

Resolutions of the Fourth Red Sea Afar

People's Conference

09 -11 August 2014

Semera Town, Afar Regional State of Ethiopia

Historically, the Eritrean three decades long struggle when the will of the people was ignored not by Ethiopia but also by the international communities mainly the colonialists, Italian and the British guided by the US imperial power. As a result, Eritrea incorporated based confederation and then united, it at all it is unity that the people in general and nations in the Eritrea would enjoy, exercise, and respected their human and democratic rights. It is that led to wedging armed struggle against imperial and the worst the military "Dergue" regime.

Now, what the people had experienced during the two undemocratic and repressive regimes of Ethiopia, it repeated itself since the fall of the Military "Dergue" regime in May 1991 and then Eritrean people's referendum of 1993 confirmed Eritrea as one of the new country in the world as well as in Africa. Sadly, before the people started to feel and taste the air of independence gained through sacrifice of its people, "Sha'bea"¹ / Popular Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ)² reversed the situation and started to exercise abusing the human and democratic rights of its citizens. The dictatorial measure taken by the regime surprised the Eritreans in general and the marginalised nations that have realized insignificant reward as a result of the thirty years of popular struggle wedged.

The Red Sea Afar people started their popular struggle realizing the nature and strategy of the regime determined to wipe out marginalized nations of the state 17 years ago led by the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RSADO).

¹ Arabic word meaning popular

² Popular Front for Democracy and Justice that is framed in 1994 by Eritrea Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) after overthrowing the Military "Dergue" regime

During those almost two decades, RSADO wedged political, economic and armed struggle against the undemocratic and repressive regime that strategically determined to ethnic cleansing of the Red Sea Afar community as well as other marginalized community members and also those committed to oppose the militaristic regime in whatever form and irrespective of the nature and extent of sacrifice it demands.

In the last 17 years of struggle the Red Sea Afar people subjected to genocide, mass massacre, and displacement to neighboring countries namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Middle East Countries, and the Sudan.

Similar to its prior three Red Sea Afar People's Conference, in 09–11 August 2014, Fourth Red Sea Afar People's Conference at Semera town. Bearing in mind the set main and specific objectives, the Conference after thorough democratic discussions on the performance evaluation reports that outlined the existing encouraging environment at regional and international levels as well as challenges faced since the Third People's Conference and other issues delivered by RSADO, leagues, civil associations, religious and community representatives, finally come out with the following historic resolution. It states:

- a) The leaders of the political organization, RSADO Executive Members, Red Sea Afar Youth and Women League, Representatives of Elders Association, representatives of Red Sea Afar Diasporas communities, and representatives of the Red Sea Afar Refugees in Ethiopia and Djibouti asserted that they are committed and determined, than ever before, condemn and oppose it and ready to fight the "Sha'bea" / PPDJ regime's hidden agenda of ethnic cleansing strategy and deter the regime's destructive aim on the natural resources like pasture, livestock, and aquatic resources that are, among others, the main stay of the Red Sea Afar people;*
- b) The people of Red Sea Afar is with rich language and culture, mode of livelihood, habiting along the Red Sea is one of the nations of Eritrea, estimated to have share of 18 percent. The area where they habit covers around 117,000 Sq.km accounting for 1/3th of the total area of the country extending from Rasdumara to Massawa sea shore incorporating, among others, the tourist*

attraction of Dahlak and Halib islands that the Red Sea Afar people are determined to share with others, but sadly denied by the regime;

