



HIS HOLINESS ABUNE BASILOS ELECTED AS 6TH PATRIARCH

His Reverend Abune Basilos, Administrator of the Office of the Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, has been elected as the 6th Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox

Tewahdo Church. The election was conducted on December 9 at the Headquarters of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church in accordance with the norms and regulations of the Holy Synod

and the Church.

The electoral process was attended by members of the Holy Synod, representatives of monasteries, the scholars' council, as well as representatives from Theological Colleges and dioceses both within the country and abroad.

The official consecration ceremony of Abune Basilos is scheduled to take place on 26 January 2025.

CAR AND MOTORCYCLE RACE IN ASMARA



The National Cars and Motor Bicycles Federation organized a race last Sunday at the Biet-Gergis area in Asmara. The event was broadcast live on Eri-TV.

The race lasted five hours and featured over 70 competitors across seven categories. A total of 67 vehicles competed in the 1000 to 2000 cc category, while motorbike races were held in two categories: 125 cc and 175 cc, with seven participants.

The race was concluded with enthusiasm and winners received their medals and trophies.

NUEYS BRANCH IN SAWA ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT MEETING

The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students branch of Higher Education Institutions and Sawa held a meeting to assess activities conducted in 2024 and plan for 2025.

Ms. Mensura Ismail, head of the union branch, emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts with partners to finalize unfinished programs from 2024 and urged regional and college heads to ensure strong follow-ups.

Highlighting the success of the 11th festival of higher education institutions, Ms. Mensura called for collective efforts to ensure

the success of the 2025 festival. Reports were presented at the meeting by Warsai Yikealo School in Sawa and all colleges.

Ms. Helen Amine, head of regional follow-up at the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, urged stakeholders to integrate efforts to address the challenges observed in 2024.

Additionally, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students in the Central Region provided administration and leadership training to 126 youth representatives from various administrative areas in the region.



ERITREA PARTICIPATES IN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS WORKSHOP

An Eritrean delegation participated in the Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Workshop held in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, from 2 to 9 December 2024.

During the workshop, Mr. Habtom Zerai, Charge d'Affaires at the Eritrean Embassy and the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, and

Mr. Natnael Yebio, from the Department of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented papers titled "Challenges and Solutions: Promoting and Protecting Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights" and "International Cooperation on Human Rights", respectively, reflecting Eritrea's stance and position.

In their presentations, the

speakers emphasized that economic, social, and cultural rights are not abstract concepts in Eritrea but living commitments. They highlighted how these rights are encapsulated in Eritrea's national development philosophy, which prioritizes achieving social justice, and are deeply embedded in the National Charter, national policies, laws, and proclamations.



INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI: ON GLOBAL, REGIONAL, AND DOMESTIC ISSUES

On November 30, 2024, national media outlets conducted an interview with President Isaias Afwerki, discussing timely and important global, regional, and domestic issues. Third and final part of the interview follows.

Part III and Final

Mr. President, the leaders of the TPLF instigated, despite advice to the contrary, a war of insurrection that have inculcated massive calamity to the people of Tigray. As a result of these crises, the leadership in Tigray has become fragmented, and the political situation has reached a critical climax. In this context, there are claims that the Government of Eritrea is dissatisfied with the Pretoria Agreement and is opposed to the peace process. What message does the Government of Eritrea wish to convey to the peoples of Tigray and other peoples in Ethiopia as well as to their political forces.

There are several points that should be stressed. This situation – this “game” – has been ongoing for over 50 years, and, yet, satisfactory explanations/justifications remain elusive. Our primary focus has always been clear: we do not need such conflicts. For instance, when the issue of the Millennium Dam arose, the rationality of its construction should have been evaluated soberly and objectively. Unfortunately, this was not done. Searching for solutions after the damage has already occurred is an evasive exercise in futility.

We are committed to addressing the genuine needs of the region, not for heavenly reward but out of a sincere desire to contribute positively. This does not mean that our efforts are solely self-

interested; rather, we aim to promote stability in the region as a whole, which is crucial for us.

The stability of all our neighboring countries is fundamental. Much can be said regarding the nature and actions of the regimes in Ethiopia in the entire period after the Second World War. Since the early 1970s, we have recognized the potential for collaboration and consistently rejected any actions that do not serve the collective interests of the region.

