



## EID AL ADHA CELEBRATION

Eid Al Adha, 1441 Hijiri year, was celebrated yesterday, 31 July.

Sheik Salem Ibrahim Al Mukhtar, Acting Mufti Eritrea and Secretary General of Higher Assembly of Eritrean Iftae and Islamic Affairs, had called on the faithful to follow the guidelines issued by the office regarding the celebration of the Holiday event.

According to Sheik Salem's statement due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in force on public gatherings, the prayers did not take place, as usual, at public squares, but instead took place in privacy of individual homes of the faithful. Sheik Salem also

gave extensive briefing on the background and objective of the Eid Al Adha Holiday celebration.

Sheik Salem finally wished Happy Eid Al Adha to the Eritrean people inside the country and abroad in general and to the faithful in particular as well as peace and prosperity



to the Eritrean people.

## MENINGITIS VACCINATION TO BE A PART OF REGULAR PROGRAMS

The Ministry of Health announced that from this year onwards Meningitis vaccination will be included in the category of the 12 antigens.

Indicating that previously 12 types of vaccinations have been provided regularly to children including TB, polio, tetanus, measles, hepatitis, influenza and others, Mr. Tedros Yihdego, Head of National Vaccination Program, said that starting from July this year Meningitis vaccination will be provided regularly and that will increase the variety vaccinations to 13.



Mr. Tedros noted that children at the age of 1 and six months should take the meningitis vaccination and urged parents to take their children to nearby health facilities vaccination.

According to the document from the Ministry of Health, in 2019 over 2.8 million citizens aged from one to thirty years have taken meningitis vaccination across the country.



## FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT TO DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES

Financial support has been extended to families of martyrs and disadvantaged citizens in Anseba and Central regions.

Accordingly, the residents of Adi-Tsenaf, Gala-Nefhi sub-zone extended financial support to 50 disadvantaged families while in Tsetserat sub-zone food items worth of 4 thousand Nakfa was distributed.

Similarly, the owner of 'Warsa' enterprise, Mr. Mulugeta Kismu contributed 50 quintals of grain to

disadvantaged families.

Likewise, residents of the administrative areas of Adi-Gush and 01 and 02 administrative areas of Eden semi-urban center disbursed 89 thousand and 700 Nakfa and four quintals of grain to disadvantaged families in their areas.

In related news, a number of house owners in various parts of the country decided that the families and small businesses renting their houses to live free of rental payment ranging

from one month until the pandemic is fully contained.

## RENOVATION OF AFABET-KEREN ROAD

The renovation of the Afabet-Keren road by the Northern Red Sea region in cooperation with national construction companies will have significant contribution in improving the livelihoods of the residents. The comment was made by the people residing along the route linking Afabet

with Keren city.

Indicating that road has been damaged due to various reasons including flooding and that has been creating transportation problem to the residents as well as in the unacceptable price increase of consumer goods, the

residents said that the renovation of the road will have significant contribution in facilitating their daily lives.

The residents also called for the resumption of the transportation buses that were previously providing transportation service.



## ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

A total of 18 patients have been diagnosed positive for COVID-19 in tests carried out in Quarantine Centers in Gash Barka, Southern and Southern Red Sea Regions this week.

All the patients are nationals who returned from Sudan and Ethiopia recently.

On the other hand, 36 patients who were receiving medical treatment in hospitals in the respective regions have recovered fully and were released from these facilities.

The total number of recovered patients to-date accordingly stands at 225.

The total number of confirmed cases in the country to-date is 279.

Ministry of Health  
Asmara  
30 July 2020



## Remarks by Ms. Elsa Haile, Director, International Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea during Virtual High-Level Roundtable Discussion to Commemorate the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons organized by UNODC Regional Office for Eastern Africa

*Dear Colleagues,*

Let me start by thanking the UNODC Regional Office for Eastern Africa for organizing this event.

Eritrea welcomes the convening of this event to commemorate the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. Commemoration are time for reflection and an opportunity to assess how far we have gone in eradicating one of the most heinous crimes of our time. This year there is little cause for celebration as millions continue to fall prey to, and suffer in the hands, of criminals.

The interrelated crimes of migrant smuggling and human trafficking continue to pose serious challenges to human security in the Horn of Africa. Thousands of the citizens of the region, especially youth, are lured by criminal syndicates as they migrate through irregular routes and methods. They face abduction, extortion, rape, enslavement, torture and death.

