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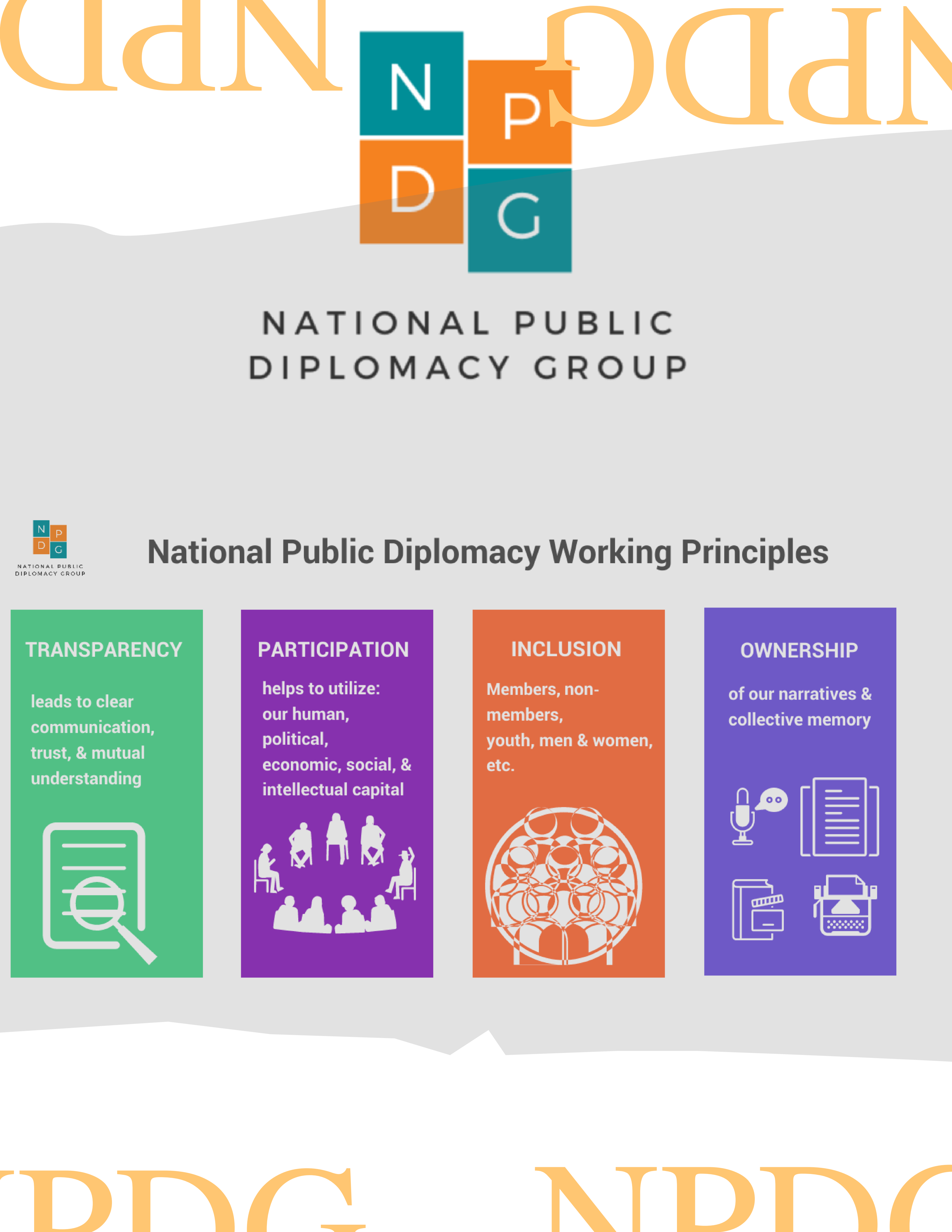


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intellectual capital



INCLUSION

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members,
youth, men & women,
etc.



OWNERSHIP

of our narratives &
collective memory



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Archeology

A New Excavation

An excavation of archaeological heritage was conducted in the area of Meal-Arha in Egri-Mekel, Emini-Haili sub-zone, in collaboration with the Commission of Culture and the Southern Region administration in the summer of 2024.

Dr. Abraham Zerai, an archaeologist at the Commission of Culture and Sports, indicated that the archaeological finding was discovered during the construction of a dam in the area. The discovery included human remains and ceramics. Dr. Abraham also mentioned that additional studies are needed to determine the age of the archaeological findings.

Commending the residents for their initiative in informing the concerned institutions about the findings and their keen interest in preserving ancient heritage, Mr. Gebremicael Gebreselasie, an archaeologist at the Department of Culture and Sports in the region, called on others to do the same if they come across heritage items in their areas.

Egri-Mekel is located 7 km south of the Mendefera-Adi-Quala road.

Source: Shabait.com



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BioDiversity

A Path to Sustainable Ecological Tourism for Eritrea

Lessons Learned from Costa Rica Part II

Mebrak Ghebreweldi

Costa Rica's synergy between ecotourism and forest conservation offers several benefits:

- Job Creation: Ecotourism is a key employment source, particularly in rural areas, enabling locals to benefit from their natural surroundings.
- Revenue Generation: Tourism significantly boosts the economy, funding infrastructure and public services.
- Cultural Exchange: It promotes cultural interaction, with tourists learning about local traditions and customs.

Costa Rica's blend of ecotourism and conservation serves as a model for sustainable tourism, providing lessons for Eritrean communities, environmentalists, and biologists.

Lessons and Inspiration for Eritrea

As readers, we are not merely spectators but active participants in the quest for environmental preservation, both nationally and globally. The call to action is clear: keeping our local space and environment clean is the responsibility of each and everyone. Support sustainable practices, embrace responsible ecotourism, and advocate for policies that prioritise the protection of our natural world. By learning from Costa Rica's experience and applying these lessons, we can contribute to a cleaner, brighter, greener future for our nation Eritrea and for all.

What can Eritreans learn from Costa Rica and other countries that have implemented successful ecological sustainable systems? Eritrea, rich in history and culture, cleanness, and fortunate to have a friendly atmosphere, can apply these lessons to its own context.

Costa Rica's Transformation

Costa Rica's journey from the dark days of deforestation to becoming a global leader in environmental conservation demonstrates the power of commitment, innovation, and community involvement. This small nation has shown that with the right policies and a national shared vision, Eritreans can reverse environmental degradation and secure a sustainable future for our country and the planet.

Eritrea's Context

Eritrea, located in northeastern Africa with over 1,300 kilometres of Red Sea coastline, has a history marked by centuries of colonisation and struggle for independence. Unlike many African countries, the Ottoman Empire occupied Eritrea's Red Sea coast from 1516, followed by Italian colonial rule from 1889, British administration after WWII, and Ethiopian occupation from 1960-1991. Eritrea endured centuries of foreign domination, segregation, contempt, and attempts at divide and rule during the UK military administration from 1940-1952. However, its people have persevered, showing resilience against all odds, culminating in a hard-fought victory for independence in 1991. Due to the prolonged war for independence and border conflicts with Ethiopia, Eritrea has started taking modest steps to develop Ecological Sustainable Systems (SES).

Starting afresh offers massive opportunities to learn from other countries that have successfully implemented sectorial development while avoiding disastrous, unsustainable, and short-lived developments. Today, Eritrea is on the right path toward SES development, with vast potential for economic growth, particularly in history, culture, biodiversity, greening the landscapes, renewable energy, and the sustainable tourism sector.

Eritrea's abundant biodiversity includes cloud and rain mountain forests, mangroves on the Red Sea shores, over 360 islands, and various species of birds, African elephants, ostriches, several species of monkeys, wild asses, tigers, cheetahs, and rare species of deer. Eritrea can also become a haven for environmentally friendly divers and fishers.

Costa Rica's Insights for Eritrea: Conservation as a National Priority

Following a catastrophic destruction of forests and biodiversity, Costa Rica's proactive approach to conservation—including declaring its extensive network of national parks as protected areas—contributed to its status as a premier eco-tourism destination. Eritrea had and is taking similar steps by:

- Implementing ecological sustainable government policies.
- Protecting the Northern Red Sea mountains.
- Conserving Mount Monguda.
- Planting new trees during the rainy seasons.
- Promoting awareness and education in conservation.
- Conserving and protecting the entire Red Sea coast (2006).
- Maintaining the national martyr's park on the outskirts of Asmara.
- Prohibiting the use of plastic bags since 2005 (Proclamation No. 165/2005).

These conservation initiatives can serve as testing grounds for further SES development in conservation and eco-tourism.

Water Conservation

Unlike Costa Rica, which is near the equator and receives ample rain, Eritrea must conserve every drop of rainwater. Building 950 water dams across the country has been one of the biggest successes in the last 10-20 years, securing national food and drinking water supply. These water resources can support SES development with a systemic approach, encouraging modest job creation and offering monetary rewards.

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Infrastructure Development

Enhancing existing transportation systems, installing a sustainable and consistent renewable energy supply, and developing human capital are fundamental infrastructure developments for Eritrea. The four pillars (water, renewable energy, transportation, and human capital) must work seamlessly for SES development to succeed. Recognizing these infrastructures as priorities for sustainable ecological development is essential, and this understanding should be shared through community organisations, schools, media, and educational institutions. In addition to diverse skilled human resources, financial investment and scientific knowledge are necessary. The people and government of Eritrea have been working to implement these initiatives despite challenges. In my opinion, in the last 33 years, Eritrea has prioritized food and water security, community, and the safety of the nation. Moving forward, alternative energy, adequate roads, sufficient water supply, and committed human capital are prerequisites for sustainable, consistent, and long-term national development.

Community Involvement

Costa Rica's success in conservation is partly due to the active involvement of local communities. By engaging communities in sustainable eco-tourism initiatives, Eritrea is also building conservation efforts through community engagement and inclusivity, benefiting both the environment and local communities.

During my visit to Costa Rica, I had many conversations with community members such as van and small boat drivers, waitresses, tour operators, environmentalists, and accommodation providers. For them, keeping their space and environment clean and green, and looking after their habitat, is a matter of survival. Education and health are free because everyone contributes. They love their country, are proud of who they are, and are polite and hard workers. "Pura Vida" (pure life) is their national slogan. I found Costa Rican people at peace with themselves and others. I learned a lot from ordinary people about what it means to be content and at peace with oneself and the environment. Of the more than 20 people I spoke with, only two had been abroad. A male hotel manager had visited Germany for a conference, and a female hospitality van driver said, "I was a migrant in Canada for six years, working day and night but couldn't save enough money to live like a normal person who works eight hours a day, so I decided to come back and work hard for my own country among my own family and people. It feels good." Everyone I spoke with said they had never left the country because they didn't need to. Perhaps my conversation was with those in remote areas involved in eco-tourism and not in big urban cities. A few people said, "We have problems with drugs, but only in the big cities."