If the source of these problems stemmed from their own agendas, it could have been addressed. However, it transcends their own local agendas. The issue of Badme, for example, was a surprise to us. As it is well-known, there are no good-faith controversies whatsoever on Badme. But, influenced by external agendas, it became a pretext for fomenting conflict as it was indeed the case with Hanish and other putative disputes.

When I learned about what was brewing up regarding Badme, I communicated with Meles over the phone although I am not keen and usually avoid this mode of communication. I stressed to him that we should avoid any escalation. I insisted that any presumed dispute could be resolved through bilateral dialogue, and if necessary, we could seek the facilitation of a third party. If these mechanisms fail, we could also go to court as a last resort. We had learned valuable lessons from the Hanish situation. I emphasized that we did not draw the boundaries and were not in a position to alter them.

These suggestions were made prior to the submission of the Badme case by the Ethiopian Government to the Parliament.

Unfortunately, war erupted and escalated to an unnecessary level.

Finally, the Algiers Agreement was signed as a resolution to the conflict. As previously noted, the border dispute was not the primary cause of this conflict. It is well understood that the borders of many African, Asian, and other countries were drawn during a specific historical period. We have no option but to respect these boundaries and refrain from engaging in warfare under the pretext of territorial disputes. The Hanish issue served as a significant learning experience for us; we were unable to resolve the



border dispute through bilateral discussions or mediation. In the end, the only viable option was to seek legal resolution, based on the sanctity of colonial boundaries.

Prior to the Badme case, they had raised the issue of customs, suggesting that all cross-border transactions of various commodities, even petty trade in poultry etc. should be conducted through bank accounts. As it may be recalled, we had previously been working to establish a body for policy harmonization aimed at keeping our borders open for the flow of goods and services. However, this initiative was abruptly abandoned, and a new modality introduced which lacked the necessary institutional framework to facilitate its implementation. In practical terms, requiring the opening of a bank account for cross-border transactions proved unfeasible. The putative border dispute occurred against this backdrop. These facts are well-documented, with detailed records of daily interactions.

Eventually, the Algiers Agreement was signed, serving as a final and binding resolution with no latitude for appeal. The case was settled legally, with the verdict based on ‘colonial boundaries’ and ‘applicable international law’, with colonial boundaries serving as the primary reference point.

As elaborated in my response to the first question, these conflicts ultimately stem from Washington’s hostility towards Eritrea. Their intention was to impose punitive measures – the word “punish” was used – which raises significant ethical questions. Why would one embroil a nation in turmoil and bloodshed? Every conflict in the region, including the issues of Hanish, Badme, and other subsequent border disputes, does

not stem from governments and political groups in the region. It is rather driven by Washington’s agenda.

Physical demarcation was supposed to be implemented following the verdict, without the need for further negotiations. However, this was obstructed. Nevertheless, the border was precisely and virtually demarcated using modern technology. This process utilized Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to accurately delineate the border, leaving no room for ambiguity. As such, the border issue has been fully settled once and for all.

Yet, this legal solution was not embraced by the State Department, which called for revisiting the matter and initiating new discussions under the pretext of facilitating dialogue among residents on both sides of the border. This was argued under the false premise of avoiding division of homes.

It is unnecessary to divulge now the names of the particular US officials who were pushing for this unwarranted process. However, one must question why legally-settled matters were being raised in a verdict that was final and binding. In the event, the two-decade stalemate between Eritrea and Ethiopia can clearly be attributed to Washington’s deliberate meddling.

Furthermore, and as another instrument for compounding the situation, the issue of imposing sanctions on Eritrea emerged in 2009 by falsely accusing it of extending support to Al Shabaab. It is well known that we have long been engaged in the fight against terrorism. How can we be accused of supporting terrorism when we actively fought Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden during their presence in Sudan, even severing

diplomatic ties with that country? Such accusations were baseless and unfounded. Eventually, sanctions were imposed against us during the Christmas holiday of 2009, a time when most delegations at the UNSC were on holiday. The sustained hostility, which spans 80 years, cannot be confined to, and goes beyond, Ethiopia.