Human trafficking impedes socio-economic progress, undermines the rule of law and governance, and threatens regional security. The hefty proceeds from human trafficking are more often than not used to fund other forms of transnational organized crimes, including terrorism.

In the case of Eritrea, overwhelming evidence exists

about the complicity and involvement of certain countries as well as some murky associations in various countries abroad, especially in Europe, in the smuggling of Eritreans, for the political purposes of "strategic depopulation". For some, the economic spin offs associated with this enterprise is another incidental objective. The sensational propaganda of demonizing the nation to rationalize these acts and the enticement of the youth to flee the country is part and parcel of their game plan.

A case in point is UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines on Eritrea which was prepared without any form of consultation with the Government of Eritrea. For the past decade, Eritrea has been calling on the UNHCR to rectify its eligibility criteria which classifies Eritrean economic migrants as "bonafide" refugees. UNHCR's maintenance of privileged treatment for Eritrean migrants continues to be a pull factor for irregular migration.

*Dear Colleagues*

The Government of Eritrea is committed to fight trafficking in persons in all its manifestations. For the past decade, it has implemented a four-pronged strategy to combat and eradicate trafficking in persons and mitigate its effects on victims:

First, intensifying its efforts to achieve rapid, people-centered, and balanced socio-economic development in order to create opportunities for its citizens.

Second, deterring and combating trafficking in persons. All relevant law enforcement bodies have been working with the vigilance needed to combat trafficking. Active involvement of religious and societal leaders in planning and implementation of national policies have been very crucial. Public awareness raising programs, including at schools are regularly conducted by concerned authorities in coordination with communities. Trafficking is criminalized in the Transitional Penal Code of Eritrea (Articles 605-07). Eritrea is a state party to United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the trafficking protocol. The fight against Trafficking in Persons entails substantial human, technological and institutional resources. With the aim of enhancing its legal, institutional and technological capacities, Eritrea has signed a comprehensive

partnership framework agreement with UNODC to strengthen its crime prevention and criminal justice capacities, including its ability to combat transnational organized crimes.

Third, supporting victims of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. Eritrea opposes any stigmatization of victims of human trafficking and provides them with all possible assistance. Eritrean diplomatic missions and communities continue to support Eritreans to voluntarily return to their homeland, especially those stranded in the emergency and conflict situation of some countries of transit, such as Libya.

Fourth, strengthening of regional and international cooperation. Eritrea views combating and eradicating transnational organized crimes, such as trafficking in persons as integral part of its struggle to achieve durable peace and economic integration in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region.

After two decades of conflict and mistrust there is a new dawn in the Horn of Africa. In the Agreement signed in September 2018, President Isaias and Prime Minister Abiy, clearly expressed their commitment to "combat terrorism as well as trafficking in persons, arms and drugs in accordance with international covenants and conventions."

Eritrea also continue to advocate in all international fora the importance of addressing and eradicating the causes of human trafficking—extreme poverty, global inequality, the vulnerability of irregular migrants, conflicts and wars of aggression as well as sexual exploitation, cheap labor and organ harvesting.

*Dear Colleagues,*

Eritrea believes the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crimes and its protocols could play a vital role in facilitating regional and international cooperation through exchange of good practices and information, mutual legal assistance and technical support to improve state capacity in preventing and combating these heinous crimes.

However, trafficking in persons is not a law enforcement problem per se. Given the complex and

multidimensional nature of the crimes of human trafficking, the importance of strengthened coordination between UN agencies in the region cannot be understated. Multiple initiatives dealing with migrant smuggling and human trafficking pose challenges. There is a need to consolidate and strengthen regional initiative in order to enable those multiple initiatives to meaningfully contribute to the betterment of human life and regional security. As the UNODC, continues its efforts to develop a regional action plan to combat trafficking in person in Eastern Africa, cross-regional

coordination with other UNODC regional offices will be critical.

In conclusion, fight against human trafficking is ultimately linked to the struggle for peace, stability and socio-economic development within countries and a fairer international economic and political order. Eritrea will steadfastly continue to work with the countries in the region and beyond to combat and eradicate human trafficking.

*I thank you!*

*Nairobi,  
30 July 2020*

## LOCAL NEWS

### COMMUNITY BASED ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION ACTIVITIES

The residents of Segeneity and Emni-Haili sub-zones, Southern region are conducting community based environmental sanitation activities.

