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حزب الشعب الارترى (ح ش ا)

ERITREAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

1948-2008

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

At the 60th Anniversary of the UDHR,

Eritreans Recall Their Own 60+ Years of Struggle

For Political and Human Rights That Are Not Yet Achieved!!

10 December 2008

This 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also marks 60+ Years of the struggle of the Eritrean people for their own national, democratic, civil and human rights that have not been consummated in spite of the unyielding and ceaseless struggle that was conducted by the 1 million Eritreans of 1948 who fought colonial rule, and still being conducted by today's nearly 5 million souls who are suffering injustices under a regime made up of their own sons and daughters.

Therefore, on 10 December 2008, we Eritreans, who are opposed to the violators of human rights in Eritrea and elsewhere, stand and struggle side by side with all UN human rights bodies, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders and all other human rights strugglers expressing our commitment to fight for the promotion in Eritrea and elsewhere the lofty ideals proclaimed 60 years ago in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We believe also this is the right occasion to remind the international community of the unbearable abuses of human rights by the dictatorial regime of President Isaias Afewerki in Eritrea, the youngest country in Africa liberated after a 30-year war that ended in 1991. Since that time, the people were betrayed by the erstwhile "liberators" who turned to be abusers of the extreme type of human rights in Eritrea.

- Since 1991, no national elections were held in Eritrea which remains without a constitutional government, without institutions whatsoever save the President and "the Presidential Office". Dissent is a crime in our country where the rule of law is unthinkable.
- Eritreans are subjected to rule by brute force of a powerful security apparatus that reminds us of the most oppressive security agencies of the last century. Innumerable political prisoners languish in several prisons in the country where they are kept

incommunicado, without any right of visit by relatives and the Red Cross. Among them are over 2,000 prisoners of conscience whose sole “crime” is their religious faith.

- *Torture in its extreme forms and different types is the tool for intimidation and subjection of the Eritrean people who are kept hostage of the one-man dictatorship. People are arrested for the simplest of framed up “crimes” and kept in containers under extreme and unbearable temperatures. Death under investigation is a likely fate to every prisoner. And no wonder that the Isaias Afeworki regime is not signatory to the Declaration Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.*
- *Disappearance of dissidents and suspects is a continued occurrence in the country. The situation reminds us of Peter Benenson’s 1961 appeal for amnesty of **Forgotten Prisoners**, an appeal that led to the establishment of Amnesty International. Speaking about forgotten prisoners in Eritrea, for instance, no one knows since April 1992 the whereabouts of Woldemariam Bahlibi and Teklebrahan Gebretsadik (Wedi Bashai), Executive Committee members of the then ELF-Revolutionary Council, kidnapped by agents of the Asmara regime from the Sudan. No one knows the whereabouts and the condition of 11 Eritrean government ministers and scores of press people who were arrested by the regime since September 2001. Thousands of of Eritrean dissidents were arrested and hundreds of them disappeared in this way since 1991. And no wonder that the Isaias Afeworki regime is not signatory to the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance.*
- *The wrong policies of the callous regime led to economic collapse which is threatening the very survival of the population. The forced conscription of well over 300,000 young Eritreans to the army and to other non-productive forced labour caused the economic failure. NGOs and other international humanitarian organizations have little access to help the needy persons in the a country where 65% live under the poverty line. With aggressive attitude to neighbouring countries and the world at large, the Khmer Rouge type of regime with a new brand of Pol Pot at its head is denying the Eritrean people the right to food.*

In short, the Eritrean people are denied all the promises to humanity enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose 60th anniversary is being marked worldwide on this very day.

Therefore, Eritreans, like other peoples suffering under repressive systems, have all the reason to stand and struggle for the promotion of the ideals of the 60-year old document side by side with all UN Human Rights Bodies, Amnesty International and regional and international human rights organizations in this planet.

Members and supporters of
The Eritrean People’s Party