Recently, change or reform was proclaimed in Ethiopia. What constitutes reform? Will it effectively help Ethiopia in overcoming the challenges that it is facing? The issue of ‘Ethnic Polarization’ primarily stemmed from the political system established in Ethiopia in 1995. However, delving into the specifics of the current situation is not possible at this point in time. We had our own perspectives when the concept was first floated in 1995. In this context, we can discuss the historical relationship we had with the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT)/TPLF for the past 50 years; in its broader dynamics and challenges. We are well-acquainted with the issue of ethnicity in Ethiopia, which has been a focal point in our political discourse all along.

There is no need to revert to outdated structures and frameworks of feudalism in order to achieve nation-building in Ethiopia. Such a mentality is incompatible with the goal of building a cohesive nation. I regularly engaged in consultations with Melles on various issues, exchanging ideas similar to those discussed during our 1993 meeting in Cairo. We also participated in the 1991 conference on “Transition to Democracy” held in Addis Ababa, where the ‘question of ethnic groups’ was a central topic of discussion with all Ethiopian political forces at that time.

Continued on page 3

**ERITREA
PROFILE**

**Published Every
Wednesday & Saturday**

**Editor-In-Chief
Amanuel Mesfun**

**Asst. Editor-In-Chief
Sirak Habtemichael**

P.O.Box: 247
Tel: 11-41-14
Fax: 12-77-49
E-mail:
eritreaprofilemoi@gmail.com
Advertisement: 12-50-13

**Layout
Azmera Berhane
Betelhiem Tadese**

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI . . .

Continued from page 2

In 1994, Melles visited Asmara to seek my opinion on the draft Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, informing me that I was the first person to see/review it. Recognizing the seriousness of the matter, I requested some time to read the document thoroughly. After my review, I conveyed to him that the Constitution would not serve Ethiopia, nor would it be suitable for any other country. I expressed my concerns that it was impossible to build a nation upon such a framework. I warned him that this constitution could lead to unnecessary complications and, if escalated into conflict, could ultimately spiral out of control. Article 39 was not the only problem; the overall content and spirit of the document were not applicable to Ethiopia.

He was not comfortable with my comments and responded, "I knew you would say that. We cannot govern Ethiopia without such mechanisms; you may have your own opinion, but that is the only way to govern Ethiopia. You plant a time bomb here and there, and if things go wrong, you explode the bombs." I reiterated that once ethnic polarization occurs, it is extremely difficult to reverse it. It poses significant economic, cultural, political, and security risks and is fraught with precipitating disintegration instead of fostering national cohesion. I advised him to reconsider the implications before proceeding with implementation.

Is it possible to build a nation with such ideas? How can one draft a constitution for a country under these premises? Will it be possible to avoid the resulting consequences? Finally, I thanked him for seeking my opinion on the document.

In any case, the constitution was implemented in 1995. A Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was established along ethnic lines. The current problems are direct outcomes of this framework. It is important not to divert attention to irrelevant topics to obscure this reality. Ethnic polarization, conflict, perpetual clashes, and a weakening of national cohesion are all byproducts of the Constitution.

This issue ought to be rectified; Ethiopia needs to resolve its internal problems to achieve stability and effectively contribute beyond its borders. This is the only viable solution. The issue is not whether Ethiopia will be dominant or not; rather, it is essential, first and foremost, for the people of Ethiopia to attain stability. The experiences gleaned in Ethiopia over the past 30

years should not be underrated. For Ethiopia to make meaningful contributions to its neighbors, it must ensure its internal stability. Stability cannot be achieved while engaging in ethnic politics. The question does not revolve on the number of former provinces or districts. The central issue is the need to discard ethnic administrative structures.

There are numerous lessons to be learned from other countries. For example, Somalia was dubbed a "Failed State" for pursuing clan politics, despite being a nation with a common language and religion. Why repeat this experience? It is crucial to learn from it.

We used to discuss with Melles on the situation in Somalia too. Since 1991, we maintained that Somalia should not become a failed state. We held similar apprehensions regarding Sudan and South Sudan. The discourses of the past notwithstanding, the current events remain preoccupying. It is unproductive to continue discussing the various ramifications at play currently and that essentially stem from the aforementioned approach.

