

Change the Policy that Perpetuates Poverty and Shatters our Image

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Eritrean People's Party

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Eritrean culture has many virtues. For example, homicide can be settled through mediation and sometimes through arranging marriage between both the victim's and the offender's family. We have a culture that values giving solace during death and illness. Eritrean people have a culture that values integrity and promotes good behavior and orderliness against those who belittle and demean others. We have a culture that recognizes rule of law at the village and community level where cases are brought to and settled by village elders and judges. Eritrean people value the culture of education in which parents invest money in education of their children even if it means going hungry themselves. In short, Eritrean people can be distinguished as people who cherish peace, justice, rule of law, and the respect of human dignity. In light of this, one would expect the Eritrean government to implement policies that are reflective of and compatible with the culture, needs, interest, values, and ideals of Eritrean people. In other words, policies conceived on basis of Eritrean people's ideals would promote democracy, free movement, flow of tourism and capital investment, encourage trade and commercial enterprises ... etc both at the national and international level. In the end, formulating policies that embrace the nation's ideals would contribute to the growth and prosperity of the people.

However, the policies of the dictatorial regime in Eritrea are opposed to the true identity and ideals of Eritrean people. For example, the foreign and diplomatic policy of the regime, which has everything to do with the Eritrean people's wellbeing, is based on antagonism, hostility, and belligerency; it runs counter to the rule of law, peace, and justice that Eritrean people dearly identify with. The fact is the current policies of the regime do not ascribe to the Eritrean people's ideals, but to the dictatorial regime and its cohorts. As a result of the hostile foreign and diplomatic policies and relations that Isayas government pursues, Eritrea finds itself caught in confrontation with its neighbors; we have persistent starvation and abject poverty in the entire society; and we have thousands of Eritrean youth fleeing the country into exile.

Isayas hardly sees or understands the impact of his misguided policies on Eritrean people. He enjoys ridiculing other nations instead. For example, we heard him before undermining the AU, IGAD, Sena Forum, and Arab League. Later, we heard him consistently scoffing at the western nations. At the end, in retaliation and true to his nature and ineptness, Isayas expelled aid agencies that effectively ended the humanitarian activities in Eritrea, restricted the movement of embassy personnel inside Eritrea, expelled and arrested a number of embassy employees, barred foreign journalists from entering Eritrea, and banned religious institutions from conducting business in Eritrea.

In 1994, Isayas regime had severed its diplomatic ties with Sudan, claiming that the government of Sudan was trying to topple his government and destabilize Eritrea by exporting Islamic ideology. Soon, Isayas regime began its tit-for-tat diplomacy by backing SPLA and other Sudanese opposition forces that was entirely detrimental to the people of Eritrea. Later, Isayas regime reestablished diplomatic ties with Sudan mainly to protect its power. Over the years, Isayas regime pursued policies that can be rightly characterized by ineptness, inconsistencies, hypocrisy, and lack of knowledge and experience of international affairs.

There are people who attribute the regime's diplomatic practices to the one uttered in the diplomatic world, which is "there is no permanent friendship, but permanent interest." True, but whose interest is in question here? The truth is the foreign and diplomatic policies of Isayas regime were never designed to look after the interest and affair of Eritrean people. No coherent policy was ever developed in the country on basis of the country's strategic interest. If there were, it benefited Isayas regime and its cohorts. Yes, there is nothing wrong with showing flexibility and shifting positions in diplomatic world if it benefits your nation. However, if the policy compromises the interest of the people as well as promotes the interest of the regime and its associates, which is always the case in Eritrea, we need to condemn it.

Not only do we condemn the present foreign and diplomatic policies of the Isayas regime but we also must change it. On one hand, its policies have brought unprecedented harm, poverty, and destitution to the Eritrean people; and on the other, it distorted the good image of both our country and our people. The passion, resourcefulness, tradition, creativity and other characteristics that describe us both as people and as a country are lost. We must change this; but we must first change the regime that is responsible for the perpetuation of these policies. On foreign and diplomatic policies, Eritrean People's Party has formulated the following policies:

- Our party's foreign relations with other countries will be based on promoting common interests. Relations with our neighbors play an important role in promoting our common development interests. To this end, we should work jointly together for the promotion of peace and economic growth through respect for each other's national sovereignty and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.
- Our party will use all its abilities in the fight to abolish the hostile and misguided policies of the current system in Eritrea and foster understanding with the people of our neighbors to enhance our common interests. Our relationship with the rest of the world will also serve common interests. We will specially do our best to cooperate with global efforts to control and defeat ignorance, diseases and other programs to help the underprivileged as these programs are tied to our own basic objectives. The misguided policies of the dictatorial regime will be eliminated since these have only isolated the country to the detriment of national interests.
- Our foreign relations are to foster common interests and will be based on mutual respect for each other's national sovereignty.
- Promote and establish closer friendly relations with regional and international organizations whose programs are similar to ours.
- Make efforts to promote cooperation as a means of securing regional peace and security and developing common economic growth.
- Strive to see that all international treaties are honored.
- Our key method of resolving conflicts will be through peaceful and diplomatic means and procedures.
- To make efforts to ensure that trade agreements with other countries are fair and constructive.
- Fight against any form of ethnic discrimination and oppression.
- Provide our support and encouragement for the success of global programs against poverty, diseases and ignorance