as 8 years old, many below 17 years old and a huge number of elderly people. Many of them are suffering due to the absence of medical help at the Ala detention area where they are being held.

Interrogators have beaten and most of the captured and an undisclosed number of people have already died due to injuries sustained during those sessions.

The Ala prison is overflowing with people captured while trying to cross to Ethiopia. The hills in the area are dotted with unmarked graves of people who died as a result of interrogations or other untreated medical problems. Families of the dead at the prison camp are not notified.

The number of dead prisoners has been increasing as a result of the government's extreme handling of people captured trying to cross borders.

(<https://www.erimedrek.com/2016/04/%E1%8A%A3%E1%89%A5-%E1%8B%9E%E1%89%A3-%E1%8C%8B%E1%88%BD-%E1%89%A3%E1%88%AD%E1%8A%AB-%E1%8C%BD%E1%8B%91%E1%89%95-%E1%8B%88%E1%89%B0%E1%88%83%E1%8B%B0%E1%88%AB%E1%8B%8A-%E1%88%B5%E1%88%88%E1%88%8B-2/>)

Hello Professor,

Insiders say the currency change was a response to the lack of cash in circulation and to the inflation due to the fake currency injected by the government itself.

There was about 65 billion Nakfa in circulation in Eritrea, while the Sudanese and the Rashaida owned almost ten times that amount at more than 550 billion in Nakfa. The Eritrean government has accepted the old currency from Sudan but has not given them new currency in exchange.

Prices have seemed to decrease for basic local supplies like vegetables and meat, but the forced decrease in inflation still puts them in the same or worse range than before. This is hurting local farmers who are losing the value of their work to the difference between forced decrease in inflation and the generally unchanged prices of most goods.

Imported goods, transport, water and electricity, telephone bills remain the same. A farmer now sells his latest sheep to buy half an hour worth of international mobile phone calls. In the resulting market imbalance, a cheap Chinese produced pair of jeans which previously cost 30 USD now costs more than 100 USD.

[www.forumeritrea.org](http://www.forumeritrea.org)

Asmara- June 9, 2015



The Eritrean government is injecting fake currency into the market to cover for the shortage of Nakfa in the Eritrean market, sources from the government said. To cover its tracks the government aired a press release on EriTV on the 8th of June of 2016 alleging that foreign powers are injecting fake currency to destabilize the Eritrean economy.

There had been rumors for some months now that the government had been printing fake currency and importing it through Sudan. Banks and businesses are suffering complications as the announcement by the state TV comes after the fake currency has been circulated fully.

The press release, which was only a few seconds long, did not clarify the situation very well to the public.

Most of the fake currency is in 50 and 100 Nakfa notes.

Due to the acute lack of currency in banks, the government hasn't paid government employees salaries and martyrs' parents' allowances for some months now.

(<https://www.erimedrek.com/2016/04/%E1%8D%95%E1%88%AE%E1%8C%8D%E1%88%AB%E1%88%9D-%E1%88%AC%E1%8B%B5%E1%8B%AE-%E1%88%98%E1%8B%B5%E1%88%A8%E1%8A%BD%E1%8D%A1-%E1%88%93%E1%88%99%E1%88%B5-14-%E1%88%9A%E1%8B%AB%E1%8B%9D%E1%8B%AB-2016/>)

Asmara- April 14, 2016

In its first quarterly report, the Ministry of Finance has notified the Office of the President that due to the strict controls on currency since the end of 2015, the banks have not been getting back most of the capital in circulation.

The loss of confidence about the banks has caused the public to store cash privately. Currency circulation has been increasingly slowed over the last three months of 2016. The government had originally declared the change of currency to find a solution to the slow currency circulation that was a result of the loss of confidence because of earlier failed financial policies. The current financial crisis has been compounded by repeated quick fix policies that only brought very short term solutions to the long term problems.

Meanwhile, the PFDJ's monopoly over the market has been increasing through the Red Sea Corporation. The corporation's controlled over the underground currency market has been increasing, as security agents hunt down any remittance agents and imprison recipients. The PFDJ has tried to increase the exchange rate of the USD to the Nakfa to 17 and even 14 Nakfa. At the time of the new currency the exchange rate was 55 Nakfa. The government's decision to lower the exchange rate is not in response to market demand and supply but an attempt to appear in control of the market. The PFDJ is controlling the markets to enable it to control the flow of hard and local currencies.

(<https://www.erimedrek.com/2016/04/%E1%8A%A3%E1%89%A5-%E1%8B%9E%E1%89%A3-%E1%8C%8B%E1%88%BD-%E1%89%A3%E1%88%AD%E1%8A%AB-%E1%8C%BD%E1%8B%91%E1%89%95-%E1%8B%88%E1%89%B0%E1%88%83%E1%8B%B0%E1%88%AB%E1%8B%8A-%E1%88%B5%E1%88%88%E1%88%8B-2/>)