



## **Eritrean People's Party**

### **First North America Regional EPP Conference**

**Indianapolis, Indiana, 28-29 March 2009**

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#### **Statement of Conclusions**

The first conference of the Eritrean People's Party (EPP) of North America region, consisting of various branch representatives was held in Indianapolis, Indiana from 28 to 29 March 2009. This first EPP regional conference was concluded successfully under the theme of "Greater transparency, openness on our ideas, and accountability on our party actions and decision-making processes."

The EPP North America conference took place at a time when the brutal repression of the ruling party of the People's Front for Justice and Democracy (PFDJ) continues subjecting Eritrean people to the most inhumane treatment, when PFDJ keeps exposing Eritrean people to the worst hunger and poverty, when PFDJ continues banning the establishment of constitutional and democratic government where the rights and freedoms of Eritreans are denied, and when the PFDJ continues running a country under a one-man dictatorship where there is no rule of law and justice.

Hosted by the Indianapolis, Indiana EPP members, the conference devoted to a lengthy discussion on the plight of the majority of Eritrean younger generation who are subjected to torture, imprisonment, exile, and death under the dictatorship regime of Isayas Afewerki. Denied all political freedoms, Eritrean youths are fleeing the country in thousands by risking their lives across oceans, deserts, and unknown places.

During the two-day long conference, members noted the diplomatic blunder of the dictatorial regime that brought the total isolation of the country from its international community. Instead of building democracy and solving its own domestic crisis, the regime resorted to intervening in the affairs of neighboring countries and regional politics that destabilize the security and peace of the region. The conference also noted the declining public support of the regime in which a number of PFDJ members continue to withdraw their support from the regime.

The conference noted increased role and responsibilities of the Eritrean political and civil society organizations in the ongoing opposition against the dictatorial regime in our country. It noted that both the level of impact in their activities and the strength in their organizational actions had grown significantly, comparing to the preceding years. It believed such development would bring actions that are more effective in opposing the regime of Isayas.

The first EPP North America regional conference extensively discussed the present crisis of our country and the adverse impacts on the lives and wellbeing of Eritrean people. In light of these worsening conditions, the conference resolved to accord high priority to redoubling and intensifying the opposition, with explicit effect to the commitment of concerted actions and well mapped out strategy.

**The conference focused on the following major areas:**

1. The conference reaffirmed to reinforce the principles, policies, and resolutions of Eritrean People's Party that envisioned the removal of the dictatorship regime in our country; and to realize a democratic system of governance that guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of Eritrean people.
2. The conference decided to achieve the Eritrean People's Party National Democratic Strategy by introducing intertwined political and organizational actions, as well as by strengthening the economic resources that contribute to greater success of EPP.
3. The conference reaffirmed the establishment of Youth and Women's departments at the secretariat level in the First & Constituent congress of EPP in July 2008. It further commended EPP for the valuable contribution and particular focus it made towards the Eritrean Youth and Women. The conference resolved to assist youth and women activities at the level of zonal and local by taking necessary measures to improve and accelerate their roles and participation in the ongoing struggle.
4. The conference expressed strong support for the ongoing unity process between the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP) and the Eritrean People's Party (EPP); and underlined the particular obligations of both members to defend and promote the process that must help the final merger of the two political parties. The conference called on members to give their inputs and participate in the process actively. The conference welcomed the discussion with the Eritrean People's Movement (EPM) and emphasized the need to include other organizations that have similar visions and programs in the unity dialogue as this will bring and achieve greater sustainability and security of our country; as well as stronger unity within the Eritrean society.
5. The conference discussed the strategy of peaceful and democratic form of resistance to remove the military dictatorship in our country. In view of the military culture we inherited during the war for independence, as well as the present circumstances that surround our country, the peaceful and democratic path is the right strategy in resisting and bringing down Isayas' dictatorship regime in our country. In this connection, the conference recognized the challenges, difficulties, and misconceptions of the strategy that exists within the Eritrean politics. It underlined that it will require constructive and a scaled up approach towards promoting the understanding of the strategy, including improved public seminars and education. It further stressed that the peaceful and democratic resistance is a necessary condition for a peaceful democratic transition and sustainability in future Eritrea.
6. The conference expressed strong support for the Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA). It reiterated the vital role of EDA is to create a political environment conducive for post PFDJ Eritrea that recognizes the establishment of multiparty system of governance, that reflects the plurality and diversity of Eritrean society and that upholds the supremacy of constitution. Members of the conference agreed to work jointly with EDA members, as well as pledged to strengthen EDA both at regional and local levels.
7. The conference called on governments, NGOs, and international humanitarian organizations to provide medical, food, and material assistance for Eritrean people who are victimized by poverty and hunger, social and political repression under the hands of the current dictatorship regime of Isayas Afeworki. The conference called and urged EU, international development agencies, and governments to stop granting financial and development aid assistance to the regime in Asmara. It believed granting financial and development aid without setting up a transparent and rigorous controlling and accountability mechanisms will enable the regime to strengthen its security and police apparatus, and intensify its gross human rights violations in the country unrestrained.

8. The conference called on Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) to rise up and stand firm against the prevailing political repression, torture, imprisonment, and suffering of Eritrean people, and intensify efforts for democracy and freedom in Eritrea. The conference urged the EDF to be part of the voices of change and source of hope, peace, and security in the country.

Conference Secretariat

28-29 March 2009