



FIRST RED SEA AFAR DIASPORA CONFERENCE

Towards Political, Social and Economic emancipation of the Red Sea Afar people

Although the Afar people who straddle the Horn African countries of Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia are marginalized in all the three countries, it goes without saying that the Red Sea Afars in Eritrea take the worst burnt of suppression, eviction from ancestral land and deprivation of all social services. Since Italy carved away her first colony in 1890 called Eritrea, by amalgamating nine ethno-linguistic groups and three religious communities just five years after Berlin Conference, viable national statehood of this political entity has never been free from uncertainty till its independence in 1991 from neighboring Ethiopia. The uneasy relations between those ethnic and religious groups still bedevil their peaceful co-existence even today, more than two decades after its independence.

For the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) talking of diversity in Eritrea, leave alone finding ways of managing diversity in a constitutional accommodative arrangement, is a taboo nobody would dare to mention. But, now this "national unity" and nation building process is no more a taboo. Eritrea is no more a country of *Hade Hizbi* (*One People*) and *Hade Libbi* (*One Heart Beat*) as the ruling party in Asmara would like us to believe. However, in its *SAMARA DECLARATION*, the Red Sea Afar people who have understood the danger of this false nation building extended their hands to nations and nationalities of Eritrea and declared their commitment to struggle to establish together with them a democratic ethnic federation based on principles of freedom, Autonomy and Equality for all.

The conference, organized by the Afar Friends in Sweden (Swedish Afar NGO) and ABF (Swedish Workers' Educational Association) in collaboration with Can Go Afar (Canadian Afar humanitarian organization) for the Red Sea Afar Diaspora, plans to host soon in Swedish city of Uppsala. The primary goal of the conference is to discuss the national unity, nation building as well as accommodative constitutional mechanisms in post-Isayas Eritrea in the light of the recent developments not only from the perspective of the Red Sea Afars but from the perspectives of non-Afar other Eritreans as well. Those issues will be deliberated upon by Eritrean and non Eritrean-academics with the Red Sea Afar Diaspora including the legal adviser of the Afar people Prof. Josef E. Magnet, Canada's most respected lawyer on constitutional law and federalism, who, by mandate from the Red Sea Afar people, is the principal author of the *SAMARA DECLARATION*.

The secondary goal of the conference is to share best practices amongst Afar humanitarian NGOs to improve the relief of poverty for all Afar People in the Horn.

And the next day of the conference, the Afar Diaspora will discuss the plight of the Afar refugees in the neighboring countries and means and ways to alleviate their predicament.

It is an honor for us to invite you to this important conference, by your participation you are contributing to a good outcome of the gathering.

If you plan to attend the conference, we want your application no later than 30 November.

If you are in need of accommodation during the conference, tell us so we will book a hostel for you. Tell us also if you're willing to stay in a group room or if you want a private room.

The price for the accommodation is as follows:

Single room: 450 SEK a day

Group room: 350 SEK a day

Register your participation to the following E-mail:
afarsolidarity@yahoo.se

The programme of the conference

Friday 28 December 2012

Conference venue: Drabanten, Bangårdsgatan 13, Uppsala

Moderator: Dr Maknun G. Ashami, PhD

10:00 *Registration and Coffee*

10:45 *Opening session*

Welcome

by Mr. Hamad Issa, Chairman of the Afar Friends in Sweden

11:00 *The Geo-strategic Position of Red Sea Afars-A curse or a Blessing?*

by Yassin M. Yassin, PhD, University of Hamburg

11:40 *The unbearable situation of the Red sea Afar refugees: UNHCR Convention, refugee protection and other Considerations*

by Mr. Warren Creates, Chairman, Can Go Afar

12:10 *Lunch (50 SEK)*

13.00 *The Red Sea Afars' Right to Self-Determination and Eritrean National Identity Construction*

by Professor Josef Magnet, Faculty of law, University of Ottawa

13:30 *The Challenges of finding a Constitutional Accommodation for an ethno-cultural diverse society, the lesson from Ethiopia*

by Yassin M. Yassin, PhD, University of Hamburg

14:00 *Advocating for the Rights and Dignity of the Red Sea Afar In the Horn of Africa*

by Mr. Ahmed Y. Mohamed, Head of RSADO Foreign Mission

14:30 *Federalism and Eritrean National Integration as envisaged by Eritrean Federal Democratic Movement (EFDM)*

by Mr. Nair Fesseha, EFDM

15.00 *Break*

15:30 *Panel discussion: Constitutional framework for unity with diversity in Eritrea*

17.00 *Closing session*

Conclusions

The moderator of the conference will close the conference by presenting a summary of the main aspects, challenges and recommendations.

