

New Year and More Eritrean Refugees

Department of Information and Culture
Eritrean People's Democratic Party
January 27, 2010

The ruthless and repressive political system in Eritrea is pushing Eritreans to flee their country in hundreds every month, and to seek political asylum in the neighboring countries of Ethiopia and Sudan. Comprising all walks of life, backgrounds, members of Eritrean Defense Forces, and varied ages, the flight on foot to neighboring countries is exposing Eritreans to unprecedented risks of death by the PFDJ border security forces, disease, robbery, and a host of other life-threatening conditions.

In 2009 both the governments of Sudan and Ethiopia have received more than 30,000 Eritrean refugees, mostly young Eritreans who escaped from the harsh forced military conscription run by the PFDJ regime. These numbers do not include the hundreds of refugees who avoided the refugee camps and entered the major towns of Ethiopia and Sudan in order to facilitate their departures to western countries.

Approximately 21,000 thousand of these refugees are reported to have entered in Shegerab refugee camp, in Eastern Sudan in 2009, including another 1,363 new arrivals who entered Eastern Sudan during the first three weeks of January 2010. Of these new arrivals, 167 are children under the age of 5.

In 2009 the lack of adequate basic services in the refugee camps, mainly shelter, food, water, health care and other humanitarian assistance have exposed Eritrean refugees to a number of communicable diseases and malnutrition – women and children being the most severely affected.

The UNHCR and other agencies have predicted the worst for Eritreans in the year 2010. Given the existing state of affairs of Eritrea, the influx of Eritreans is expected to grow by many folds in 2010. The Eritrean People's Democratic Party is calling on all Eritreans to work in unison on how best to draw the attention of UNHCR and other international humanitarian agencies to the suffering of Eritrean refugees who are currently housed in various refugee camps of Sudan and Ethiopia. Eritrean refugees, having escaped from political and religious persecution in their country, are entitled to basic services, protection, and to other benefits.