Our discussions (with Melles) extended beyond the Badme dispute; we addressed any disagreements as they arose. On our part, we preferred to handle matters at a low level, without publicizing them unnecessarily. The discussions we have had over the past 50 years are well-documented and would amount to thousands of pages. We have consistently opposed inciting hatred and stoking conflicts. Particularly when tensions seemed to escalate toward war, we adhered to a policy of 'preventing war'.

Reverting to the current situation, war was declared when the idea of reform was introduced. It is surprising to anyone who reviews the documents. Why was war declared at this particular juncture? Was it because reform was proclaimed? Was it to avoid addressing the prevalent problems in Ethiopia? I will further dwell on the matter in order to amplify the concrete facts. I informed the Prime Minister, "They [TPLF] will unleash war and are planning specific measures to this end... they have already identified over 70 targets within Eritrea for missile attacks, preparing them for the intended assault... We must address this issue."

The Prime Minister recognized the gravity of the situation and suggested that I speak with the TPLF. I indicated that I was willing to do so, but it might be too late and virtually unproductive. Later, when the Prime Minister brought Debretsion to our meeting in Omhajer, I reconsidered and spoke

with him in spite of my previous reservations. We stepped aside with Debretsion alone for a brief conversation, during which I asked, "Why are you planning to go to war?" He responded, "It will not happen." My final reply was, "You say 'it will not happen,' but in practical terms, you have decided to do so". This encounter lasted no more than two or three minutes.

Was there a need for war at that time? Actions were taken hastily, and aside from the propaganda aspects, the details of the operational plans and preparations were extensive. What was the necessity for such measures? If one really cherishes peace and stability in Ethiopia, can it be achieved in this manner? The war resulted in the disastrous consequences, of unprecedented magnitude and not seen in the last 50 years, that we are witnessing today. Our efforts until the very last moment were focused on preventing war, as it is the people who ultimately bear the brunt of war.

We prefer not to dwell on the current situation. Why engage in acrimony and confrontations? What purpose does this serve? This is not merely about holding a Congress or not. After all these experiences, there should be no need for further confrontations. The Pretoria Agreement was designed to conclude the war, and ending the war is good in itself. However, the Pretoria Agreement does not directly concern us. We have no reason to either support or oppose it. Had the Pretoria Agreement been managed and implemented by the key internal protagonists, the current complications and hurdles would have been avoided.

In reality, the Pretoria Agreement was soon discarded by its principal architects, leading the issue down an undesired path instead of implementing it in good faith. What was the rationale of unleashing a new conflict by deciding to disarm the Amhara? First and foremost, the agreement must be implemented. The agreement contains specific details and timelines outlining the framework for disarmament and demobilization. Once the war concludes, the next steps can be broached? The enormous damage inculcated by war must be healed in order to think forward; beyond the confrontational status. The people deserve to be relieved from their sufferings. Why ignore this vital task to make preparations for yet another war? This is an evasive act and entirely baffling.

The defamatory campaign waged under false pretexts of "perpetrated genocide", "...occupied territories", etc. is a fantasy designed to advance a new agenda. Moreover, internal



conflict can only entail detrimental consequence to the people. Why is it occurring now? We are not only focused on preventing war, but we also assert that such a crisis is not in the best interests of the people of Tigray or the broader Ethiopian population. If the MLLT/TPLF has genuinely learned from past conflicts, it should adopt a forward-looking perspective.

What is the fate of the people of Tigray? What can be done for the other peoples in Ethiopia; and, the region as a whole? These are crucial considerations for moving forward. What benefit is there in looking back to stir up internecine conflict through social media and other channels? Why provoke people and incite hatred? Is it logical to believe that this approach is meaningful?

We had consistently maintained against war and that we must strive to avoid it. But, the message was not heeded, and we are all witnessing the consequences. Why invite another crisis when their forces are already in disarray? This situation is unacceptable to any rational mind. Our firm and longstanding policy is to avoid such conflicts. What is the benefit of continuously stoking tensions and perpetuating animosity between the people of Tigray and the other peoples in Ethiopia; as well as neighboring Eritrea? We should learn from past experiences. Internal conflicts, heightened tensions, and hostility are unnecessary. Our position remains unchanged: there is no need for conflict.