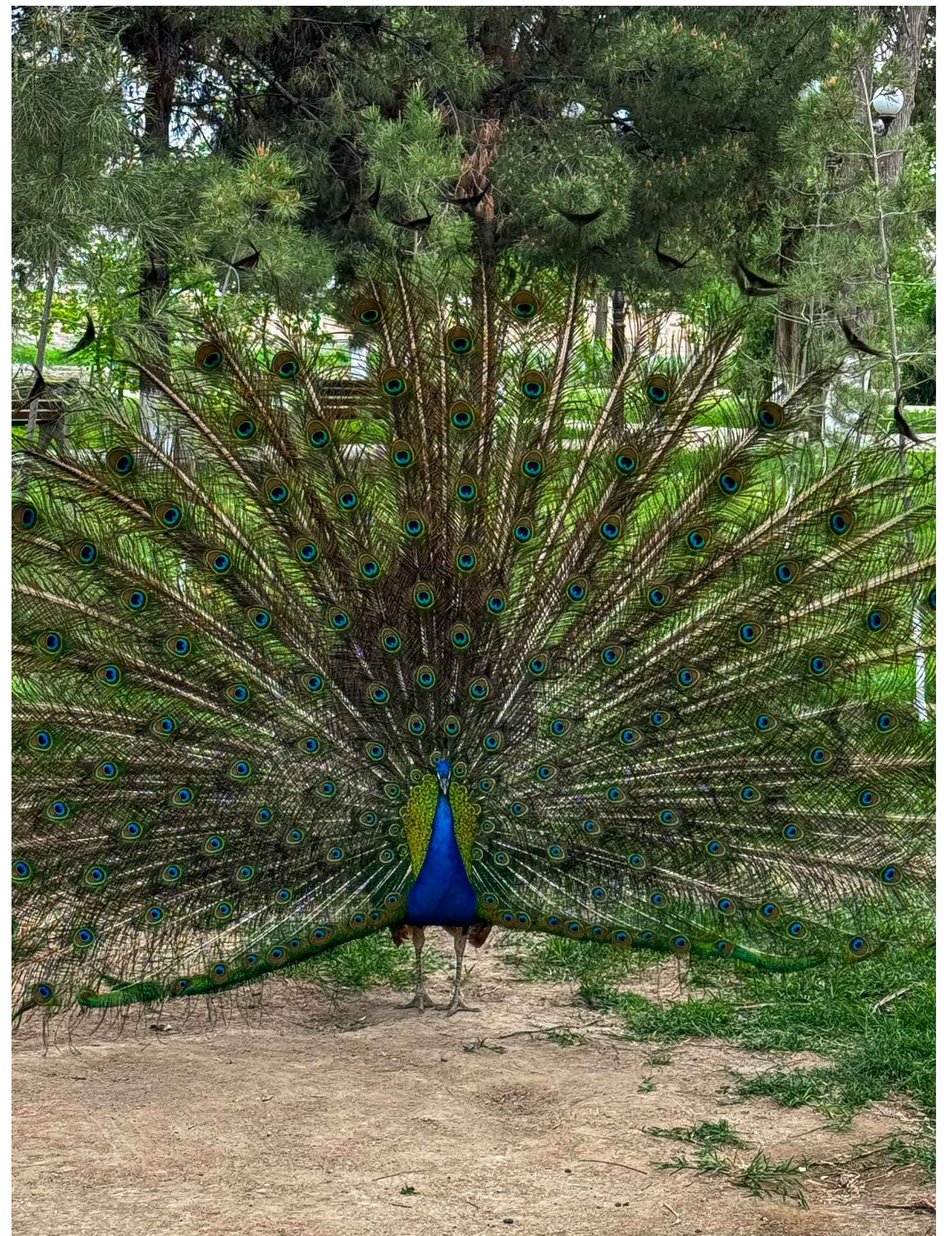
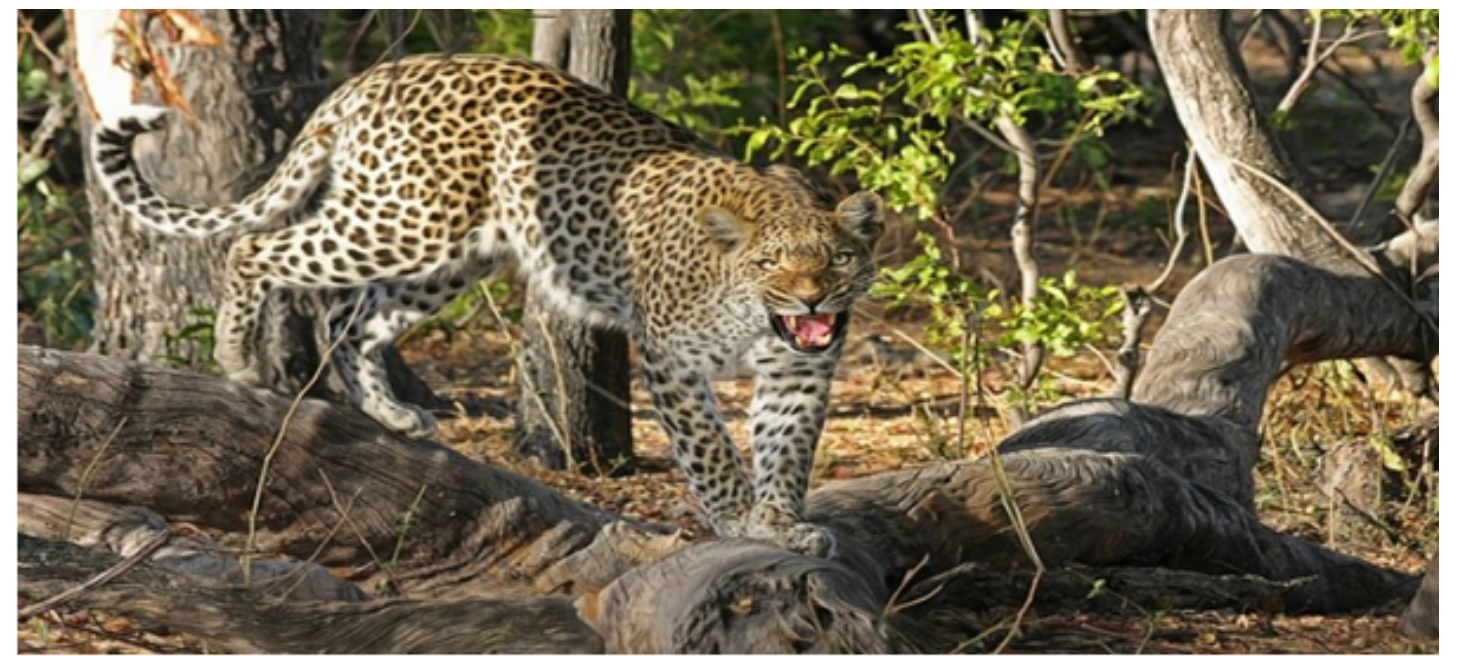
BioDiversity

Investment in Infrastructure

Costa Rica has invested in eco-friendly infrastructure, including renewable energy, eco-lodges, nature reserves, and sustainable transportation options, to accommodate eco-conscious travellers. The people of Costa Rica respect their environment. No one throws plastic bottles, rubbish, or bags. At the national park entrances, everyone is checked to ensure they have no plastic or other environmentally unfriendly items. Their seaside beaches are pristine, with no plastic or any form of trash along miles of coastline and forests.

Investment in community awareness is critical. Eritrea's power lies in its people, and if we can engage everyone—from children to adults—to contribute, by ensuring awareness that starts from elementary schools, colleges, universities of natural and social sciences, and marine and environmental psychology departments, it would be beneficial.

Many of those I engaged with in Costa Rica also said that "having national world-class biologists and environmentalists working in collaboration with international universities and neighbouring countries has helped them acquire new knowledge."



Culture

The Honor in Death

By Rahel Musa

Our family recently faced the heartbreaking loss of my mother. While the death of a loved one is something many people experience, each person's journey through it is uniquely their own. Reflecting on the past few months, as we navigated the deeply meaningful process of laying my mother to rest, I've had a lot on my mind.

My mother lived in Kenya, but her final resting place was in Eritrea—a journey that was far from simple. Coordinating transportation, even in the best of times, can be tricky. At the time of her death, Nairobi was experiencing civil demonstrations, and it was peak tourism time in Eritrea, leading to numerous flight delays and cancellations. On top of that, transporting a body is far more expensive than booking a plane seat. Several of my siblings had to fly in from North America, adding another layer of planning and urgency. In the midst of what felt like a whirlwind of chaos, I found myself contemplating whether we should bury my mother in Nairobi instead.

When I first suggested this idea, I was met with stunned silence. One family member responded with the saying, “ሰብ ኣብ ዕጉብቱ ዝተቐበረሉ እዩ ዝቐበር,” which translates to “a person is buried where their umbilical cord is buried.” Though I'd heard this phrase throughout my life, it was only at that moment that its more profound significance truly struck me. The practice of burying an umbilical cord after birth is both literal and symbolic, representing a connection to the land and our ancestors.

Honoring our ancestors is a cornerstone of our culture. Their sayings, lessons, and sacrifices provide the strength and resilience we need to preserve our cultural heritage. Our ancestors' wisdom warns that losing our cultural roots is far more perilous than losing land or material possessions. By ensuring that our loved ones are buried in their homeland, we help preserve the continuity of their legacy and the connection between the living and the spirits of those who came before us.