According to report, community based environmental sanitation program had been introduced in the 37 villages clustered in 18 administrative areas in Segeneity sub-zone and that 85% of the villages have successfully accomplished the envisaged sanitation programs.

In the same way, 14 villages in Emni-Haili sub-zone have accomplished the charted out environmental sanitation program while 9 villages are nearing accomplishment of the program.

The administrators of both sub-zones, commending the participation the residents so far demonstrated called for reinforced participation in future community based programs.

### ROADS RENOVATION POPULAR CAMPAIGNS

The residents of Adi-Keih sub-zone, Southern region, and Gala-Nefhi, Central region are engaged in roads renovation popular campaigns.

According to report, youth in the villages of Misgad and Adi-Bakokay, Central region, are renovating six km dirt roads linking their villages with Daero-Paulos.

Indicating the roads have been damaged due flooding, the youth said that upon completion of the program the transportation problem the residents have been facing will be alleviated.

Commending the strong participation the youth are demonstrating, Mr. Fitsum Araya, administrator of the Daero-Paulos administrative area, called for reinforced participation of the youth in the implementation of the charted out development programs.

Similarly, the residents of Hired administrative area are engaged in the renovation of 12 km road linking their area with Adi-Leih town.

Hired administrative area is located 14 km west of Adi-Keih town.

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# 23IT1J09 DIPLOMACY

## Eritrean History 101: Receiving “Marching Orders” is Anathema to Our DNA

**Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion**

In a recent article, “A Request: More Honesty, Less Nonsense”, I discussed the issue of the fabrication of information, pointing out how things like “fake news”, misinformation, and disinformation have become increasingly salient and problematic issues within societies around the world. The central focus of the article was on how during recent months and weeks, generally corresponding with the global Covid-19 pandemic, there has been much false information and a lot of fake news about the local conditions and general situation in Eritrea.

Unfortunately, however, the false information and poor, irresponsible reporting swirling around about Eritrea have not just been restricted to the supposed conditions in the country during recent times. A lot of commentary and numerous analyses by talking heads, so-called regional experts, journalists, and other members of the cognoscenti about the ongoing Nile dispute, and Eritrea’s supposed role within the issue, has also left a lot to be desired. For instance, in a recently published article examining the dispute about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) involving Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan, the author suggests,

*“Another foreboding sign is the uptick in visits to Cairo by...Isaias Afwerki [the Eritrean President]. He has held two meetings with al-Sisi at the presidential palace in the Egyptian capital in as many months, the most recent being on July 6 when the two leaders again discussed “regional security” and Ethiopia’s dam. Eritrea provides a Red Sea corridor into landlocked Ethiopia which would be more advantageous to Cairo than long flights across Sudan.*

*Nominally, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace deal in July 2018 to end nearly two decades of Cold War, for which Ethiopia’s Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, the Eritrean leader may be tempted to dip back into bad blood if it boosted his coffers from Arab money flowing in return for aiding Egypt.”*

While this is only one particular example, there is an abundance of others which similarly suggest that Eritrea may become, if not already, militarily involved on behalf of one of the parties, is renting out its services

or territories, is choosing between sides, or is cynically playing off different parties against one another. Overall, such perspectives and lines of analysis are deeply flawed and wildly off the mark, revealing a poor understanding of some of the fundamental basics about Eritrea.

First, it is well to note Eritrea’s longstanding general regional policy and approach. In brief, it may be described as being anchored on the promotion of a safe and cooperative neighborhood. Additionally, since its independence, the country has always strongly believed in non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states, respect for sovereignty, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the strict adherence to international law. In particular regard to the ongoing disagreement between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan pertaining to the GERD, the Eritrean president long ago stated his conviction that the issue not be politicized in the pursuit of short-term gains. Eritrea recognizes the right of Ethiopia to develop its water resources for the benefit and well-being of its citizens. At the same time, it also regards the Nile as a tremendous blessing for the countries and peoples of the region and believes that the Nile basin countries should collectively share in its many benefits and advantages. Finally, Eritrea advocates close consultation, coordination, partnership, and cooperation between the countries involved in order to bring about a just, peaceful,

and sustainable resolution that is beneficial to all.

