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جبهة التحرير الإرترية
المجلس الثوري

Eritrean Liberation Front
Revolutionary Council

Final Statement of ELF-RC 6th Congress

27 July 2006

Heroic Eritrean people!
Steadfast ELF-RC members!
Supporters and Friends!

The 6th ELF-RC National Congress that convened under the slogan, “We Struggle for Change and Democratic Unity of our People!”, and opened on 23 July 2006 by paying tribute to the fallen hero Seyoum Ogbamichael, who was supposed to open this historic event, wound up its proceedings after five-day long sessions on 27 July 2006.

The number of participants delegated to attend the congress from various parts of the world was 156. Factors that made the congress unique included the participation of youth and women in relatively large numbers; the presence throughout congress deliberations of observers from Eritrean research centers and media outlets, and the attendance at the opening and closing sessions of large number of heads of opposition organizations. It was the first ever Eritrean congress that manifested transparency.

Struggling compatriots!

The congress deeply studied the prevailing domestic, regional and international political situation. Regarding Eritrea, the congress believed that the dictatorial PFDJ regime has subjected the entire population in our country to cruel and bearable suffering. The regime’s grossly faulty domestic and diplomatic policies have created the endlessly instable situation of ‘No war, no peace’. The working force has been forcefully conscripted to military service which in reality has turned out to be modern-day slavery. Part of the affected

youth risked their lives, and many died while trying to cross dangerous deserts and the high seas trying to find a safe refuge. The monopolization by PFDJ of all national resources, the economic and day-to-day life condition of the people has been continuously worsening. The situation of human rights is equally worrisome in Eritrea. The 6th Congress thus called upon all Eritreans to engage themselves in a serious struggle and search for a quick end this extremely sad situation.

At the regional level, the Congress believed that the belligerent PFDJ regime has isolated itself from all neighbors and turned our country to a virtual prison, and cornered the entire population to become its hapless victims in a country that is now counted as one of the few places where the most serious violations of human rights are practiced. Under these circumstances, the 6th Congress recalled the final and binding decision on the Eritrean-Ethiopian border conflict and once again appealed in strong terms for international action to help the two countries to settle the matter urgently so that dangers hanging over our people and country could be averted and avoided.

The 6th Congress studied and adopted various five-year reports of the Revolutionary Council presented at plenary sessions. The Congress also carefully reviewed the split that occurred in the organization in 2003 and believed that it was an occurrence that violated the process of democratic transfer of power enshrined in the programme and a measure that betrayed pledges entered to at the 5th Congress. Therefore, the 6th Congress concluded that the split was an irresponsible measure and that its actors shall be accountable in front of history for their action. On the other hand, the Congress commended the majority RC (leadership) members who stood firm in defending the mandate given to them at the 2001 congress.

Our Steadfast People!

After making an overall review of the situation surrounding Eritrea at many levels, the 6th Congress made timely changes and additions in the political programme and the organizational structure of the ELF-RC. Likewise, the Congress passed political resolutions that state in clear terms the position of our organization towards urgent national issues and lifts upwards to meet the wishes and aspirations of our

members and the entire population. Some of the key Congress decisions and resolutions are the following:

1. Based on study papers finalized during this year, the Congress mandated the new ELF-RC leadership to work towards establishing, within two years, a mass political party that includes other organizations and groups with similar programmes as well as intellectuals and important Eritrean figures who are willing to start jointly drafting an all-inclusive programme that can be adopted at the constituent congress of the future party. The ELF-RC leadership shall establish committees at various locations to sell the idea and mobilize people for the establishment of the proposed all-inclusive party.
2. [Redefining an existing provision], the 6th Congress stated as follows: The state structure shall be decentralized at national, provincial, district and village levels to guarantee a just allocation of power and resources at all levels on the basis of a democratic multi-party system of governance.
3. The post-dictatorship Eritrea shall introduce free market economy that does not betray the interests of the needy sections of the society.
4. Reconfirming that the fact that land belongs to the people, the 6th Congress passed a strong resolution declaring that those Eritreans who lost their land under the present dictatorship shall regain it through just and legal channels.
5. The ELF-RC shall use all possible means of struggle in order to remove the illegitimate dictatorial regime in Eritrea and in its place establish a multi-party democratic system that guarantees respect of human and political rights of the people.
6. The ELF-RC pledges to render all possible services and support to those Eritreans fleeing to exile in order to escape the gross human violations in our country.
7. The 6th Congress believed that the only acceptable manner of struggle to remove the dictatorship in Eritrea is by bringing together all forces in the opposition under a viable umbrella, and reconfirmed ELF-RC's commitment to help mould the Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA) into

a strong and effective force. In regard of creating a strong opposition force, the 6th Congress mandated the new ELF-RC leadership to work towards reaching highest levels of unity with organizations that possess related programmes and visions.

8. The ELF-RC shall initiate and put to action reliable and lasting strategic relations with all neighbors, and not base its policies on short-term interest and sheer tactical measures.

At the historic 6th Congress was announced the establishment of a civil association by the name of Demoselam in honour of the martyr-hero, Seyoum Ogbamichael. The association is founded by the ELF-RC, the Awate Foundation and the family of martyr Seyoum.

The 6th Congress called upon the new leadership to exert all efforts possible to further expose at the international level the gross human rights violations in Eritrea like the collective punishment of parents with heavy fines and imprisonment for the 'escape' of their children; the imprisonment of people without due process of the law; the seizure of land illegally from its rightful owners in order to sell it to persons with money, and myriad of other crimes perpetrated by the regime.

The Congress made a sharp call on the international community to fully grasp the ongoing situation in Eritrea and come urgently in support of our people by putting all pressure possible on the ruling regime.

The 6th Congress paid gratitude to all those political organizations, civil societies, research and media centers and individuals who have respectfully responded to our invitations attended the congress or sent us good wishes for its success.

The Congress also commended civil societies, media outlets and human rights establishments for their role in exposing the dictatorial PFDJ regime.

The Congress saluted the peoples and government of Ethiopia for facilitating the convening of the event in this neighboring country and for the support to our people's struggle for change and

democratization. Likewise, the Congress thanked the people and government of the Sudan for their warm welcome and support to our struggle. Warm welcome was also extended to the countries of the Sanaa Forum for Cooperation for their continued understanding and support to the Eritrean opposition forces to achieve peace and democracy in Eritrea.

Steadfast Members of ELF-RC!

The 6th Congress ended on 27 July 2006 after democratically electing a new leadership of 33 members and 4 reserves who are entrusted with the implementation of the programme and work plans for the coming stage.

We Struggle for Change and Democratic Unity of our People!

Long-live ELF-RC!

Victory to the EDA!

Down with the PFDJ dictatorship!

Glory and Eternal memory to our Martyrs!