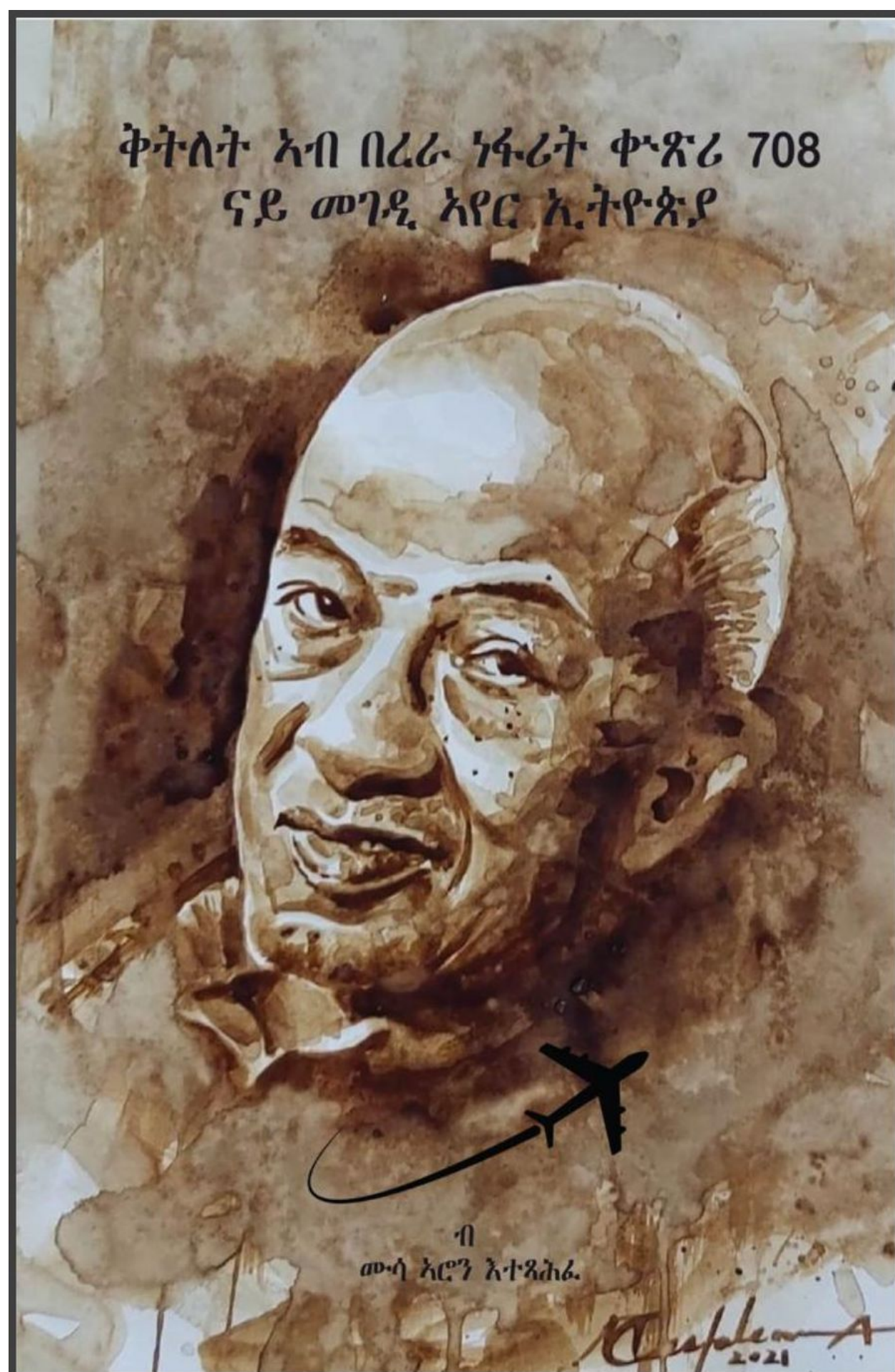
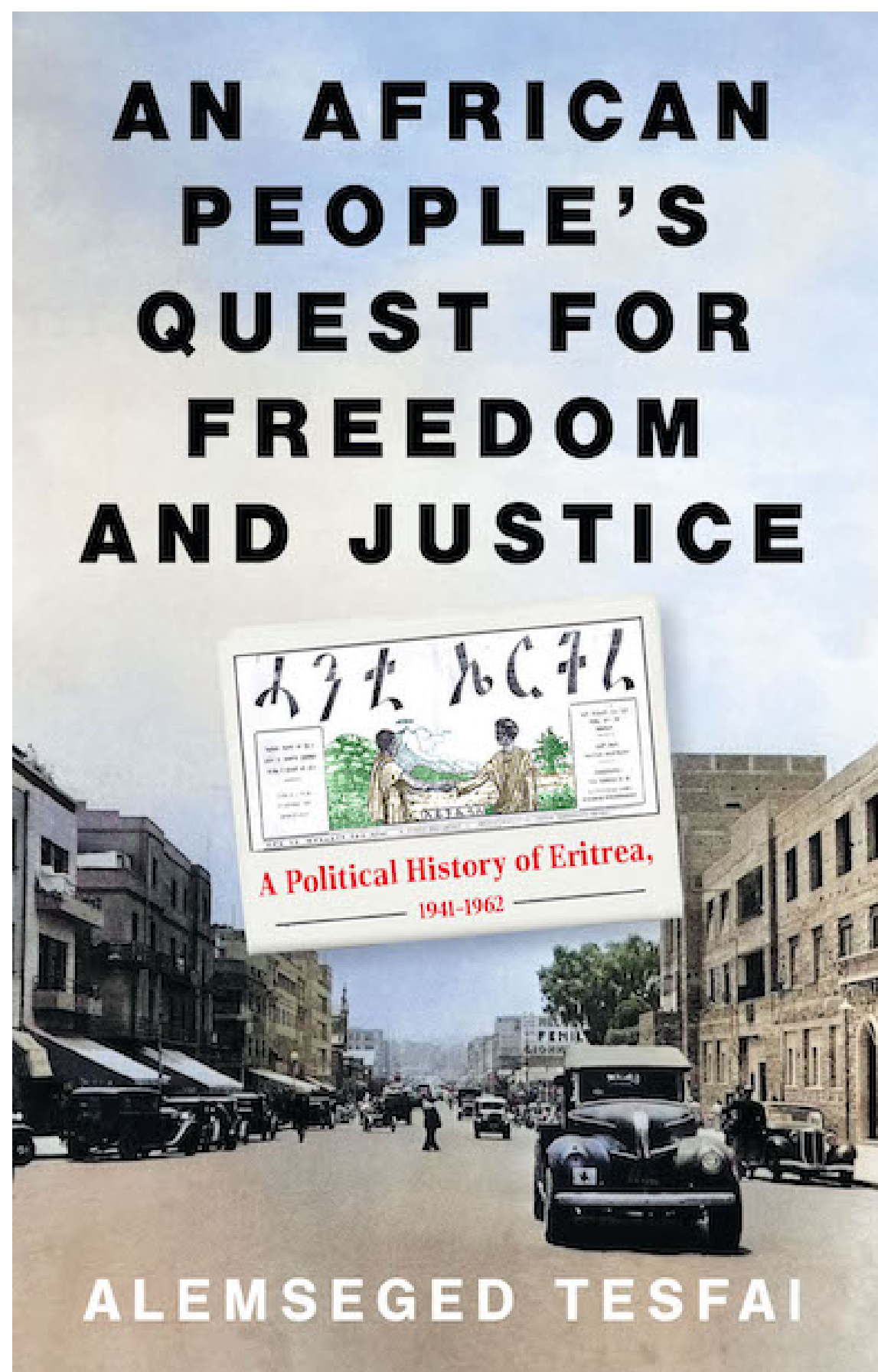
Even though our ancestors aren't physically present, many believe they are still among us in spirit. They're like unseen guardians, guiding and watching over us. When I suggested burying my mother outside her homeland, I was reminded of another saying: “ኣዕጽዖቶም ከይረገመኪ” which means “You don't want the bones of our ancestors to curse you.”

This saying isn't meant to invoke fear but to emphasize the importance of not disrespecting our ancestors. It's a reminder that our actions carry weight and that honoring their wishes and traditions is a way of showing respect and ensuring that we remain connected to the wisdom of those who came before us. By adhering to these practices, we reinforce our ties to our heritage and keep the spirit of our ancestors alive in our daily lives.

In our culture, written wills aren't the norm. Instead, through conversations and traditions, people often express their wishes about where and how they want to be buried. Religious and cultural practices play a huge role in shaping these decisions. My mother had frequently expressed her desire to be buried in our homeland, a wish that wasn't just about a physical location but about a deeper connection to our roots. She wanted to join our ancestors and remain part of the stories and traditions that guide our family and community. Her wish reflected a desire to be woven into the fabric of our cultural heritage, to continue in the narratives that bind us together. In honoring her request, we're not just following a custom; we're ensuring that her spirit stays intertwined with the values and legacies that have shaped us.

“ሰብ ኣብ ዕጉብቱ ዝተቐበረሉ እዩ ዝቐበር,” which translates to “a person is buried where their umbilical cord is buried.” Though I'd heard this phrase throughout my life, it was only at that moment that its more profound significance truly struck me. The practice of burying an umbilical cord after birth is both literal and symbolic, representing a connection to the land and our ancestors.

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**Lingering
Shadows of
Contiguous Ties
Part 1**

**By Prof.Asgede
Hagos**

I. Introduction

Even after the chains of colonialism are broken and the quest for statehood is realized, the colonizer may continue to pose challenges to the sovereignty of the victim nation—especially if the two have contiguous ties or are located in the same neighborhood. This proposition is exemplified by the experiences of Eritrea and Namibia, two former colonies whose long journeys toward freedom serve as poignant reminders that the battle against external forces—especially those in geographic proximity—does not end with the attainment of independence.

For example, when Namibia, a former German colony, finally achieved independence from South Africa on March 12, 1990, its principal seaport, Walvis Bay, and the Penguin Islands remained occupied by its expansionist neighbor South Africa. Pretoria “also claimed that the boundary with Namibia was not the middle but the Northern bank of the Orange River.”¹ It took four more years before the port and other sovereign parts of Namibia were returned to their rightful owners, completing the formal decolonization of this southwestern African nation. This was a culmination of strategies Pretoria pursued during its decades-long occupation of Namibia to bolster its chances of retaining the enclave in case the former German colony achieves independence.

Ethiopia was also relentless in its attempt to separate Assab from Eritrea during its long occupation of the Red Sea territory by either merging it with a nearby Ethiopian administrative district or managing it separately to establish a *fait accompli* in case of Eritrean independence. As soon as it set foot in the former Italian and British colony under a bogus federation in 1953, Ethiopia tried to detach the port from the Red Sea territory and incorporate it into the neighboring Ethiopian province of Wollo or administer it as an autonomous unit mostly run by military officials. However, when the day of independence arrived in May 1991, the policy failed because Eritrean nationalists were able to successfully secure every inch of the territory, including its ports, bringing closure to 30 years of a protracted bloody armed struggle.

However, a mere five years after Eritrea’s formal independence in 1993, following a United Nations-supervised referendum in which 99.8 percent of Eritreans voted for independence, Ethiopia made an attempt to re-occupy sovereign parts of the new country; although the conflict looked primarily like a border dispute, with Badme as its focal point, Ethiopia’s unstated objective was to capture Assab. Jacquin-Berdal and Plaut say, Assab “was a strategic target [of the Border War] for Ethiopia”² and that “politicians in Ethiopia had demanded Assab be captured.”³

Furthermore, five years following the resolution of that border dispute in 2018 when the then new Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed signed a peace agreement with Eritrea—an achievement that won him a Nobel Peace Prize—the same prime minister issued what essentially was a declaration of war to secure sea access for his landlocked country. This rapid shift—occurring in what seemed historically like a blink of a moment—took place after a few years of the two governments working together to ensure regional peace.