What also cannot be overlooked is the fact that Eritrea has only just emerged from 20 years (1998 to 2018) of destructive conflict and a tense “no peace, no war” stalemate. While war has never been the desire or preference of Eritrea, the country was forced to take up arms in order to defend its territorial sovereignty and maintain its hard won independence. By any objective measure, the past two decades were extremely difficult and trying for Eritrea. The country was confronted by countless challenges, various hardships, and numerous setbacks, and it paid an enormously high price in national blood, treasure, and lost opportunities.

However, two short years ago, Eritrea and Ethiopia, longtime bitter foes, courageously decided to end their dark chapter and agreed to peace. As a result, after decades of conflict, instability, and crisis, the Horn of Africa has finally begun witnessing encouraging developments. Peace and cooperation are opening great opportunities for prosperity and better circumstances for ordinary Eritreans, Ethiopians, and others across the region. Notwithstanding several outstanding challenges, in a public statement released to coincide with the second anniversary of the peace agreement several weeks ago, the Eritrean government forthrightly articulated that, “This is

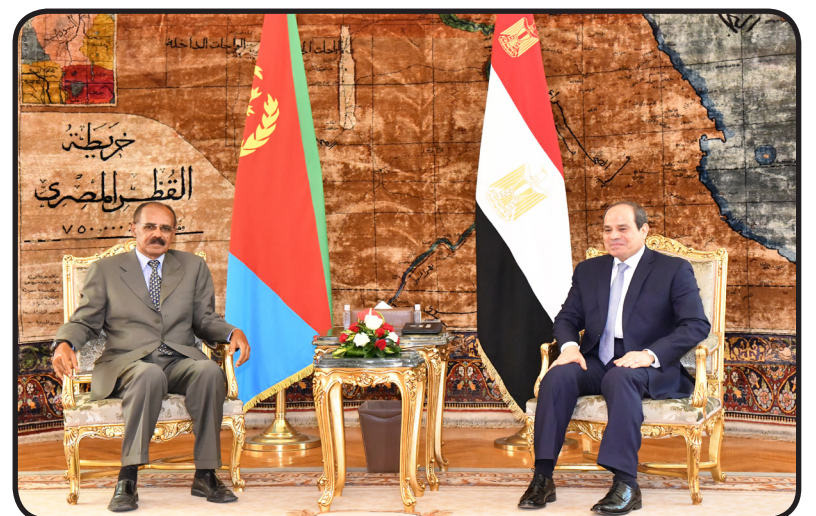
a peace agreement that has enabled Eritrea to extricate itself from war and the threat of war to funnel its undivided potential and energy towards peaceful development. Resources and capabilities that were squandered in war and conflict are now marshaled and leveraged towards reconstruction. The bilateral peace agreement has spurred a wider momentum for peace, stability and cooperation in the turbulent Horn of Africa region.” Furthermore, the government statement points out that, “We will not spare efforts to bolster the peace process and the cooperation frameworks we cherish with Ethiopia...,” and that “...first and foremost, we will continue to funnel our efforts to rebuild and strengthen our nation in the political, developmental, social, cultural, and security sectors of nation-building.”

Within this context and overall historical backdrop, to somehow think or believe that Eritrea would now so easily jeopardize what it has worked so long and hard for by simply or casually choosing to “dip back into bad blood” or conflict to boost its “coffers” is beyond preposterous. To discerning observers, such claims will recall past false reports about the country, such as the 2,000 troops it was falsely accused of dispatching to Somalia over a decade ago.

In any event, the present reality is far different to the misleading suggestions being bandied about. Rather than seeking out war or conflict, picking sides, or playing

off different parties against one another, Eritrea is focused on peace, development, and cooperation. Based on its modest capacity, and using its generally positive and cordial relations with the governments and leaderships of the countries of the region, Eritrea has only sought to support a peaceful settlement and an enduring resolution to the ongoing dispute. Notably, this closely aligns with one of Eritrea’s longtime general principles and goals: “to become a respected member of the international community, by coexisting in harmony and cooperation with its neighbors; and by contributing, to the extent of its capability, to regional and global peace, security, and development.”

Finally, one last point that needs reiterating is that, contrary to the slew of recent misguided assumptions and inaccurate claims, receiving “marching orders” – from big or small powers – is anathema to Eritrean DNA. The notion that Eritrea is now willing to serve as a proxy or act militarily at the behest or upon the delegation of others in the ongoing Nile dispute is belied by the fundamental fact that it has historically been, and continues to remain, firmly guided by a clear policy of nonalignment, independence, and self-reliance. The country is singularly and unfailingly averse to dependency or polarized alliances and it is fiercely protective of its sovereignty. Anyone that fails to understand these indelible facts should enroll in Eritrean History 101.