It would have been beneficial if the Pretoria Agreement had led to greater stability. The question of whether we support it or not is irrelevant. As intimated earlier, the Pretoria Agreement does not represent the agenda of local actors; it originated from external agendas. These agendas seek to perpetuate endless conflicts among communities; pitting Tigray against the Amhara, Afar, and others. The United Nations, European Union, and similar organizations are often instrumentalized and used

as an umbrella for intervention. Representatives from various countries come and promise relief aid and support and float demobilization programmes. But there is no need for engaging in such endless initiatives. The priority should be to ensure stability for the people of Tigray, enabling them to implement their development programs and coexist harmoniously with other communities. Promoting peace and unity must be the central agenda.

These challenges have persisted for over 50 years? What is the mystery; why has it eluded an enduring solution? We have a moral obligation to prevent such unnecessary conflicts from recurring again. It is essential to engage in consultations and foster cooperation to overcome these challenges. We must not lose hope at any moment as the experience gleaned is substantial indeed. What is the purpose of issuing statements and counter-statements on social media? Such actions should be avoided, as they incite hatred and promote provocative campaigns. The most important and urgent message to the people of Ethiopia is that the situation that has engendered ethnic polarization must be addressed. All citizens of Ethiopia should strive to co-exist in harmony, on the basis of mutual respect, cooperation and complementarity. Furthermore, peaceful coexistence within the neighborhood is crucial. There is no benefit in perpetuating grudges and hatred.

Our primary focus and overarching goal is regional stability. It is not our concern to engage with what is being said or who is making those statements daily. We are unwilling, and do not have the appetite, to indulge in these meaningless and acrimonious platforms. Our hopes and objectives are for the people of Tigray to be relieved from the calamity they are enduring to enjoy peace and stability.

Continued on page 4

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI . . .

Continued from page 3

What purpose does it serve to raise unnecessary issues that fuel animosity between the people of Tigray and Eritrea? We will never engage in, or entertain, such follies. What is of paramount importance is the resolution of their internal problems before they reach a point of no return. This can allow full focus on their essential priorities.

As I underlined earlier, the issues that have arisen over the past 30 years are driven by external agendas. This is not mere analysis. It can be substantiated with detailed evidence over time and across various contexts. Their intention has been to foster animosity and instigate conflict between us. Dwelling on innuendos on current events in Ethiopia would be futile.

The political awareness of the peoples of this region must be elevated to keenly and fully realize that it is external intervention which is exacerbating the problems. We need to challenge external meddling. We believe we have shouldered our responsibility in this regard and we will continue to do so. We can draw valuable lessons from 50 years of experience as we contemplate and chart out future plans; also because we know full well the main culprits.

From 2025 onwards, our primary objective will be to defend against such interventions. We will not engage in other unnecessary and peripheral conflicts, and we advise those who are involved in such matters to refrain from doing so.

Mr. President, with the New Year 2025 approaching, let us now turn our attention to domestic issues. What development programs are currently in progress and what new priority programmes are envisaged?

We have been diligently refining our national development plans, with a top priority placed on water security. By considering various factors, we have successfully upgraded our water development programs. Over the years, we have enhanced our capabilities and can confidently say we are now in a stronger position.

Our efforts have focused on the integrated management of watersheds, and we have developed comprehensive water programs at the Zoba, Sub-Zoba, and local administrative and village levels. We have constructed relatively big macro-dams with a capacity of up to 330 million cubic meters, as well as micro-dams capable of holding between 20 and 50 million cubic meters.

Our water development initiatives

go beyond these efforts. To maximize our water resources, we have and continue to implement various strategies, including terracing, leveling, and the construction of small- and large-scale water reservoirs. Additionally, in areas where water-wells are required, including where desalination is possible, the programme is being pursued rigorously to ensure sustainable water security.

We must meet not only current water demands for domestic consumption, livestock, and industries but also ensure water security for future generations. Proper utilization of water reservoirs is also essential. It is imperative to introduce modern water technologies to maximize the use of conserved water for livestock, agriculture, and industrial purposes. We need to adopt innovative approaches in managing our water resources. For instance, instead of using a specific amount of water on ten hectares of land, we should explore ways to extend that usage to one hundred hectares.