This post-independence prime land grabbing behavior was part of a pattern both imperial Ethiopia and apartheid South Africa practiced during their prolonged occupation of Eritrea and Namibia respectively—exploiting their contiguous ties to these former European colonies. This paper explores how or if the lingering shadows of contiguous ties with expansionist neighbors might lead to enduring conflicts long after the shackles of colonialism are shattered unless and until the underlying source of the aggression is removed or fundamentally transformed. By examining these cases, we gain insight into the dynamics of contiguous expansionism and the challenges it poses to victim nations’ sovereignty as well as regional stability.

II. The Historical Context

The long-anticipated decolonization of the two former African colonies of Eritrea and Namibia occurred at the close of the Cold War era, albeit one year apart, in 1991 and 1990, respectively. These momentous events marked the end of over a century of resistance against various expansionists, from far and near, spanning oceans and regional boundaries. Eritrea and Namibia were among the last former European colonies to undergo post-World War II decolonization, facing considerable delays and denials for more than three decades after what is known as the ‘Year of Africa,’ 1960, celebrating the time when 17 former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa gained independence, while Eritreans and Namibians were forced to get organized to prepare for a long fight to regain their rights to determine their futures.

The hindrance was primarily attributed to their expansionist neighbors—imperial Ethiopia and apartheid South Africa—whose adept manipulation of Cold War politics ensured Western, particularly Washington’s superpower patronage to achieve their respective annexationist objectives. For example, as we will see below, these were the only African nations involved militarily in the U.S.-led anti-communist Korean War, with Ethiopia being the sole non-NATO African nation in that ideologically driven crusade against communism. Theodore Vestal, in his book on the last Ethiopian emperor, says, “To show Ethiopia’s appreciation for the United States’ support on the Eritrean and Ogaden issues in 1950, Emperor Haile Selassie sent a contingent of 1, 200 troops from the Imperial Bodyguard to join” the Korean War. Adding, he says, “An American ship transported the troops to Korea early in 1951,” and noted that “Ethiopia was the one non-NATO nation in Africa to contribute a contingent” to that distant Asian conflict⁴. In the case of Pretoria, Borstelmann says the war in the Korean Peninsula greatly helped it continue its control of South West Africa [Namibia] and keep practicing its abhorrent policy of apartheid for more than forty years, until the very end of the Cold War. The Korean war, he adds, “welded the common interests of South Africa and the United States into a solid alliance.”⁵

¹ Laurent C. W. Kaela, *The Question of Namibia*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1996, p. 134:

² Dominique Jacquin-Berdal and Martin Plaut (editors), *Unfinished Business: Ethiopia and Eritrea at War*, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2005, p.154t

³ *Ibid*, p. 81.

⁴ Theodore M. Vestal, *The Lion of Judah in the New World: Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and the Shaping of Americans’ Attitude Toward Africa*, Praeger: Santa Barbara, CA, 2011, p. 40.

⁵ Thomas Borstelmann. *Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle*, (New York: Oxford University Press.1993), 139.

Lingering Shadow of Contiguous Ties

So, at the onset of the post-World War II era, while the rest of the world embarked on decolonization, compelling former European empires—such as the British, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Belgian, and others—to relinquish their colonial possessions, the Ethiopian empire and apartheid South Africa initiated well-financed diplomatic efforts, shrouded in thinly veiled schemes, to essentially recolonize these two former European colonies.

In a major shift from the evolving post-1945 consensus on decolonization during the early post-World War II years, Washington began to see the world principally through the prism of communism and looked at the USSR as an existential threat—a shift which also complicated the disposition of the former colonies such as Eritrea and Namibia. As a result, American policymakers viewed the decolonization of former colonies that were going through the then newly established United Nations system at the time through this new lens to protect the global order Washington created for the post-war world. As a result, they saw the disposition of Eritrea and Namibia from this point of view.

The Eritrean case was initially part of the disposition of the former Italian colonies—the other being Libya and Somalia. However, due to shifting U.S. policy that favored Ethiopia, Eritrea was later separated from the other former Italian colonies and was eventually denied the right to determine its future. In the case of Namibia, the United Nations was trying hard to terminate South Africa's mandate over the former German colony given by the then defunct League of Nations to place it in the UN Trusteeship system to prepare it for independence after a ten-year transitional period. Pretoria refused to hand over the territory because it was determined to incorporate it into South Africa as its fifth province.

The two expansionist nations quickly realized the way to achieve their respective goals was to secure the support of then increasingly dominant superpower, the United States. Both were adept at leveraging every opportunity that came along that was of interest to Washington.

Washington's unconditional support for the Ethiopia emperor and its persistent and unjustified opposition to Eritrea's self-determination at the dawn of the era of decolonization, also had to do with the "Israeli security agreement," which saw Ethiopia as a reliable partner in the fight against forces in the Middle East that threatened Israeli security. Such a policy naturally mischaracterized a potential Eritrean independence. Lefebvre says Israel "envisioned the Red Sea being converted into an Arab Lake in the event of an Eritrean victory" in the war to end Ethiopian occupation of the Red Sea territory.⁶ US arguments against Eritrea's independence echoed these baseless sentiments as well as those pushed by the Ethiopian emperor and his representatives—arguments which history has now proven to be groundless. This was also a reflection of the one-sided discussion in Washington on the Eritrean case, with no input at all from the Eritrean people or their representatives.

Erupting in the middle of this process of disposing the former colonies was the Korean War considered as the first major threat to the then emerging world order established by the United States and was preparing to protect it from the communist camp led by the USSR and its allies. This development gave both Ethiopia and South Africa a critical opportunity to show their support to the U.S.-led effort to stop the communist forces in the Korean Peninsula to secure Washington's support in their efforts to annex their neighbors Eritrea and Namibia, respectively. So, they became the only two African nations to militarily participate in the Korean conflict.

As a result, both Eritrea and Namibia became collateral victims of the distant Asian war exposing them for further victimization throughout the Cold War decades and sowing the fragile Horn and the southern regions with more seeds of more conflicts whose adverse effect on the continent are still being felt today. Even after enduring challenging struggles to liberate themselves from various expansionist forces, these two nations faced or have been facing difficult early post-independence transitions. Despite suffering decisive defeats—militarily in Eritrea's case and diplomatically in Namibia's—their last colonizers, like other expansionists in the post-colonial era, have tried to leverage their contiguous ties to regain control. They have attempted, or are attempting, to disrupt the post-independence progress of these former colonies by leaving unresolved issues or devising new schemes to potentially reverse their hard-won independence.

III. The Perils of Geography

The Eritrean and Namibian cases represent distinct scenarios occurring in disparate regions of the continent. However, a critical linkage exists in the geographically contiguous relationship between these former colonies and their annexionist neighbors. Another post-World War II example of this phenomenon in Africa, in addition to Ethiopia and South Africa, is imperial Morocco, which has persistently sought the past 50 years to forcibly annex its neighbor Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony.

When expansionist aggression emanates from neighboring borders rather than distant seas, ruling elites typically strive to retain control over their colonial possessions⁷, even after a comprehensive defeat on the battlefield, as in the case of Ethiopia, or mostly on the global anti-apartheid forums of diplomacy, as in the South African case. Colonial expansion across oceans involves the acquisition and colonization of territories separated by vast bodies of water, such as oceans or seas. Nations engaged in this form of aggression include Italy, Britain, Spain, France, and others from that part of the world.

Conversely, non-transatlantic or contiguous colonial expansion transpires when a nation extends its territory by annexing or colonizing adjacent or neighboring lands without the need to traverse significant bodies of water. Richard Pipes cites cases of how non-transatlantic empires and empire builders fail to draw "a clear distinction between themselves as a nation and as an imperial power.... partly because their colonial possession lay not overseas but" across land next door. "The French in North Africa, the Germans in the Cameroons, or the Japanese in Korea had no doubt about their identity," Pipes added, "They crossed bodies of water."

6. Jeffrey Lefebvre, *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953-1991*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1991, p.162.

7. Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970, p.1.

Cycling in Eritrea



Cycling in Eritrea: The legacy of resilience, competitiveness and skill

By Aklilu Lijam

On September 24, 2021, Eritreans all over the world celebrated a significant sporting victory. This victory was achieved by a young rider and a rising star named Biniam Girmay. As one of the European journalists reported, “Biniam hailed a landmark moment for Eritrea and all of Africa after winning the silver medal in the U23 men’s road race at the Union Cycling International (UCI) Road World Championships”.

This victory, however, was not achieved overnight and has its roots in the love of all Eritreans’ cycling sports. Eritreans’ love and embracing of “the machine” for daily activities or competitive sports has been going on for generations. The tradition of competitiveness and scoring persistent victories that started with the “First Generation” is now more than ever glittering with the new generation, known as the “Fourth Generation.”

Due to the extraordinary success of Eritrean cycling, professional Eritrean cyclists have joined different European and Asian cycling clubs, unthinkable some twenty to twenty-five years ago. The roots of such success lie in the determination of the Eritrean people in general and the cyclists in particular, who confronted Italian, British, and Ethiopian colonial rulers to respect their rights and their right to participate and compete in the cycling contests organized in Eritrea and for just and equal treatment during the competitions. All the cyclists, from the first generation to the current young riders, have paid dearly to the success stories we enjoy and boast about.

If we look back at the Eritrean cycling history, the bicycle was first introduced to Eritreans by the Italians. It was in 1898 that the Italian soldiers brought in the first bike, which was then used for postal services. However, cycling as a competitive sport was first introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. A 120-year-old heritage with “the machine” both for means of transportation and competitive sports has developed a proliferating passion for the sport. The result is that Eritrea continues to produce some of the best cyclists in the world.

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The Eritrean people embraced this “new machine,” and it did not take long before it became part of their daily lives as a mode of transportation and a means of competitive sports. Although, as in most countries, Eritrea was initially reluctant to use it for activities. The bicycle, which, when introduced into Eritrea, was nick-named Arebya Sheytan (the Devil’s Chariot), has since then shed its derogatory name because Eritreans learned how to use it, tamed the machine and learned that if used correctly, it could be beneficial. The bicycle did not take time to become many Eritreans’ best friends, including children. A saying goes: “The Eritrean child learns to ride the bicycle before he properly starts reading his books.”

Cycling in Eritrea: The legacy of resilience, competitiveness and skill



Then we have the New Generation, both men and women, known as the “Fourth Generation,” who managed to influx the global stages in considerable numbers by first attending the UCI-based training centers in Switzerland and then showing their competitiveness and skills by joining famous European and Asian cycling clubs to compete professionally. In the past five years, Eritrea has produced more than 25 pro cyclists who have joined known professional clubs, mainly in Europe.