- c) It should be realized that the Red Sea Afar people don't equally share the rights and benefit, whatever its coverage; the representatives affirm that they have been denied by design rather than by default and as a result the difference prevailed when compared with the highlanders, as appropriate;*
- d) The Red Sea Afar people has been suspicious of the inhuman nature and secretive strategy of the "Sha'bea" / PFDJ regime since it started struggling the Ethiopian repressive regimes and preferred to distance from engaging themselves in active involvement rather focused on leading their livelihoods from their livestock resources (goats, sheep, cattle, camel and fish). Nonetheless, after the 1993's referendum, "Sha'bea" / PFDJ regime surfaced its secretive ethnic cleansing strategy; it started denying their rights of using practically their rich language and culture, and furthermore started to displace the people from its areas where they lead their livelihoods through enhanced forced displacement and undertaking resettlement programme to other people from different ethnic groups. Such dictatorial measure is unique where African people live with respect of their rights and benefits interdependently rather than encouraging people to flee their areas to neighboring countries as refugees. Thus, the representatives have recognized the strategy of the inhuman and dictatorial and sadist measures taken by the regime. The people reaffirms its commitment to fight such draconian strategy more than ever before;*
- e) If peace and democracy wanted to prevail in Eritrea, it requires adhering to the internationally accepted respecting the kernel of human and democracy rights, that is the respect of "self - determination including and up to secession" of nations. This entails incorporating respect of human and democratic rights of nations and ethnic groups in the constitution of the country. Thus, the Red Sea Afar people in any way to imagine and even to expect from the repressive rule of "Sha'bea" / PFDJ regime. Therefore, the Conference participants believe the ultimate outcome of the struggle be establishment a political system that guarantees peace and democracy, requires establishing federal democratic system. Nonetheless, the struggle and sacrifices being made is not to hear as*

“Sha’bea” / PFDJ regime “had Libi, hade hizbi” that means one heart and one country, implying that all the people would benefit from its country. This is contrary of its deeds in the last two decades that experienced benefiting one and displacing marginalized nations or ethnic groups like Red Sea Afar people experienced. It is the responsibility of all nations of the country to coordinate their struggle and condemn the regime and encourage / strengthen popular struggle rather be fighting each other that takes the life of the regime longer. Therefore, it calls all nations be alert and commit themselves strongly than ever before;

- f) It is difficult to envision that a government be established that ensure peace, that guarantee equality and justice by the regime in power in Eritrea. Here, therefore, it basically and urgently requires overthrow of the regime. Therefore, the Red sea Afar people as well as RSADO is committed to coordinate its struggle with people of Eritrea led by the opposition political organizations;*
- g) We call upon the regional and international community should not be silent and remain voiceless on those atrocities conducted against its people that subjected to extraditions, forced displacement, and remaining refugee in other countries;*
- h) We condemn, efforts being made to deny access to basic socio-economic services and believe should not continue. Therefore, parallel to ongoing struggle civil associations should strive hard in soliciting resources from all sources, as appropriate. Moreover, the people justifies establishment of Red Sea Afar Research Center that would entrusted to undertake cultural, historical, economic and natural resources management, etc; and*
- i) Finally, the Red Sea Afar people and RSADO would like take this opportunity to thank the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia reflected its support through Agency of Refugee and Returnee Administration (ARRA), Charities and Societies Agency (CSA), and Afar Regional State, other organizations that accessed education and health services for refugees, as appropriate.*

The participants of the Red Sea Afar People's Conference further recommended the following resolutions:

- 1. Draft and endorse constitution that establish federal system of government that ensure equality, respect of rights and satisfy needs of the different nations of the Eritrea;*
- 2. Respect the rights of nations to self-determination including and up to secession;*
- 3. Equal rights for all nations to use their language. Besides, guarantee nations' rights to use in their offices as official and further to use to educate and train their people;*
- 4. Adores and work to ensure equal justice for all in line with proper crafted agreed upon rule of law of the country;*
- 5. Respect religious equality and adhere non-state intervention on religion;*
- 6. Ensure equal right of owning property and equal share of responsibility among the nations of Eritrea;*
- 7. Guarantee that Red Sea Afar people would enjoy devolved / decentralized rights to run their administration, manage resources, ensure that the people would benefit from its resources and development; and*
- 8. Uphold that the rights of nations be respected based on the international convictions signed, as appropriate.*

People Shall Win!!

Joint effort of people would be Cemented!!