

# Let us salute the Eritrean People's Democratic Party Leadership for its Courageous Nationalist Stand!

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## **Introduction**

Throughout its long history in the struggle for Eritrean emancipation, the Eritrean Liberation Front-Revolutionary Council (ELF-RC) has been identified as an uncompromisingly secular and multiethnic nationalist liberation organisation - one that considers the unity of the Eritrean people and the interests and survival of Eritrea above everything else.

Consequently, due its secular nationalist ideology and progressive world outlook, the organisation and its leadership have been at the receiving end of all kinds of unjust attacks and name callings by its enemies, particularly by reactionary elements from within the organisation itself and by other rival organisations. At times, the ELF-RC has been declared dead and buried by its political enemies, especially so by diehard elements of the EPLF's leadership. However, much to the dismay of its enemies, being an organisation which mirrors Eritrean society and armed with a progressive nationalist and non-confessional ideology, the organisation has survived by the steeled unity and sustained and painstaking struggle of its core elements.

Certainly, after several years of intense internal debates and discussions, it is these stalwart core elements that saw the historical necessity to transform the ELF-RC into an advanced modern political party - one which embraces all Eritreans that share common political values and a vision of the future of our country, irrespective of their past organisational affiliations. Indeed, through arduous struggle, overcoming the historically evolved ELF and EPLF differences/antagonism and by amalgamating with other politically likeminded Eritreans, in February 2008 a new party bearing the name Eritrean People's Party (EPP) was formed.

## **The EPP and its Leadership**

Since its formation, the EPP, just like the ELF-RC, has also been at the receiving end of all kinds of hostilities and unjust attacks by those who do not wish to see the unity of secular-democratic and independent Eritrean forces opposed to the dictatorial PFDJ regime. Obviously, the chieftains of ethnic- and other religious-based organisations have been at the forefront of maligning the EPP and its leadership. Moreover, these vacillating ethno-religious and regionalist chieftains are operating under the direction and financial sponsorship of the TPLF government of Ethiopia. It is evident that these groups are driven by personal ambition and greed for power, rather than by a common vision to construct an alternative democratic order in society or by genuine concern for the welfare of the Eritrean people.

Nevertheless, undeterred by the malicious attacks perpetrated by the backward-looking rightwing groups and their intellectual cadres, the unity of secular-democratic and independent Eritrean forces did not stop halfway and was to forge ahead. Indeed, after a protracted series of brainstorming dialogues and discussions, which started some years back when the ELF-RC was led by the brave nationalist, the late Seyoum Ogbamichael, the EPP and EDP were dissolved in 2010 to form a larger political party called the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP). In other words, EPDP was established on January 1, 2010, through the merger of the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP) and the Eritrean People's Party (EPP) at the unification conference, which was held between 29 and 31 December 2009 in Frankfurt, Germany.

As would be expected, the formation of the EPDP, which is the largest, most cohesive multiethnic and secular political party in Eritrea, was an earth shaking event that created shockwaves and an adrenaline rush within the leadership of all the diehard rightwing Eritrean groups and their sponsor, the TPLF government of Ethiopia.

Shaken by the birth of the EPDP, there was nothing the Ethiopian-supported anti-national Eritrean groups did not say or do to create havoc and division within the party. It is now an open secret that paid Eritrean TPLF agents under various guises were sent to infiltrate and destroy the EPDP. To support this claim, I cite Issayas Asfaha, a member of the Eritrean People's Movement (EPM), who boasted in one meeting organised by the so-called National Commission for Democratic Change (NCDC) in London: "It is not only the EPM that is deserting the EPDP. Very soon you will see the party will be destroyed completely from within due the seeds of division and destruction we have sown and planted within that party." However, despite the malicious and vain attempts of the enemy to destroy the party,

