

The Beginning of the Journey with the New Party

Department of Information and Culture
Eritrean People's Democratic Party
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The Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) is a new political party that came into existence in December 31 2009 as a result of a merger of three political parties: the Eritrean People's Movement, Eritrean Democratic Party, and the Eritrean People's Party.

The objective of the new party is to remove the politics that operate on basis of ethno-regional and religious stance, dismantle the past histories of EPLF and ELF that breeds divisiveness, and enable Eritrean people to defeat the PFDJ ruling dictatorship and establish a multiparty democratic system of government that fosters, peace, justice, and equality, and promotes and defends human rights and fundamental freedoms in Eritrea.

The Eritrean People's Democratic Party is also committed to establishing a democratic system of government in Eritrea that takes social justice to its heart by developing a decentralized policy that eliminates social and economic disparities between different regions and locals of our country. And it is this conviction that the new party takes land ownership, economic issues, and social justice as a corner stone for realizing every citizen's fundamental right. Echoing on these rights, the new party adopted the following resolution:

The Merger Conference studied the illegal resettlement and eviction policies of the dictatorial regime, and believing that all such policies are harmful to social harmony, peaceful co-existence, and the future prosperity our people; it strongly condemned the ongoing land and resettlement policies of the PFDJ regime. The Conference further reaffirmed that the Eritrean people are the rightful owners of land in the country and that all land seized from the people shall be returned to its rightful owners through legal means in democratic post-PFDJ Eritrea.

The question of land, the regional equalities, and the concern how to achieve economic growth and human development in our regions occupies a center stage in our political platform:

1. The party will concentrate on Provinces lagging behind in their economic development.
2. Ensure that each District develops its own economic development plans consistent with the country's general economic policy.
3. The party will work to promote cooperation and relationships between the national government and the various local governments (regions, districts, and villages) based on the constitution of the nation.
4. Introduce equitable programs that encourage increased educational participation in provinces that are economically less advanced in view of the economic disparities among Eritrean provinces.

The Eritrean People's Democratic Party is also determined to fight against our past history, which holds our future not only hostage but also creates polarization and mistrust in our society. The party considers all our histories and past experiences as a reference rather

than a state of directions for the present and future of our country. We are struggling to rise beyond the conventional politics and dedicate ourselves to the present and future challenges, with a particular focus on the Eritrean younger generation as agents of change in our struggle.

Certainly, the Eritrean People's Democratic Party recognizes that the pre merger politics of the three organizations were not as effective as they should be to transform Eritrean youth and women to become agents of change in the struggle. We also believe the majority of Eritrean youth and women did not rise to the level of embracing the opposition and taking charge of the struggle to achieve their rights and empower themselves. Now, with the formation of the new party, there is an opportunity and a new chapter where both the Eritrean youth and the new party must adapt and cooperate on how to become effective agents of change in the struggle against the PFDJ ruling dictatorship.

The new party is looking for a concerted struggle with the Eritrean youth. We know full the difficulty and suffering Eritrean youth face as refugees in foreign lands on one hand and, the constant abuse and the untold horrible conditions they go through as forced military conscripts at home on the other hand. We also know the root cause for all this is the regime of PFDJ. Hence, ending the PFDJ ruling dictatorship is the only option we have in front of us. To do that, Eritrean youth as well as Eritrean women should increase their participation and involvement in the struggle against the PFDJ regime, including active involvement such as being organized and empowered to effect change and progress in their future.

In the meantime, both the opposition and the Eritrean civic society organizations are being called upon to be advocates of Eritrean youth refugees, to work with concerned refugee authorities and UNHCR to alleviate the suffering of our youth, to see that Eritrean youth enjoy all the refugee rights that are provided in the provisions of the refugee conventions, as well as to advocate for education and training access.

It is also important to express our gratitude to many governments in general and our neighbors in particular that have cooperated and assisted to alleviate the suffering of Eritrean refugees. We also need to voice our strong condemnation against countries that are abusing, forcibly deporting, and detaining Eritrean refugees by breaching the fundamental rights enshrined in the convention on refugee rights. We must urge and call on the international community to protect the rights of Eritrean refugees.

In short, the new political party's vision is to cultivate an empowered youth that can take charge of its future. The point is clear: the Eritrean youth are being taken seriously by the new party as the inheritors of future Eritrea. The new party strongly believes that if there is any force that can bring about change in Eritrea it is the youth. As each previous Eritrean youth generation has had its share in shaping Eritrea, now it is the present generation's turn to shape its future by involving in the current struggle against the PFDJ regime. The present generation is the first generation to ever inherit an independent Eritrea and it has a unique opportunity to make history.