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## Lighter Side

# What's Wrong With being Average!

Milka Teklom

Reading 'Veronica decides to die' while I was in lock down is one of my greatest mistakes. The story is about a 24-year-old woman committing suicide not because she was constantly

without marrying the one you love, finally having kids. This perfect life that artists showcase ultimately sucks! If the highlight of our life is to marry someone, . . .

A research by Dr. Howard

We naturally are wired to become dissatisfied with whatever we have and satisfied by only what we do not have. In the words of a famous blogger, Mark Manson, life itself is a form of suffering. The rich suffer because of their riches. The poor suffer because

the life of Charles Bukowski. He was an alcoholic, a womanizer, a chronic gambler, a lout and, on his worst days, a poet. Bukowski wanted to be a writer. But for many years no one wanted to publish his work; he was rejected by almost every media outlet. His work was horrible, unsophisticated and depraved, they said. As the stacks of rejection slips piled up, the weight of his failures pushed him deep into an alcohol-fueled depression that would follow him for thirty years. When Bukowski was fifty, an editor at a small independent publishing house out of pity took a chance on him. He would go on and publish six novels and hundreds of poems, selling over two million copies of his books, enabling him to be one of the most renowned authors till this day. I know you are saying

his story sounds just like 'The Ugly Duckling' story, so inspiring but it's not.

Despite the book sales and the fame, Bukowski was a loser. He knew it. And his success stemmed not from some determination to be a winner, but from the fact that he knew he was a loser, accepted it, and then wrote honestly about it. My point is in today's culture, society puts pressure on people to constantly be successful, chanting the phrase, "If you are not the best you are the worst." Let's face it, nobody could be the best at everything, so what's wrong with being in the middle. I think success doesn't only come with hard work; luck should also favor you because as the saying goes "as long as luck is favoring you all your defects will be hidden from the world."



depressed or was a sad and embittered woman. She solemnly killed herself for two reasons. One reason was realizing once her youth was gone everything would go downhill; old age will set her to a journey of onset illness, departure of friends and loved ones urging her to wish for death to come fast. The second reason was her feeling of powerlessness because of the injustice that was happening all over the world and the fact that she could do nothing to put things right. Reading her reasons on only 18 pages left me feeling agitated and hopeless and mainly made me question the reasons behind why we are living.

For so many years fiction writers, poets and film makers have told us what they think is the perfect life and have justified why we are living. This perfect life mostly revolves around a person that is successful, earning a lot of money and then realizing that having money is nothing

S. Friedman, professor of psychology at the University of California, on 1,500 people for more than eight years indicates that married men take fewer risks and "calm down" and, therefore, are healthier than their single counterparts, whereas middle-aged married women reported mental and physical problems than single ones.

For centuries, philosophers and scholars have tried to formulate ways to avoid pain, seek happiness and peace within oneself, and the formula was agreed to be having positive expectations. But according to Dr. Friedman, some people who are cheerful and optimistic during childhood tend to die before their more pessimistic peers. It seems their downbeat concerns of upcoming risks led them to shorter life. Also, it is psychologically impossible to stay positive all the time; fixation on happiness inevitably amounts to a never-ending pursuit of something else.

of their poverty. People without a family suffer because they have no family. People with a family suffer because of their family. People who pursue worldly pleasures suffer because of their worldly pleasures. People who abstain from worldly pleasures suffer because of their abstention. Problems are a constant in life, so happiness comes from solving these problems. This easy solution is not visible for most of us; we either deny that problems exist or blindly choose to believe that there is nothing we can do to solve the problems. These two states of mind might offer us a short term relief but in the long run we are bound to face the problems which will lead to outburst of different emotions of insecurity, neuroticism, emotional repression, helplessness, and despair.

The constant dissatisfaction with life has kept human beings striving, building and conquering. One of the greatest examples is

## Can Summer be Summer . . .

Continued from page 6

In an attempt to cut the life cycle of the coronavirus, Eritrea has implemented very strict measures of lockdown that have had promising results. To ameliorate the economic problems of the most vulnerable people, the Eritrean diaspora is making significant contribution. The monetary contributions to the Covid-19 fund has no parallels. Medical workers living in Europe and America have given advice and lessons through various mass media outlets, and various diaspora organizations raised money and sent important medical equipment to aid the healthcare system. These contributions reinforce the diaspora's membership and involvement in national affairs and give the local community and the government strength to control the pandemic. As a result of the coordinated efforts, Eritrea is the only country in the region with the lowest number of cases and no coronavirus-related deaths.