the Eritrean People's Democratic Party and its leadership have re-emerged, renewed in vigour and rigour, and are winning the hearts and minds of the Eritrean people in a way never seen before. What the infiltrators did not know previously, but certainly found out when they slithered into the EPDP, is that the EPDP is a very cohesive political party composed of likeminded and tested Eritrean nationalists. Consequently, these enemy agents felt suffocated inside the party and ran away, without achieving their dirty task. Indeed, the ironclad unity of the EPDP is confirmed in the recent interview made by ex-ambassador Mohamed –Nur Ahmed with Alnada, who expressed his frustration as follows: **እዞም ሰባት እዚኣቶም ብሓደ ንነዊሕ ጊዜ ሰሪሖም ከም ሓደ ዓሌት (ቀቢላ) ተቐይሮም'ዮም። ክፈላለዩ ድማ ብዝኾነ ምኽንያት ከቢድ ኢዩ። ይኹንምበር እዚ ሕጂ ነዚሰልፊ ኣጋጢምዎ ዘሎ ቅልውላውን እቲ ካብ ኩሉ ተነጺሎሞ ዘለዉ ኩነታት ኣብ ውሽጢም ሽግራት ከይፈጠረሎም ኣይተርፍን ኢዩ።**

Today, the EPDP is the only multiethnic and promising nationalist political party to have emerged from the flames of the struggle for democracy and justice, and one that has stood firmly and uncompromisingly in defence of the immediate and long-term interests of the Eritrean people. Indeed, at the moment many former nationalists have openly compromised and betrayed Eritrea and its people, and are now engaged in Ethiopian government sponsored and directed ethnic and religious-based divisive politics, designed to weaken and eventually shatter Eritrean independence. The EPDP is thus the only remaining independent nationalist and democratic political party in the opposition camp to have defied Ethiopian government interference in internal Eritrean affairs and steadfastly defended Eritrean unity and sovereignty.

A shining and solid example to cite here is the EPDP leaders' non-compromising nationalist positions taken in their recent meeting with the Ethiopian prime minister. In that historic face-to-face meeting with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, unlike the servile ethnic and religious chieftains based in Addis Ababa, and in the style of a responsible shadow government ready to assume full governmental responsibilities when the need arises in Eritrea, **the courageous EPDP leaders told him to leave the fate of Eritrea to be determined primarily by Eritreans themselves, to implement the unimplemented final and binding decision regarding the Ethiopian-Eritrean border issue, to vacate Eritrean sovereign territory, and to allow political organisation and the method of struggle to remove the dictatorship to be an independent decision of Eritreans. Last but not least, the EPDP leaders also stated in uncompromising terms that the system**

**of government to be adopted for post-dictatorship in Eritrea would be one that does not compromise the unity of Eritreans and their country.**

It is no wonder therefore that at present all the chieftains without any Eritrean nationalist credentials based in Ethiopia, and the mercenary intellectuals spearheaded by the Awate team - Amanuel Hidrat and Amanuel Iyasu and their likes - are sharpening their knives and directing them at the EPDP and its progressive and non-compromising nationalist leaders.

It is therefore high time and imperative that all progressive Eritrean nationalists and other patriotic democrats fully support and rally behind the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) and struggle in unison against the serious threats coming from sub-nationalist groups that have entered into an unholy military and political alliance with the historical enemies of Eritrea and its people. Likewise, it is very important that EPDP leaders clear all remaining obstacles that stand in the way, to enable all Eritrean nationalists and other democrats to join and work hand-in-glove with the party.

It is true that EPDP leaders have been criticising what they consider to be the serious shortcomings of the EDA. However, the EPDP still maintains membership in the organisation that has made this derisive alliance with the enemies of the Eritrean people. Yes, the EPDP has boycotted the Addis Ababa Waala and declared that the NCDC was ill-timed and illegitimate and that they do not feel bound by its decisions. These measures, however, are not as far-reaching as far as other Eritrean nationalists are concerned. In other words, in order for all Eritrean nationalists and other patriots to rally wholeheartedly behind the EPDP, the party is required urgently to make a courageous decision to withdraw without any further delay from the Ethiopian government-run and -financed EDA leadership, denounce it as a puppet organisation working to promote the Ethiopian government's conspiratorial and dirty plans against Eritrea and its people and pack up and close its offices in Ethiopia once and for all. With this done, I have no doubt whatsoever that all Eritrean patriots inside and outside of the country will begin flowing with their money into the ranks of the EPDP, making it a very strong political party capable of supplanting the dictatorial and anti-democratic PFDJ ruling party in Eritrea.