Moreover, it is crucial to develop our human resources in areas related to water management. Our development programs must be both innovative and sophisticated, and we have formulated detailed plans for implementation in 2025 and beyond.

Our comprehensive plan outlines where macro, medium, and micro-level dams should be constructed, where water conservation efforts should take place, and what types of trees should be planted in specific areas. This plan is not only extensive, covering all levels from the national to village levels, but it will also be integrated with other development programs. Our primary task now is to identify the sequence of priorities for implementation.

In the infrastructure sector, it is essential to develop various components, including the construction of roads, the development of ports, and the establishment of infrastructure that enables us to utilize our marine resources. While some of these projects are very big in scale and may not be implemented immediately, they will be executed over time in alignment with our development programs.

Our infrastructure initiatives are comprehensive, encompassing areas such as railroads, cable cars, ports, airports, and, importantly, residential housing. The development program clearly outlines when and where each aspect of the plan will be implemented.

We will implement our development plans over time, taking into account the needs and conditions of our people. Priority will be given



to those living in villages and remote areas, particularly individuals who have been denied access to essential social services such as potable water, transportation, and other critical services. However, this does not mean that other issues will be overlooked.

We have also developed detailed plans to ensure a balanced approach to infrastructure development and residential construction, allowing the two sectors to reinforce one another. This signifies that our current development plan is more refined than previous ones.

The next area of priority is the energy sector. Energy is of paramount importance, and little can be accomplished in its absence. Without energy, it is challenging to irrigate agricultural areas, implement plans for the manufacturing and industrial sectors, and transform a subsistence economy into one that adds value through processing and manufacturing. Unfortunately, our electric supply service has dwindled to a critical level, with the initial energy plant installed at Hirgigo, which had a capacity of 120 megawatts, but which is not operational to its full capacity at this point in time.

We have developed a revised program for the energy sector to help us progress towards our ultimate goals. As mentioned earlier, we have various plans to utilize thermal energy, install generators of different capacities that use fuel energy, and harness renewable sources such as solar and wind energy. In the future, we also plan to introduce sustainable geothermal energy. It can be said that we have made significant improvements in this area.

The revised energy sector plan includes comprehensive strategies for expanding electric generation and supply lines throughout the country, as well as addressing household-level consumption. Additionally, the

third component of our development plan, which encompasses hybrid sources of energy—i.e., thermal, renewable, and other sources—has also been revised to enhance its effectiveness.

We have also initiated and mapped out a national energy network, as well as the operational plan, for power generation with an initial capacity of 360 megawatts, aiming to expand it to 2,000 megawatts. This capacity will be utilized for various development projects, including agriculture, marine resource development, and the industrial sector.

It is essential to harness all sources of renewable energy to provide electricity to even the most remote areas of the country. For instance, we need to supply water to pastoralists using solar-powered pumps, which are not connected to the national grid. While these proposals are not new, they require alignment with a clear timeline and necessary resources. Therefore, we have been working to refine these plans and make them as detailed as possible.

Next, we turn to the manufacturing sector. We are all aware of the historical context of this sector in Eritrea, and rather than lamenting the past, we must adopt a stronger approach focused on value addition. A subsistence economy will lead us nowhere. Currently, we are not in a better position than many other African countries in this regard. We need to elevate our capabilities to a manufacturing level, producing not only leather, plastic, and metal products but also advancing to the more complex manufacturing of cars.

In terms of specific consumer goods, our ongoing plans include implementation of significant projects for processing meat, milk, fruits, and vegetables, leveraging our fertile lands for these purposes. It is essential to elevate our agricultural

sector to its highest potential.

The marine resources of our country are extensive and largely untapped. Similar to our initiatives in infrastructure, water, and energy, we have developed operational plans to fully utilize these marine resources. Additionally, we have outlined priority areas for the fisheries industrial sector.

To implement these ambitious national development plans, addressing human resources is crucial. However, it is difficult to assert that we have made significant progress in this area; we are currently lagging behind our goals. We need to align our curriculum and teaching methods with these objectives to ensure that our workforce is adequately prepared for the tasks ahead.