Eritrea is currently at war to

protect the life of every Eritrean. The Eritrean defense forces, the police and security forces, youth organizations and health workers are on the frontlines to contain the spread of the virus. People follow orders and extend their cooperation. According to my observations, during the last four months, the remittances of the Eritrean diaspora have increased tremendously. There is no doubt that these remittances can have a positive impact in the lives of the people of the country.

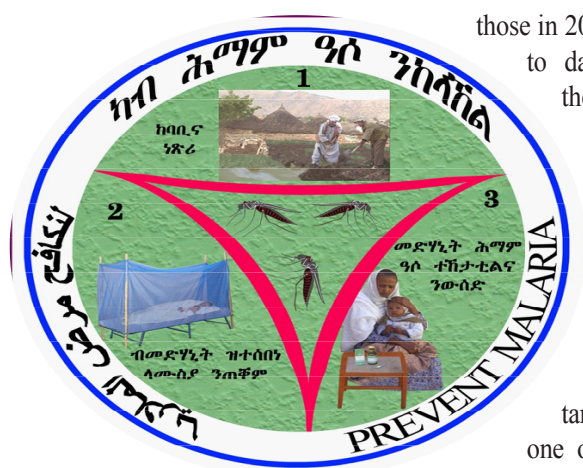
At last, Eritrean nationalism has no borders. It serves like a glue to hold the Eritrean society living inside and outside of the country together. We have many stories that show that Eritreans are a kind of people strengthened and bolstered in times of difficulty. The participation of the diaspora in the homeland affairs during critical times is unprecedented and will help us to establish a bright future. Physical separation has no power to endanger the emotional bond the Eritrean diaspora have with their country.



# Development

## Malaria in Eritrea: Marching Towards Elimination

Ruth Abraham



Malaria is one of the most common endemics in the world. For a long time, it has been one of the most frequent causes of death worldwide. But with time, many developed countries have managed to control or eliminate it. Currently, the world is marching toward a total eradication of the disease by helping developing countries to apply preventive and treatment systems.

According to the 2019 World Health Organization (WHO) report on malaria; in 2018, an estimated 228 million cases of malaria occurred worldwide, compared with 251 million cases in 2010 and 231 million cases in 2017. Most of the cases in 2018 were in the WHO African Region followed by the WHO South-East Asia Region, with 3.4% of the cases. Plasmodium falciparum is the most prevalent malaria parasite in the WHO African Region, accounting for 99.7% of estimated malaria cases in 2018.

Globally, the elimination net is widening, with more countries moving towards zero indigenous cases: in 2018, 49 countries reported fewer than 10,000 such cases, up from 46 countries in 2017 and 40 countries in 2010. The number of countries with fewer than 100 indigenous cases – a strong indicator that elimination is within reach – increased from 17 countries in 2010 to 25 countries in 2017 and 27 countries in 2018.

On the one hand, if malaria case incidence and mortality rate remained the same as those in 2000, globally there would be 320 million cases and nearly 1 million malaria deaths in 2018. Instead, there were an estimated 228 million malaria cases and 405,000 malaria deaths in 2018. These represent about 30% fewer cases and 60% fewer deaths in 2018 than would have been the case had levels of malaria incidence and malaria death remained similar to

those in 2000. While the gains to date are impressive, the global malaria challenge remains enormous, and the rate of progress is slowing down.

The Ministry of Health of Eritrea (MoH) has targeted malaria as one of the diseases that must be eliminated, being the serious public health problem it has been for a long time. To do so, the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) and other partners have been following steady prevention and treatment mechanisms to stop the spread of the disease using different techniques, such as vector control, insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying (IRS) of insecticides and Larval source management. Based on these achievements, the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 lays the foundation for further significant reductions in mortality and incidence by at least 90% over the coming 15 years, with elimination of malaria projected for a further 35 countries.