It was in 1935/36 that Eritreans, for the first time, could use the bicycle in a competitive sport. This is the time known as “Nel Trenta-Cinque,” which marks the Italian invasion of Ethiopia from their bases in Eritrea and Somalia. At that time, Eritrea had been under Italian occupation for 45 years. It was, therefore, not easy for the Eritrean indigenous people to overcome the obstacles of the Fascist discriminatory laws and be able to compete in any of the cycling events organized by the Italians. The first generation, as we refer to them in the Eritrean cycling competition, showed resilience and dedication or used the Tigrinya word “HABBO” to overcome the obstacles imposed by the Italian colonists. They fought hard and were able not only to be part of the sporting events but also to show their skills to beat the Italian colonists and prove that black Africans were not in any way inferior to the “masters.” The huge victories scored by Eritrean cyclists Gebremariam Gebru in 1939 and Weldemichael Asgedom (nick-named Berbere) in 1946 can be sighted as good examples of the significant achievements of the indigenous people that paved the way to more successes.

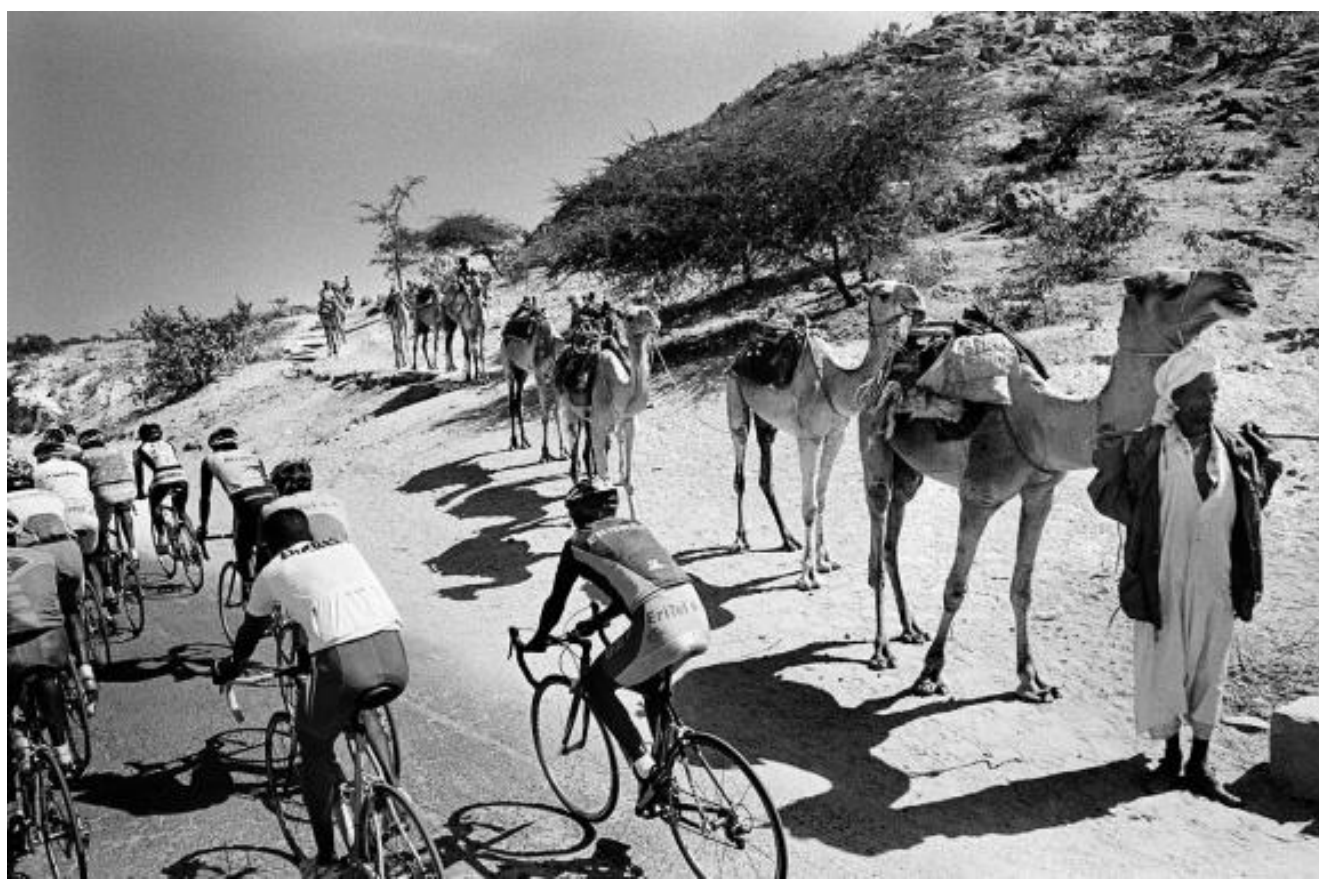


In the international stages of cycling, the two Eritrean Olympians, Tsehay Bahta and Mesfin Tesfai set the ball rolling when they became the first black Africans to compete in the Olympics of 1956 in Melbourne, Australia. Then, followed in their steps came the 2nd generation of riders of household names, and as there are many, it isn't easy to list their names in this article. These riders dominated the Olympics from 1960 to 1972, showing their skills when competing with the elite European riders. Five of these riders were able to stand first and win a gold medal in the All-African Games of 1972 in Lagos.

Despite the hardships they faced from the Ethiopian colonizers, the “Third Generation” was also able to achieve historic victories in the domestic and international stages, achieving galvanizing victories.



Cycling in Eritrea: The legacy of resilience, competitiveness and skill



I participated in the 2024 World Cycling Championship in Zurich and met with our cycling heroes who represented Eritrea in the elite, under 23, and junior women categories. Many Eritreans from all over the world, including senior riders from the 80's and 90's, showed up in Zurich to support the young Eritrean talents competing on the world stage. Among the big crowd of Eritrean tifosi was Tekeste Weldu (Gigante) present. He could take a picture with Henok Mulubrhan and the young woman talent Kisanet. He encouraged them a lot and gave them fatherly advice. A few days after meeting Gigante, Henok Mulubrhan could do a hat-trick, winning a gold medal for the 3rd time at the African Cycling Championship in Kenya. have the New Generation, both men and women, known as the "Fourth Generation," who managed to influx the global stages in considerable numbers by first attending the UCI-based training centers in Switzerland and then showing their competitiveness and skills by joining famous European and Asian cycling clubs to compete professionally. In the past five years, Eritrea has produced more than 25 pro cyclists who have joined known professional clubs, mainly in Europe.

It is worth mentioning that at the 2024 African Continental Cycling Championship, held from 9 to October 13 in Kenya, Eritrea's National Team won seven gold medals, five silver medals, and four bronze medals. In the overall team classification, Eritrea ranked first with 2,840 points, South Africa with 1,264 points, and Morocco with 1,155 points.

These days, cyclists exhibit what once seemed impossible to their young sons and grandsons, but it is indeed possible. This was accomplished with the numerous triumphs of young talents such as Biniam Girmay, Daniel Teklehaimanot, Merhawi Kudus, Henok Mulubrhan, Natnael Tesfazion, etc. Many Eritrean cyclists within the current young generation living back home aim not only to repeat what Biniam and his colleagues have achieved and continue to do but also to surpass them and set more prominent standards.

Cycling in Eritrea: The legacy of resilience, competitiveness and skill

Our gedaym cyclists have inspired famous cyclists of the 1980's such as Zereagabier Gebrehiwot, Yemane Tekeste, Fitsum Ghilom, Desalegn Negash, Yonas Zekarias, et al. Similarly, those athletes from the 80's inspired young talents such as Daniel Teklehaimanot, Biniam Girmay, Henok Mulubrhan, Merhawi Kudus, Amanuel Gebrezgabhier, Mekseb Debesai, Tesfom Okubamariam, Natnael Berhane, Natnael Tesfazion, et al. Likewise, athletes like Biniam, Henok, and Natnael inspire a host of new cyclists coming up in their slipstream; as the Eritrean cycling terminology goes, we say, "Rota Haz!" For this reason, we can confidently remark that Eritrean cycling is the nation's heirloom!

Eritrean women cyclists have also shown tremendous effort to break the obstacles laid by the colonizers and overcome significant barriers and cultural stigma. Eritrea has produced skilled and competitive women cyclists, who are equally talented as the men, if not more so. The level and potential of talent are genuinely world-class. In the past 10 years, several Eritrean women cyclists have been able to join the UCI World Cycling Centre (WCC) in Switzerland and the Africa Rising Cycling Center (ARCC) in Rwanda for intensive training. Since 2016, two Eritrean female cyclists, Yohana Dawit and Mossana Debesay, have joined professional clubs in the USA and Italy to compete as professionals

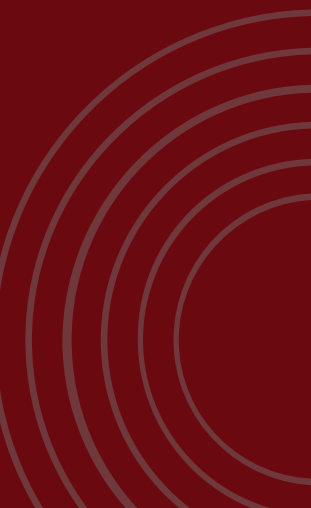
Therefore, Biniam Girmai's victory in the world championship continues the remarkable history of cycling in Eritrea for more than a century. Once again, Biniam could endorse the Eritrean legacy of resilience, competitiveness, and skill. With these qualities, Eritrea will continue to produce stars who compete on the international cycling stage.





Dexter's Story

"Afterthoughts: Guayla as Context."



"Afterthoughts: Guayla as Context"

The following “afterthoughts” emerged after the completion of my dissertation, “Guayla Nation: Unyielding Tigrinya Music, Dance, and Identity in Eritrea.” These reflections serve as a post-liminal stream of consciousness—a kind of wake after the passing of a large ocean liner—symbolizing the challenges I continue to face as I think through this important work.

There is a constant struggle in my writing to grasp the meaning of guayla, an art form that is ever-present, vibrant, and evolving. At times, even its own practitioners find guayla elusive, given its natural spontaneity. In my ongoing analysis, I am confronted by the rhythmic tenacity of guayla, yet also by its flexibility to accommodate a multi-faceted Eritrean identity. The challenge is to hold this art form within the constraints of temporality, political allegiance, and essentialization, all while recognizing its fluid nature.

Moreover, my research is complicated by the pervasive critique of the Eritrean government and the dominant, conflict-driven narratives about the Horn of Africa. While I deeply value interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly those concerned with human rights, my work seeks to avoid framing guayla solely through a political lens. Instead, I aim to honor its resilience and the deeply meaningful cultural practice it represents.