Implementing the aforementioned major development plans without a skilled workforce would be unrealistic. As we prioritize various sectors, the development of our human resources emerges as the most critical factor for achieving sustainable development. We need

to train a skilled workforce to effectively execute our operational plans. Have we successfully achieved our objectives? What challenges have we encountered? What lessons can we learn from projects that did not succeed? Through in-depth evaluations, we can identify actionable steps to enhance our human capacity. This focus on human resources is integral to our social plans. To expand health and educational services in both quality and quantity, we must revise our previous roadmap. Our comprehensive development plan addresses several key issues, including: what has been accomplished over the last three decades, what lessons have been learned from this experience, and what strategies should be implemented for better outcomes.

Continued on page 5

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI . . .

Continued from page 4

However, training a skilled workforce is not enough; such talent must be properly organized and aligned with relevant structures. Effective organization and administration are crucial for achieving significant objectives. The plans outlined above are part of the government's agenda for implementation in 2025. This does not imply that these plans are inflexible; rather, they are open to continuous assessment, evaluation, and improvement. They are dynamic, not static, and we must adopt a state-of-the-art innovative approach, ingraining this mindset as part of our culture.

Reflecting on our plans from 2012, twelve years later, we can recognize past flaws and consider how to rectify or correct those mistakes. What we are doing now is similar, and we are therefore moving in the right direction. Our strength lies in our ability to acknowledge our shortcomings and failures, which in turn helps us understand the challenges we face and design new plans accordingly. Thanks to this approach, all our plans are very realistic.

For the next two to three years, our plans will remain open to improvements, as new innovations and ideas may emerge. During the implementation phase, fresh concepts may arise that can enhance our programs. Therefore, we will not be constrained by a rigid adherence to the blueprints of our plans.

In fact, we will not execute our major development strategies in isolation; we have various stakeholders involved. How we interact with our partners—from prospective African States to Russia, Saudi Arabia, China, Italy, and others—is crucial. The partnerships we forge must align with our national development plans. We engage in open discussions with our partners about our priorities, the timelines for these priorities, and the resources needed to implement such projects.

Thus, our development plans are continually subject to progressive improvements. We can confidently assert that their implementation is assured over time.

Mr. President, thank you for the detailed information on energy and housing. Let us now shift our focus to the public transport sector, which has been a topic of significant public concern. Does the government have any plans to address the key issues within this sector?

This issue is not controversial.

We need to ensure the availability of high-quality buses—not only for urban areas but also for rural and remote regions. It is essential to have buses capable of traveling on gravel roads and providing comprehensive service to every corner of the country. Our public transport sector must prioritize marginalized areas. Key considerations include the number of buses needed, the types of buses required, and sourcing options. The current provision of public transport is clearly inadequate. When citizens can travel freely and affordably, the role of these services in economic development becomes critically important. Access to expansive and dynamic transport services enhances national development.

Moreover, transport services should not only be reliable but also subsidized. There is a rationale for subsidies. The argument is not that citizens should bear all costs related to fuel, labor, and other operational expenses. Instead, by facilitating transport services, we aim to enable beneficiaries to contribute to the economy of the country more effectively.

Similar support can extend to other sectors, but the transport sector is particularly critical. Providing transport services for people is not sufficient; we must also pay attention to livestock and agricultural products that need to be transported from remote areas to cities and towns. The creeping inflation we are witnessing in basic consumer goods affects not only imported items but also locally produced products.

This phenomenon is closely linked to the prevalence of inadequate services, particularly in transportation. For agricultural products to reach end users and be sold at reasonable prices, there must be a rational cost associated with transportation. We need to create conditions where both producers and consumers can benefit equitably. It is vital to conduct a thorough evaluation to identify issues related to the quantity of domestic products, their pricing, and their impact on the standard of living for the general public. This is not a new philosophy; to achieve fundamental solutions, it is imperative to bring producers and consumers closer together. Government subsidies can play a crucial role in alleviating the burden on the public, particularly for those living in remote areas.

For citizens to move freely from one corner of the country to another at their convenience, we need a vast network of roads. This need extends beyond just roads; we must also have efficient land transportation services. This includes enhancing transport services along the coastal

areas of the Red Sea to boost the tourism sector.