Since 1998, Eritrea has shown unstable cases and deaths of malaria. But generally, it has so far succeeded to show a major loop toward malaria elimination. Technically, the earliest stage of the fight against the disease is to control the surge of morbidity and mortality due to malaria. After it is controlled and the cases are reduced greatly, both spatially and numerically, the country or zone is said to be marching to elimination, that is, pre-elimination stage, where cases are further reduced in some areas or zones, also known as sub-national elimination. This stage is where Eritrean Fight against malaria is currently passing through to the advanced stage, which is, scoring zero local cases. Moreover, the global elimination of the disease, as targeted by WHO, is called eradication -- encountering no malaria-related cases at all. In order to claim that a subzone, zone or a country has eliminated malaria, it has to show a zero malaria morbidity and mortality for 36 months in a row. Nevertheless, in case there are imported cases, a prevention of re-introduction is carried out across border towns and villages. That is why we say Eritrea

has controlled it and gone all the way near elimination but it has not been announced as a free country either.

Moreover, the Eritrean NMCP, established in 1995, has managed to achieve a great deal of malaria cases decline from 1997 onward. In 1998, the Roll Back Malaria

(RBM) partnership was launched aiming to reduce malaria by half by 2010. Similarly, the NMCP developed a national 5 year plan (2000-2004) to reduce malaria morbidity and mortality by 80%. According to the 2016 MDGs report, a remarkable progress has been made in reducing both the incidence of and death from malaria. Malaria cases declined from 53 per 1,000 people in 1998 to 5 per 1,000 in 2004, but increased to 13 per 1000 in 2013. During the period 1998-2013 the incidence of malaria declined by an average of 9.4% per year. Due to this trend, it is projected to further decline to 12 per 1,000 at the end of 2015. Similarly, malaria deaths declined from 20% in 1998 to 0.004% in 2013 and declined to 0.002 at the end of 2015. This ranked Eritrea as one of Africa's exemplary

Zoba and sub zebra hospitals.

3. Tertiary level encompasses national referral hospitals which also serve as national centers of excellence for specialized training, education and research.

The health sector is composed of public and private health care providers. There are 28 hospitals, 13 community hospitals, 35 health centers and 186 health stations. As for the specific organization of malaria control program, Eritrea has set a strategic development plan (2017-2021), which is organized at several layers of sub-organizations -- national, zonal, sub zonal and community levels. Each has designated functions in the system, complementing one another.

When inclined to elimination, the core intervention that must be implemented in addition to the former interventions and treatments is surveillance followed by contact tracing and further treatment. Despite upsurges in some sub-zones, Eritrea has made a commendable progress and is further striving up the ladder through the pre-elimination stage



Mr. Selam Mihretab

The local activities of larval source management on community basis and the awareness raising discourses have been halted due to the lock down and social distancing measures. Though the larval management can be done by spraying relevant insecticides on puddles, the effects of the current situation may arise later because as Mr. Selam said, "people tend to stop taking the cautious malaria guidelines as they observe major cases decline."

In his address of the issue of malaria during the Covid 19 pandemic, Mr. Selam Mihretab, the manager of National Malaria Control Program at MoH said, "We can't be definite about the effects of the pandemic on the malaria prevention and control activities because we have not done a thorough research. However, according to some reports from zonal and sub-zonal health centers, in the past five months, except in gash Barka, new malaria cases have greatly decreased. But, as I said before, since this isn't based on a concrete research we can't really know whether there really are fewer cases or it is the inability of patients to travel to health centers. Because, we have recorded a decline in the number of people who come in for checkups in the past few months, I could say that the fewer the number of tests that are done, the fewer the number of cases that are detected. But we have carried out an interview with the Eri-Tv recently to remind people of malaria threats in case people neglect the disease due to the trending Covid 19 crisis." Therefore, though Eritrea has succeeded to control the malaria endemic, it is no time to relax. It is actually now that we need to work harder to preserve the achieved results and keep streaming in the lane of successfully eliminating the disease.



countries in malaria control. In 2016, Eritrea received the African Leaders Malaria Alliance award for its success in achieving millennium development goals.

According to the NMCP, Eritrea has a three-tier health care delivery system.

1. Primary level, constituting of community-based health services, health stations, health centers and community hospitality.
2. Secondary level, constituting

to achieve a score of zero local transmissions.

October is a month known for spiking malaria morbidity and mortality. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, people are in lock down and health care systems all around the world are caught up with fighting the pandemic. Though Eritrea is not hit as hard as the other parts of the world, it is only a natural possibility that the focus might be swayed from other endemic diseases like malaria.