18.00 *Free time*

19.00 *Conference Dinner (50 SEK)*

The programme of the conference

Saturday 29 December 2012

Conference venue: Drabanten, Bangårdsgatan 13, Uppsala

Moderator: Mr. Shifa Omar, Journalist from the independent Swedish Arabic News Magazine (**Assalam**), with focus on the Horn of Africa

10:00 *The political situation in the Red sea Afar region of Eritrea*

by Mr. Ibrahim Harun Hassan, chairman of RSADO

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11:00 *The plight of forgotten Red Sea Afar refugees in Yemen*

by Mr. Idriss Ali Mahmud, Representative of refugees in Khokha camp

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12:00 *Lunch (50 SEK)*

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13.00 *The dramatic situation of Red sea Afar youth*

By Ahmed Abdu Mohamed, head of the Red sea Afar Youth Association

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14:00 *The situation of Red sea Afar Diaspora*

by Mr. Ismail Mohamed Ismail, Veteran of the Eritrean political struggle

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15:00 *Workshops:*

- 1- The role of Red sea Afar Diaspora to deal with the prevailing situation of Red sea Afar people*
 - 2- Best practices for Afar humanitarian NGOs in the Horn and amongst the Diaspora*
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17:00 Closing session

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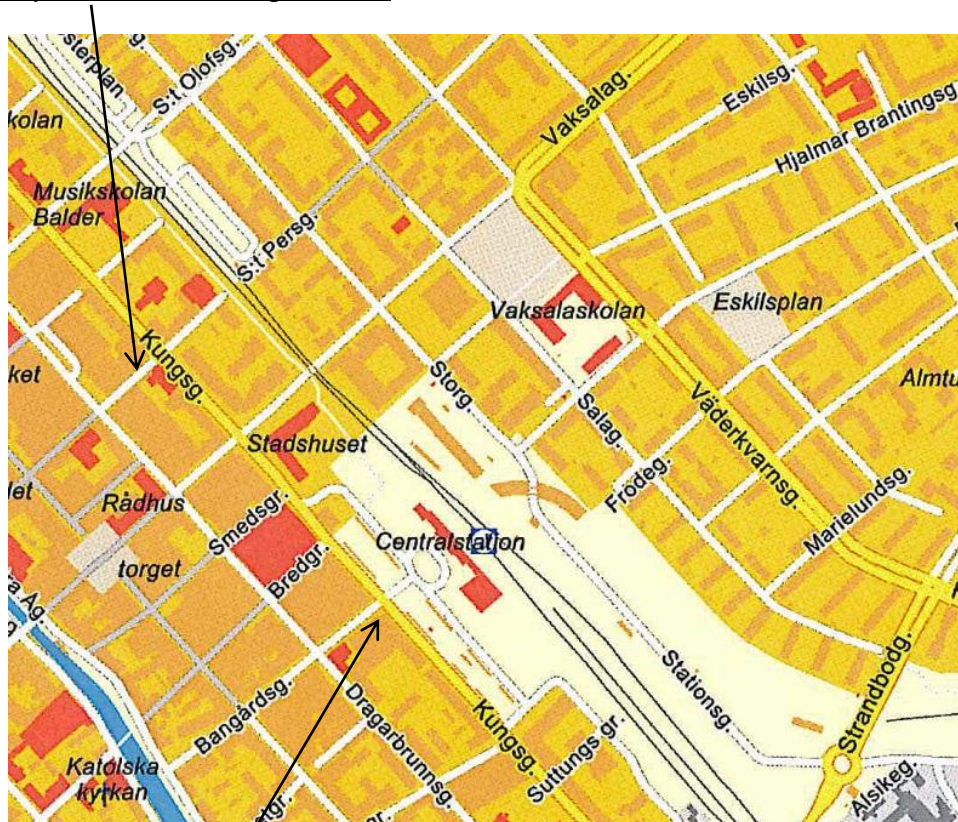
18:00 Free time

20:00 *Afar and Horn of African music event including Dinner. The event will be hosted by the famous Afar artist and singer from Eritrea Ali Mohamed Edou and the Swedish Afar music group Aydaadi Mano*

Entrance fee (200 SEK)

NOTE! ALL REVENUE FROM THIS EVENING WILL BE DONATED TO THE RED SEA AFAR REFUGEES IN NEED

Uppsala cityhostel, S:t Persgatan 16



Drabanten, Bangårdsgatan 13