Rather than using the intersection of music and politics as a point of contention, I find it generative—a space to uncover grace amid conflict. It is striking that Eritrea’s political obscurity and vilification often overshadow the country’s multi-dimensional humanity, artistry, and cultural richness. As the late Eleni Centime Zeleke asks, “Have we confused that other thing with the nation-state?”

Finally, I am reminded that I do not have the privilege of ever saying “we” in my analysis of guayla, and that acknowledgment remains central to my outsider position. Please excuse these fragmented reflections, which continue to evolve as I think through this complex subject.

Guayla as a Carrier of Social Movements: Discourse on Form and Content

In my work, I explore guayla music as a vessel that carries social movements in Eritrea, serving as both form and content in the nation’s historical and contemporary struggles. Stable and unyielding rhythmically, guayla acts as a metaphorical fortress, shielding and propelling Eritrea’s liberation struggles and providing a platform for both individual and communal expressions. The music’s steadfast nature stands in contrast to what the aforementioned Zeleke describes as “the past experienced in relation to the unstable forms in which it is passed down.” In the Eritrean context, guayla actually provides a stabilized, reliable and ever-present foundation upon which a diversity of perspectives on the nation’s predicament is indexed.

Additionally, where African musical forms are often viewed as exoticized content of the Global South, my work strives to equally frame guayla as context given its unyielding presence and structure in the lives of Eritreans. This approach remains grounded in the experience of the music and dance as a sustained driving force in multiple paradigms, allowing for a more intimate.

understanding of its socio-cultural significance. This contextual idea is even evidenced in how guayla conveys (1) the music, (2) the dance and (3) the event for its participants. Moreover, guayla communicates distinctly in different regions such as Asmara, Areza, Senafe, Mendefera, etc.

Rhythmic Resilience and Revolutionary Identity

The rhythm—specifically in Tigrinya music and dance—embodies and reinforces the collective strength and revolutionary spirit of the Eritrean people. The resilient nature of its metricity endears it to the national identity, helping Eritreans reaffirm their collective strength. I could have just as easily called my dissertation “Guayla Nation: Unyielding Tigrinya Music, Dance, and Community in Eritrea.” Importantly, the artform guayla adjusts subtly and sublimely in response to the nation’s needs, particularly during resistance movements. The tempo and dance of guayla are in direct conversation with the urgency of the liberation struggle, signaling adaptability while maintaining cultural continuity.

During Eritrea’s fight for independence, guayla was successfully mobilized as cultural “artillery” against the modernist projects of both Haile Selassie I, supported by the U.S., and later Mengistu Haile Mariam and the Derg regime, backed by the Soviet Union. Through these eras of oppression, guayla continued to serve as a tool of resistance and cultural empowerment, adapting its form to the shifting dynamics of Eritrea’s political landscape. Moreover, this mechanization was at times spontaneous and reactive, and allowed for a multitude of pioneering musical “engineers” (e.g., Redda, Tukul, Zemach, etc.).

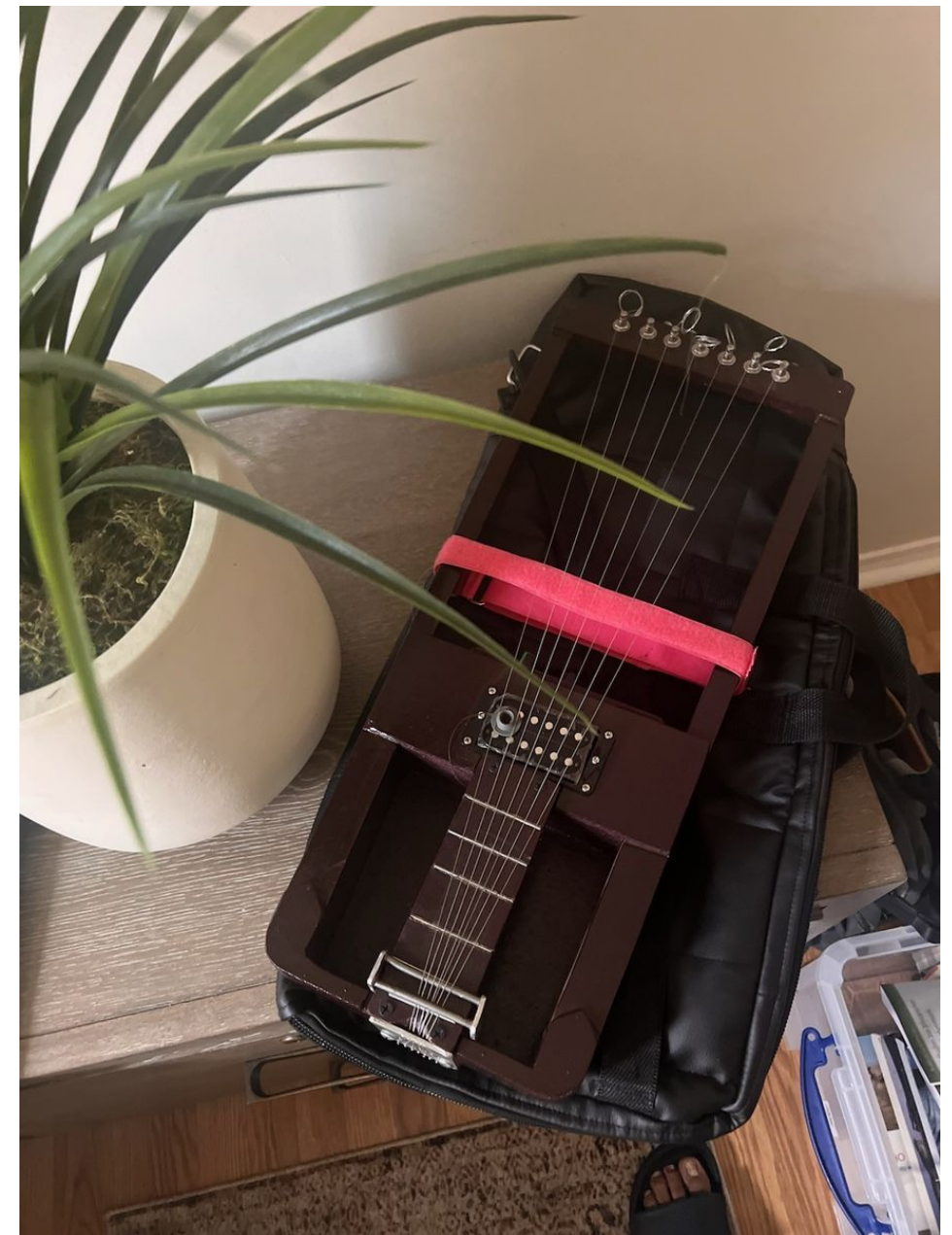
It is striking that Eritrea’s political obscurity and vilification often overshadow the country’s multi-dimensional humanity, artistry, and cultural richness.

"Afterthoughts: Guayla as Context"

Complicating Tradition vs. Popular Music: A Tool for Self-Determination

Guayla challenges the notion that traditional and popular music are binary, rejecting the idea that the music and dance cannot inhabit both realms of individualist self-expression and collective self-determination. It blends both indigenous practices and information age technologies into a cohesive articulation that embraces socio-political awareness and sacrifices made for freedom, even in its most widespread and prevailing iterations. The idea of the “usable past,” a term often applied to the construction of African history, finds resonance in guayla. It reclaims African and national pride in defiance of imperialist erasure and embodies a direct response to colonial legacies on its own terms. The resilient survival of guayla corroborates the survival of vast repositories of being and knowing for Tigrinya which is part of my ongoing exploration. Said another way, the painful history of Eritrea’s liberation struggle—its wound—is deeply embedded within guayla, infusing the music and dance with layers of resistance, healing, and defiance. Through this art form, Eritrean expressions become “Africanized” in new ways, giving voice to the complex dynamics of nationalism, pride, and resistance in a way that fuses tradition and modernity. Quda, I argue, embodies an upright and dignified posturing symbolic of the resolve, fortitude and Blackness of the people, regardless of gender.

Said another way, the painful history of Eritrea’s liberation struggle—its wound—is deeply embedded within guayla, infusing the music and dance with layers of resistance, healing, and defiance.



Dexter's kirar



Eritrea's African-ness and Regional Politics

Eritrea's geopolitical position within a volatile African region—its fraught relationship with Ethiopia, its emotional connection to Sudan, and its defiant global sovereignty—makes the nation's "African-ness" immediate and urgent. Guayla, then, reflects and fortifies Eritrean unity and power amidst external critiques and attacks, and regional instability. The music becomes a "secret weapon" or a "shield" for both the state and individuals, wielded in moments of celebration and commemoration to affirm national identity and resist fragmentation.

During my travels to Ethiopia, I observed the defiance of Tigrinya music in contrasting spaces, underscoring the resilience of the music outside of Eritrea before I was fortunate enough to experience the music and dance in situ. Themes of state formation and fragmentation are potent across the African continent, but guayla stands as a cornerstone of liberation, a pillar of strength both within and outside Eritrea. Once again, the quda dance, central to guayla, mirrors this locked-step resistance, symbolizing a codified cypher for the people. Within the same song, quda mimics formational and processional aspects of militarized unity, only to break the formation during s'bra (e.g., derreb) to allow for the "at-ease" joy and emotion of connected individualism.

Guayla as a Musical and National Anomaly

Guayla parallels Eritrea's unique geopolitical positioning as a sequestered and isolated nation. Like the country, the music exists on the fringes—distinct and self-contained, yet deeply connected to larger narratives of liberation. Guayla acquiesces to both the extremes of state agit-prop and to the individuality of personal and proud nationalist expression, making it a complex and multifaceted medium. The music and dance have historically surrendered to divergent voices and moments. However, guayla has not "sold out" nor been "watered down" along its trajectory. The artform resists compromise as it inherently remains a heart-rendering expression of revolution and freedom.

In more technical terms, the dual structure of guayla—often characterized by A and B sections—symbolizes a call-and-response or a tension and release, echoing the national ethos. This musical duality reflects Eritrea's national identity, with guayla weaving narratives of unity and independence into its very form and function.

Scholars like Mahmood Mamdani often state that "power continually reproduces troublesome binaries in Africa," but guayla stands as a mode of transmission that, in fact, celebrates contrasting approaches, much like the Eritrean nation embraces contrasting ethnic experiences. The music, therefore, serves as a site of suspense and resolution, allowing both state and individual identities to coexist. This, in turn, forces me as a researcher to grapple with the complexities of ethnography and my outsider readings of guayla. I dare say guayla digests and assuages colonial tensions which are so difficult to reconcile, while also being a rich archive of meta-Tigrinya and macro-Eritrean aesthetics.

What's Next?