# OPINION

## Can Summer be Summer Without Diaspora?

**Simon Weldemichael**

In Eritrea, summer, extending from May to early September, is a

the coast and islands of the Red sea, the mountains and plains of the countryside all yearn for the Eritrean diaspora. This summer is

It has become a norm among the Eritrean diaspora to increase their financial and political support whenever natural or human-made threats are looming against the state's national security. After the first case of Coronavirus in Eritrea was reported in March, Eritreans living abroad organized themselves to help the government and the people ameliorate the pandemic-related challenges. Their active and conscious participation has helped the government in making quick responses to cope with the horrible impact of coronavirus.

The Eritrean diaspora have maintained a strong sense of belongingness and attachment with their home country. Their extraordinary participation in the reconstruction and protection of their country attests to their commitment and loyalty. The Eritrean diaspora is an important extension of the people living in the country. When news of the pandemic was heard, Eritrean diaspora professionals communicated their expertise to their fellow citizens in the country on ways to combat the virus. The national mass media, particularly the radio, served as a channel that connects Eritreans living inside and outside of the country to exchange their experiences and know what they are doing. The relationship between them and the shared national feeling they enjoyed is strong. Eritreans residing inside and outside of the country have a common understanding regarding the basic national issues such as

the national security and unity. The 'one people, one heart' mantra is an expression that signifies the agreement of Eritreans on matters of national security and identity.

Through economic, political and diplomatic support, contributions for development projects, the martyrs' fund, and now the Covid-19 fund, the Eritrean diaspora have reaffirmed their feelings of membership in the nation. These practices evoke a feeling of inclusion in the homeland. Even though the Eritrean diaspora are living outside the territorial

constitute a considerable portion of the population, are part of this 'imagined political community' and they have labored assiduously for the security and dignity of this community.

Although their emotional attachment has been subject to international conspiracy for many years, the Eritrean diaspora have always robustly resisted it. This robustness is driven in good part by Eritrean nationalism, which causes them to rally around the government. The conspirators



season filled with annual national festivities that have a great value for Eritreans. To mention some of the great events: the celebration of Independence Day (May 24) and Martyrs Day (June 20); graduation ceremonies for the various institutions of higher education, including Sawa; the welcoming and sending-off of students to Sawa; the Sawa youth festival and Expo national festival; the arrival of the Eritrean diaspora; and the anniversary of the start of the Eritrean armed struggle (September 1st). The presence of the Eritrean diaspora on these occasions adds unique color to the bright mosaic of the Eritrean culture.

In Asmara, summer is associated with the prevalence of the seasonal cactus fruit, beles, the Eritrean diaspora and rainfall. The three come together to flood the streets of Asmara during summer. This summer, though, one is missing, the Eritrean diaspora. Of course, they are only absent physically not emotionally. People have already felt their physical absence. Some are even tempted to say, "Can summer be summer without the diaspora?" The three guests of summer - rainfall, beles and the Eritrean diaspora have a great symbolic value in Eritrean society, and contribute to the country socially, culturally, and economically.

Due to the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic, various occasions are not celebrated as usual. The streets of Asmara,

passing without seeing the Eritrean diaspora walking in the streets of Asmara with their friends and relatives. Asmara, included in the world heritage list, known for its serenity and beauty, is missing the presence of an important part of the Eritrean population. Every summer, the Eritrean diaspora, particularly the youth, come to their home country to strengthen their bond with Eritrea and contribute to the ongoing efforts of national reconstruction. The Eritrean diaspora have a strong connection with their country and their engagement in national affairs dates back to the days of the liberation struggle. Their direct and indirect social, economic and political contributions have played a great role in winning the struggle for independence, resisting the TPLF war of aggression, and overcoming the unjust sanctions. Providing all kinds of support to the motherland from long distances is a unique characteristic of the Eritrean diaspora.

Covid-19 has helped the world in certain ways to see and understand the secret of Eritrea's resilience and perseverance. The national strength of Eritrea emanates from its solid and united people who have a long tradition of resistance against human made and natural disasters. Coronavirus has hindered the Eritrean diaspora from making their usual annual visit of their homeland. However, their physical separation has not impacted their emotional attachment and nationalism.



borders of the country, they are part of the imagined Eritrean community. I would like to provide the famous definition of a nation as proposed by Benedict Anderson: a nation "is an imagined political community" to help you view the particular fact of Eritrea through a universally accepted description. The Eritrean diaspora, which

have discovered this when their intrigues, intimidation and harassment failed to spur division and cut off the national cord of Eritreans.

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