

News Release

For Immediate Release
April 2, 2005

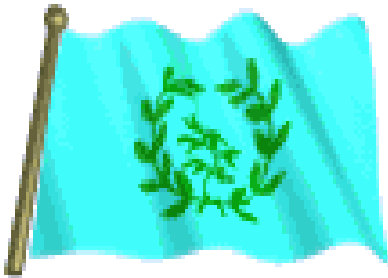
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Seattle Festival Planned to Help Eritrea & Educate Public about Suffering in this African Nation

The Seattle branch of the Eritrean Democratic Association will host an Eritrean Festival to celebrate the culture, food, music, and history of the people of Eritrea—an African nation devastated by a ruthless dictatorship currently in power, as well as famine, displacement, and years of war resulting in a large refugee population. The public, elected officials, and humanitarian organizations from the US and Canada are invited to attend the Festival to learn about Eritrea and what can be done to help its victims of political corruption and human rights violations.

Eritrean Cultural Food & Music Festival



Date: June 25, 200
Time: Public & Guest Reception
Starts at 5:00 P.M.
Location: In Seattle, Central Area
Eagle Fraternal Aerial # 1
6205 Carson Avenue South
Telephone: (206) 762-5214



Eritreans living in the US and Canada will share their personal experiences and their knowledge of the plight of people suffering in their country of origin. The UN, US State Department, Amnesty International, Human Right Watch and many other international agencies have all reported that the people of Eritrea are ruled by a brutal dictator who is perpetrating on its own people mass murders, kidnappings, torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and ethnic and religious persecution, resulting in many refugees. More specifically:

- **A repressive Eritrean government is killing and torturing thousands of its own citizens arbitrarily, in order to remain in power against the wishes of the people.** The government also has imprisoned 11 ministers and many senior government officials, closed down all independent newspapers, and imprisoned all of the 19 editors and journalists who own them. It has jailed many students and other movement leaders for many years without due process. Today, after 5 years into their imprisonment, no one knows whether they are dead or alive.
- **A border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia from 1998 to 2000 killed 120,000**

young people from both countries, and displaced up to 1.5 million or more than one-third of the Eritrean population, causing massive property destruction. The conflict was expected to be solved by an international court ruling in The Hague, to which both countries a priori agreed to abide by its ruling. Yet the problem persists and **there are many credible reports and signs that the border war is about to be reignited. We need help and intervention from the international community to avoid more years of carnage, wasted human life and destruction of livelihood. We call on our community to urge President Bush and members of Congress to intervene and bring both countries to respect their commitments and abide by international law to end the conflict peacefully according to The Eritrean Ethiopian Border Commission ruling .**

- **The Eritrean people are also suffering from severe starvation and famine, caused by drought, war and corrupt government policies.** Today, three-fourths of the Eritrean people live on foreign aid, which US Aid Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and many US humanitarian agencies are part of.
- **We also seek help in the efforts to aid Eritrean Refugees displaced from the previous wars, new refugees escaping the political repression, and youngsters running away from involuntary military conscription which has become a daily scene in countries bordering Eritrea.** The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been helping, but this help has been undermined by politics. **We need help in urging the UNHCR to consider the current dictatorial repression facing the refugees.** The UNHCR is coming up short in helping many of the needy Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan.

For online resources about the compound problems facing the Eritrean people, please investigate the links provided below:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-eri/index>

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/14043>

<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/715/>

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/14857>

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/14474>

<http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=eritre>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41602.htm>

<http://www.unhcr.ch/>

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-03/31/content_2770574.htm

The main goal of the **Eritrean Democratic Association** is to help organize and empower Eritrean and other immigrants and refugees to attain economic and social stability in cities and countries they live in—including development of employment opportunities, job training and translation.

With many catastrophic events affecting people in our former home, we feel morally obliged to make additional efforts to raise the awareness of these problems with our North American and international communities. Our organization also is involved in helping the victims of wars, displaced people, and Eritrean refugees in the Sudan with contributions for food, health-care and education of their children.

Thank you for helping to raise public awareness of our “Eritrean Cultural Food & Music Festival” and the plight of people suffering in Eritrea.

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