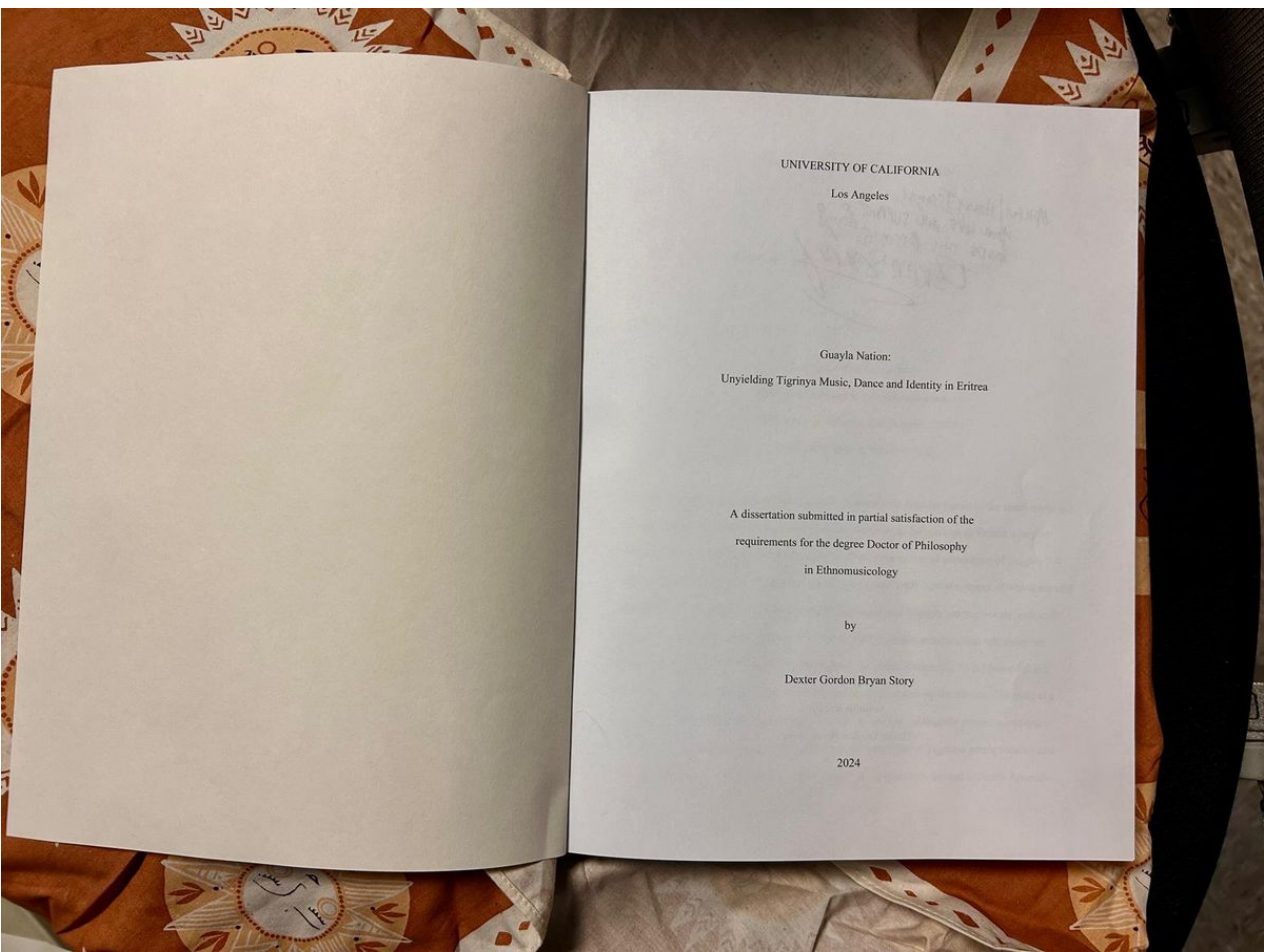
- The missing elements in my research are analysis of Tigrinya weddings and the regional differences of guayla. My dissertation fails to acknowledge the formative aspects of hamawiti when the women sing impromptu guayla songs as they prepare suwa and other provisions for the coming wedding. The multiple days of merriment around weddings such as halifut provide diverse expressions. I look to attend weddings in January 2025. Further, my future exploration will look for the whys and hows of Quda Areza, Senafe, Mendafera, guayla's numerous nuanced and distinct drum rhythms, etc. as I hope to travel to their rural areas. To be continued...

In more technical terms, the dual structure of guayla—often characterized by A and B sections—symbolizes a call-and-response or a tension and release, echoing the national ethos. This musical duality reflects Eritrea's national identity, with guayla weaving narratives of unity and independence into its very form and function.

"Afterthoughts: Guayla as Context"



Congradulations, Dr. Dexter Story!





Music & Coffee Break!





Connecting Our People

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January 04-06, 2025
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International Conference on Eritrean Studies 2025



Honorable Ministers, Honorable PFDJ Officials, other Government Officials, and Distinguished Conference Participants

It is my great pleasure to be here at the end of ICES25 to give a brief concluding remarks on the conference. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, let me first sincerely appreciate the commitment of the participants and the leadership and vision of those who made this conference possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Organizing an international conference on Eritrean studies commenced with the objective to create an international platform for open and honest academic and scholarly discourse. The last three days have revealed nothing but, a truly academic platform, both young and experienced scholars, academics and practitioners shared their views and perspectives on national, regional and international issues across social, natural and humanities fields of studies.

Within the last three days, out of 157 papers 151 papers were presented categorized in 19 themes and attended by over 530 participants. Only six presentations missed this opportunity due to unexpected circumstances. This indicates that by all measures the conference has been successful and will have long lasting impacts. The three days conferences have covered several issues which extended from Archeology to Artificial Intelligence. These include

- The application of science and digital tools in the field of energy, science and technology, architecture, food security, education, language, etc. had appealing nature and informative contributions which triggered heated debates and a range of discussions. We believe, the presentations also have a potential to offer insightful knowledge and experience for development planners and relevant institutions in Eritrea.
-
- Presentations in the fields of history, politics, law and other related disciplines covered past and contemporary socio-economic and political dynamics of Eritrea and the neighboring countries. Having covered almost all burning issues in the shifting global order in our region from legal, political and economic dimensions, the presentations illuminated the understandings on Eritrea's policies, practices, values, visions and perspectives.
-

- The discovery of the ancient and past archeological knowledge has been among the main contents of the presentations in the Archeology and Heritage sessions. These presentations discussed about the untapped sites and unmonetized Heritage in Eritrea. Presentations on archiving dealt with the process of locating and salvaging Eritrean heritage documents from different parts of Eritrea and the World. The presentations revealed that what has been achieved so far is commendable, of course with the emphasis that this process requires time, patience and resources.
-

- In Health and medicine, presentations covered safety of medicine, maternal and child health services, and emerging health challenges in Eritrea. Their evidence-based research will inform the policy and practitioners in the Eritrean health service system.
-

- The conference has been an important platform for oral poetry, ethnomusicology, publication as well as translation experiences in Eritrea. Presented in different Eritrean languages, the discussions allowed participants to express their ideas and perspective freely in the languages they master. Above all, these have made the conference very colorful and appealing for further discussions beyond this conference.
-

- Climate and environment conservations through advanced biotechnology and local knowledge, dominated the discussion in the natural sciences. The presentations in these sessions underlined and proposed for the need to introduce smart uses of natural resource as well as climate adaptive technics in agriculture in order to ensure sustainable development.
-

•Distinguished participants,

Having examined the three days conference, the organizing committee has learned that the necessity to set a roadmap and mechanisms to implement the insights gained in this conference. This should include:

1. Finalizing this conference in the form of conference brief and conference proceedings,
2. organizing symposia and workshops in different fields,
3. establishing networks of experts in different fields, and
4. institutionalizing Eritrean studies and regularizing this kind of conferences.

International Conference on Eritrean Studies 2025



In conclusion, the conference has been a forum where we, as a society and a nation, have been able to share our experience and principles to the rest of the world through scientific approaches. One of the traditions in the African studies discourse has been the focus to interrogate what is missing instead of unpacking what is happening. The Eritrean studies tradition has also been subject to such academic malaise. Thus, organizing a conference such as this one, is an attempt to redirect the tradition in Eritrean studies to focus on discovering or rediscovering what is happening.

Finally, the conference would have been impossible without the contribution of different stakeholders. The organizing committee takes this opportunity to extend its gratitude to the Government of Eritrea, different stakeholders, abstract reviewers, presenters, moderators, rapporteurs, Hotel Asmara palace, all others we failed to mention, but above all you the participants. On top of that, the organizing committee thanks all those that showed relentless conviction to make this event a successful reality.

Thank you.

Awet Nhafash!


Tedros Sium (PhD)



International Conference on Eritrean Studies 2025





A stylized graphic of a city skyline in various shades of blue. The skyline is composed of numerous skyscrapers and buildings of different heights and shapes. It is arranged in a circular pattern around a central white rectangular box, with some buildings extending outwards from the top, bottom, and sides of the box.

National Public Diplomacy Group's (NPDG) Activities at the City Levels.

Hordata Dance Team

By Meron Abraham

In a heartwarming display of cultural pride and artistic brilliance, the Hordata Dance Team from the Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle recently graced the stage at the Wide World Refugee Event, an initiative dedicated to fostering a safe and connected global community for refugees and immigrants. The event, hosted by the non-profit organization Wide World Refugee, provided a vibrant platform for showcasing diverse cultures and celebrating the stories of those who have made new homes worldwide.

A Cultural Celebration

The Hordata Dance Team, renowned for their dynamic and evocative performances, brought a piece of Eritrean heritage to the event, captivating the audience with their traditional dances. Their performance was a display of artistic talent and a powerful reminder of the rich cultural tapestry that refugees and immigrants contribute to their new communities.

Performing to a packed audience, the Hordata Dance Team demonstrated the elegance and energy of Eritrean dance forms, with intricate footwork and rhythmic movements that spoke volumes about their heritage. Each performance was a visual and auditory celebration, blending traditional Eritrean music with contemporary expressions. Their vibrant costumes and spirited routines created an atmosphere of joy and unity, perfectly aligning with the event's mission of promoting cultural understanding and connection.

Bringing Cultures

Wide World Refugee, a non-profit dedicated to supporting and connecting refugees and immigrants, provided an ideal backdrop for the Hordata Dance Team's performance. The organization aims to create a global community where people of diverse backgrounds can come together, share their stories, and build bridges across cultures. The Hordata Dance Team highlighted the importance of cultural expression in fostering inclusivity and empathy.

The event was a mosaic of performances, stories, and exhibitions from various cultural groups, each adding their unique voice to the conversation about global displacement and resilience. By participating, the Hordata Dance Team showcased their talent and underscored the value of preserving and sharing cultural traditions in a globalized world.

