

EYC: A Night to Remember

**By
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Indeed it was a night to remember Sunday May 24th in Oakland California. It looked a sea of youth in the Lobby of Washington Hotel at downtown. At some point I felt I was turning the page to the future. May be it was the beginning of a turning point.

Eritrean Youth for Change hosted an Independence Day Celebration in downtown hotel. I didn't know what to expect and I arrived at the hotel a little bit early. There were few people who arrived before me but it didn't take long for the hall to be packed with people. They were overwhelmingly youngsters with the exception of couple of dozen of EDA and other opposition members.

Talented young musicians, Lorenzo, Michael, Kebede, Dawit, and Yosef were invited for the night and played old and new songs that captured the audience. Their music was good for the soul and spirit. They entertained the crowd until the early morning hours. The crowd loved it and the stage was full with dancers the whole night.

One can tell most of the youngsters were recent arrivals. They escaped from the traps of PFDJ's hell camp. They have seen it all from the dictator's repressive life, to the deserts of North Africa, and the jungles of Latin America. They escaped the country defying the dictatorship and in search for peace and bright future.

Eritrean Youth for Change came to life in 2008 by heeding youngsters. Their mission is to implement the rule of law in Eritrea that means the ratified constitution to be implemented. This was their first year hosting an independence celebration day. In short period they did an excellent job in putting together the event. Their ability to rally the youngsters together and make big statement is to be commended. They vow to make it much bigger and better next year.

Two of EYC board members read Independence Day message in English and Tigryna. One point that caught my eye and also that got many loud shouts from the opposition members was when they read the following line, "amongst us there are ex-members of ELF and EPLF. They fought to bring peace and justice but they are banned to see their country and loved ones by the PFDJ government. We need to respect them."

In conclusion, it was good to see such big event of Independence Day with such magnitude in the Bay Area. To witness the overwhelming participation of youth is very encouraging. I believe the future should be governed and owned by the young generation and the future is here.

Let the Youth Take Charge!