

133 Eritrean Asylum Seekers Arrive in Sicily; EPP Urges Italy Not to Return Eritreans to Libya

EPP Department of Information and Culture
24.09.2009

News agencies reported the other day that 133 Eritrean asylum seekers had arrived in southern Italy this week. The new arrivals were reportedly taken to Portopalo, a port in southern Italy.

It is to be recalled that over 70 Eritreans died in the Mediterranean Sea a few weeks ago after several by-passing ships and patrols failed to rescue them.

This summer, the Italian government has returned hundreds of asylum seekers to Libya based on agreements the two sides reached last May. The Eritrean People's Party (EPP) has strongly condemns the return of Eritrean asylum seekers from Italy to Libya which in the past returned many asylum seekers to Eritrea where they faced inhuman treatments.

Below is a recent message that the EPP presented to concerned Italian authorities to stop their inhuman action of handing back to Libya asylum seekers who arrived in Italy.

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حزب الشعب الارترى (ح ش ا)
مكتب الرئيس

ERITREAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (EPP)
Chairman's Office

Date: 12 September 2009

Subject: **Appeal on behalf of Eritrean Asylum Seekers**

H.E. Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister,
The Republic of Italy, Rome

CC. To concerned high organs of the Government of Italy

Your Excellency Prime Minister Berlusconi,

I, the undersigned Chairman of the Eritrean People's Party, an Eritrean opposition organization in exile with many members in Italy and other countries, am addressing to

Mainzer Landstr. 302

60326 Frankfurt, Germany

Tel: +49 69 2424 8583

Tel: Geneva, +41227881386

woldeammar@aol.com

wammar2003@yahoo.com

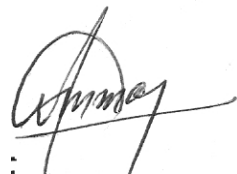
you and other high organs of the Italian Republic this urgent and highly important message on behalf of my party members and many other Eritreans, to urge Italy to reconsider its recent harsh decisions and actions against Eritrean asylum seekers who arrive in Italian waters after a difficult flight across dangerous deserts and high seas. You very well know that they are fleeing from a cruel and oppressive dictatorship in Eritrea.

Sir,

We Eritreans, who were linked to Italy by historical circumstances since 1890, have never dreamt that modern Italy would let down Eritreans at their hour of greatest need for help. What Italy is doing now against Eritrean asylum seekers in close collaboration with the Libyan government of Khadafi is inexcusable historical mistake that we believe the Italian people and their government must correct on time. Libya is not a signatory of any refugee conventions, and no Eritrean asylum seeker should be returned from Italy to Libya to be subjected to the ongoing inhuman treatments in Libyan dungeons, and possible eventual expulsion to Eritrea for worst consequences that are well known to UNHCR, to Amnesty International, to Human Rights Watch and other international and regional humanitarian organizations.

Eritreans are awaiting your most urgent action, at least on humanitarian levels.

Sincerely yours,



:
Woldeyesus Ammar, EPP Chairman

Mainzer Landstr. 302
60326 Frankfurt, Germany
Tel: +49 69 2424 8583
Tel: Geneva, +41227881386

woldeammar@aol.com
wammar2003@yahoo.com