A Message of Hope and Resilience

The Hordata Dance Team's performance reminded many attendees of the strength and vibrancy that refugees and immigrants bring to their new communities. Faced with passion and precision, the dances symbolized the resilience and hope that define the immigrant experience. Through their art, the dancers conveyed a message of solidarity and celebration, inviting others to appreciate and embrace the diverse cultures that make up our global society.

The partnership between the Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle and Wide World Refugee exemplifies how cultural organizations can work together to support and uplift marginalized communities. Participating in such events, the Hordata Dance Team helps to build a more inclusive society where every culture is valued and celebrated.

Looking Ahead

As the Hordata Dance Team returns to their local community, the impact of their performance will undoubtedly continue to resonate. Their involvement in the Wide World Refugee event enriched the occasion and paved the way for future collaborations that celebrate cultural diversity and promote mutual understanding.

In a world where cultural differences can sometimes be a source of division, the Hordata Dance Team's performance was a powerful reminder of the beauty of diversity and the importance of coming together. Their artistry and dedication inspire others to engage in similar efforts, creating a more connected and harmonious global community.

As we look forward to more events that celebrate and uplift refugee and immigrant communities, the Hordata Dance Team is a shining example of how cultural expression can bridge divides and foster a spirit of unity and respect.



Performing to a packed audience, the Hordata Dance Team demonstrated the elegance and energy of Eritrean dance forms, with intricate footwork and rhythmic movements that spoke volumes about their heritage.

The Hordata Dance Team, renowned for their dynamic and evocative performances, brought a piece of Eritrean heritage to the event, captivating the audience with their traditional dances.



Public Diplomacy Activities on Labor Day from Miami

September 1st (or **ባሕቲ መስከረም**) is an Eritrean Public Holiday known as the Revolution Day (the commencement of the armed struggle for Independence), and it's also Geez Calendar New Year. In the United States, the exact date is Labor Day Holiday, which is considered the last day of summer. Traditionally, it's viewed as the best opportunity for a family cookout, a time for politicians to reach out to constituents before the general election on November 5th, 2024. Combining these holiday traditions creates a favorable condition for hosting a community-based social event.

In June, the Eritrean American Council of South Florida was informed about “A Taste of AfriKin Food Festival” sponsored by some professionals in the City of North Miami. The public diplomacy team was dispatched to follow up on the event's progress and recommend how to participate. The team was impressed with the organizers' advertisement and advised the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) to take the lead, provided Eritrea is included in the list of African countries referenced in the digital advertisement. After extensive preparation, NUEW joined the event with the theme “A Taste of Eritrea: Presents the signature vegan dish: “Shiro in a Pot.”

On Sunday, September 1st, the City of North Miami celebrated the African and Caribbean Heritage Festival. So, the public diplomacy team accepted an invitation to join the “A Taste of AfriKin Food Festival” event with a revised theme, “Eritrea: An Evening of Art, Culture, and Culinary Excellence.”

At the event, their restaurant operators represented five African countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. NUEW represented Eritrea. Most invites were from the Caribbean nations, so the music was exclusively Afro-Caribe.

In some African booths, the waiting line to get food was extended because the restaurants had a limited number of nationals serving at the booth. A case in point is that the Ethiopia booth had a staff of three: the husband, wife, and daughter. In the Eritrean booth, up to 17 volunteer nationals were ready and willing to help.

They were distinctly dressed up in ethnic attire that attracted the public. The Eritrean booth was decorated with Eritrean flags, artifacts, books, and retractable banners that depict some talking points about ethnicity, Asmara's art deco buildings, Eritrea's strategic location by the Red Sea coast, and a pictorial narrative about the step-by-step liberation process.

One of the organizers of the event pleasantly noted that the Eritreans stole the show wearing those pretty ethnic outfits and serving the signature vegan dish “Shiro in a Pot” on the traditional “injera” (flatbread). I take it the popular opinion is in favor of the Eritreans. Effective on this day, the event organizers will reach out to the Eritrean community, and we should participate in learning, contributing, and advancing our cause.





One of the organizers of the event pleasantly noted that the Eritreans stole the show wearing those pretty ethnic outfits and serving the signature vegan dish “Shiro in a Pot” on the traditional “injera” (flatbread).

The Dish



KANSAS CITY ETHNIC ENRICHMENT FESTIVAL

By Woldu Abraha & Marry Haileselassie

Kansas City: The city of Fountains, the jazz capital of the world and the home of the back-to-back Super Bowl champions, Kansas City Chiefs had its 45th Annual Ethnic Enrichment Festival 2024 themed “FEEL THE WORLD BEAT IN THE HEART OF AMERICA”



Ethnic Enrichment Commission (EEC) – Kansas City History: “As Kansas City prepared to celebrate the U. S. Bicentennial in 1976, an idea was born which eventually led to the appointment of the Mayor’s Ethnic Enrichment Commission. To focus public attention on the area’s rich cultural heritage, Charles B. Wheeler, Mayor of Kansas City during the Bicentennial year, formed the Ethnic Heritage Committee. That Committee planned an Ethnic Bicentennial Parade, presented ethnic menus at local restaurants, and compiled a written history of contributions made to Kansas City’s growth by various ethnic groups. The latter project won national recognition from the United States Bicentennial Association.

The Committee took a step towards permanency in 1978 when two members of the Naturalization Council, Madalyne Brock, and Marion Trozzolo, urged the formation of the Ethnic Enrichment Committee. Carl DiCapo and John Duncan served as co-chairs of the Committee for three years. During that period, the group hosted its first Ethnic Enrichment Festival at the Liberty Memorial. The Festival drew the attention of Mayor Richard Berkley and City Councilman Victor Swyden, who introduced a resolution to the City Council in 1980, creating the Mayor’s Ethnic Enrichment Commission.

Ethnic Enrichment Festival: EEC or its member organizations are involved in events such as Fiesta Filipina, Northland Ethnic Festival (our next goal), and the three-day Ethnic Enrichment Festival. These three-day Festivals are held annually on the third weekend in August. This year began on the afternoon of August 16 and celebrated all three days till August 18. It is the largest gathering of multiculturalism - focusing on the traditional cultures found here in Kansas City and its surrounding metro area. The Ethnic Enrichment Commission of Kansas City is a 501(c)(3) non-profit supporting over 60 cultural organizations and communities. It has grown from its humble beginnings back in 1976 to be one of the top ethnic festivals in the United States, which provides thousands of our greater Kansas City community members with the opportunity to travel the world through music, dance, performance, food, and great shopping.

Eritrea Community Cultural and Civic Center – Kansas City: The Kansas City - Eritrean Public Diplomacy Group, under the umbrella of the Eritrean Cultural and Civic Center (ECCC) non-profit organization, joined the Ethnic Enrichment Commission – Kansas City on the first quarter of 2023. During that period, it was too late to apply for an Eritrean Booth, and we didn’t have a chance to have a Booth, Cultural dance, or fashion shows. Still, we attended the flags parade and volunteered at the information desk and ticketing of the Festival. The Kansas City public diplomacy team does different activities in the city. The team has been involved in various committees such as the EEC Finance and Budget Committee, Adapting a 1-mile Highway from 151 to 152 location on US-69/Metcalf from 61st street to 53rd street for three years, giving speeches in different gatherings such as the naturalization ceremonies and various racings such as the Kansas City Annual Dragon Boat racing.

As many mentioned, the primary purpose of the Ethnic Enrichment Commission (EECKC) is to foster understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, to preserve Ethnic heritage, to encourage Ethnic identity, and above all, to coordinate and facilitate multiple Ethnic programs. The primary mission of the Eritrean Cultural & Civic Centers, in general, and national public diplomacy teams, is to explore, engage, and be enlightened with other international communities.

2024 45th Ethnic Enrichment Festival: The 45th annual was special for our team and the community. For the first time in the history of Eritreans in Kansas City since 1970, we had our booth (#38) to present our culture and tradition. Throughout the weekend, we had thousands of visitors. Our presenters helped our guests explain the posters with rich Red Sea natural resources, Landscape, eco-system, and Eritrean historical and archaeological contents. Booth #38 has a rich menu of more than eight (8) items. We might have had some learning experience, but it was more than expected for beginners, and we are proud of our team. There was also Biniam Girmay’s jersey, all gone on the second day, and some Cycling fans, none Eritrean citizens, had bought Bini’s Jersey.



KANSAS CITY ETHNIC ENRICHMENT FESTIVAL



On Friday, the gates were opened at 6 pm and closed at 10 pm. Not many people there were enough on the first day and Friday to expect what it would be the next couple of days. Saturday and Sunday were something else. It was similar to the North American Eritrean annual festival; the gates were opened at 10:00 am, people flooded, and booths crowded within a minute. We were so ready and able to manage the heat. The Eritrean community had gathered in their booths and partied their Guayla, selling their foods and traditional coffee and explaining their culture, tradition, and history to the guests. The Eritreans' attendance was the other beautiful thing about this year's Festival. We had our children, youth, gentlemen, and women. Our booth was a small Eritrea in the heart of the Midwest.

In conclusion, we can say that our public diplomacy team and the whole Eritrean Community here in Kansas City had a wonderful weekend and a very successful public diplomacy activity.



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KANSAS CITY ETHNIC ENRICHMENT FESTIVAL



Mesob Store



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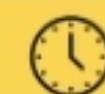


ERITREAN ASSOCIATION IN GREATER SEATTLE

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2024

 ERITREAN ASSOCIATION IN GREATER SEATTLE

 4PM TO 6PM

GET TO KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES



ALEXIS RINCK



TANYA WOO



Strengthening Community Ties: A Successful Eritrean Candidate Forum in Seattle



In October 2024, Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle, in collaboration with public diplomacy initiatives, hosted a vibrant candidate forum for the Seattle City Council elections in 2024. The event drew a diverse audience and served as a crucial platform for dialogue between local leaders and the Washington Eritrean community.

The forum was characterized by its spirit of engagement and cooperation, embodying the magazine's mission to foster connections among foreign audiences. City council candidates presented their visions for a well-rounded Seattle, addressing key issues such as housing, public safety, and community services. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and engage in meaningful discussions, making the event informative and empowering.

As election day approaches, this forum provided invaluable insights for community members, helping them make informed choices. By bridging the gap between elected officials and the Eritrean community, the event exemplified the power of public diplomacy in strengthening ties and building trust.

The success of this forum reflects the importance of ongoing dialogue in our increasingly diverse society, showcasing how collaboration can lead to a more inclusive and engaged community. As we look toward the future, the connections made during this event will undoubtedly continue to foster cooperation and mutual understanding in Seattle and beyond.