The transportation sector should not be limited to land; it must also encompass waterway transportation. We have not also overlooked the aviation sector. On the scale of priorities, land transportation is our primary focus. However, it is important to note that, currently, coverage may not exceed thirty percent. Our relentless goal is to achieve 100 percent coverage in this area.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has recently issued a revised proclamation aimed at boosting the trade sector. In relation to this topic, are there any plans to encourage investments from Eritreans living both inside and outside the country?

The proclamation issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry is directly related to the issues we discussed earlier. It addresses concerns regarding illegal trade, uncontrolled trading activities, and trade practices that evade taxation, and above all, protecting consumers from the negative impacts of such illegal activities.

For instance, it makes no sense for a sheep purchased for seven hundred Nakfa in Haikota to be sold for two thousand Nakfa in Asmara. Those who work hard deserve fair compensation, and consumers should also be able to purchase products at reasonable prices. Additionally, intermediaries who facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers should also benefit. Otherwise, it is unjust to reap illicit gains from both parties.

The primary sources of public burden stem from the unfair increase in prices of consumer goods, particularly those associated with illegal trade. Government employees are among those who suffer the most from these inflated prices, making it difficult for them to afford basic necessities. There must be fair trading practices that benefit everyone.

While these issues primarily concern those living in the country, we must also consider Eritreans living abroad. Regardless of where their money is deposited, the economic capacity of individuals and families abroad represents a significant national economic asset. Given the advantages that come with living overseas, these individuals often have better opportunities and capabilities for investment.

There are significant investment opportunities in the agricultural sector, as well as in various other sectors. The hospitality sector is not

the only available option. We have ambitious plans for sophisticated outputs in metal, plastic, electronics, and other industries. While some projects will be executed with government capabilities, the government cannot reach every corner of the country on its own. As we strive to transform our economy from a subsistence and subsidy-reliant market to one focused on manufacturing, it is essential to invest in all economic sectors, including mining. The involvement of Eritreans living abroad is crucial to this effort, but it is important to ensure that we do not engage them in areas beyond their capabilities.

Our economy has been significantly impacted by relentless sanctions, which have hindered our latent capabilities fully. One of the underlying motives behind the unfair sanctions imposed on us was to undermine the role of Eritreans in the Diaspora. To encourage their participation in the economic development of their country, it is imperative to create conducive conditions for investment. Achieving this requires not only a conducive environment but also the establishment of clear investment laws and regulations.

All the issues we have discussed regarding infrastructure, water, energy, and other development plans are aimed at creating favorable conditions for investment. Once we successfully establish these foundations, it will be easier to consider the types of investments, financial aspects, and strategies for accessing regional and international markets.

The primary tasks involve developing roads, ensuring reliable electricity and water supply, and producing skilled labor to foster a supportive investment environment. Given the challenges we have faced, opportunities for the local population are currently very limited, and most potential investors are from abroad or the Diaspora. However, the timeframe for implementation should be viewed objectively.

It is true that the interest and awareness of our Diaspora are unmatched. Still, we have to recognize the timeline for investment until the necessary infrastructure are fully in place.

Our long-term plan is to transform our subsistence economy into one focused on industry and manufacturing. To achieve this, we must create a conducive environment that allows citizens to invest in areas of their interest. Over time, local citizens will gain the necessary capabilities to participate effectively in this transformation. However, we should not initiate such

efforts without proper guidelines and mechanisms in place.

In this context, we must also consider the state of our banking services. What is the current status of our banking infrastructure? Can it adequately support these investments? There have been previous attempts to enhance banking services through institutions such as the Commercial Bank, Bank of Investment, and Housing and Commerce Bank. However, our banking services have faced significant challenges due to ongoing external hostilities and pressures. It is essential that our banking services develop in tandem with our investment policies and plans. These realities must be taken into account when discussing investments. Setting aside external conspiracies and pressures, is our current banking service efficient? Clearly, there is a need for improvement and development in this sector.

Investment, industry, and trade encompass all the factors I have been discussing, both sector-wise and industry-wise. Irrespective of the magnitude and of the number of individuals involved, their contributions to the economy cannot be underestimated. The proclamations and policies we have been introducing and refining over time aim solely to create a conducive investment environment. This is no easy task, and we are continuously working toward this goal. However, the issue of skills remains a significant challenge. Continuous improvements and structural changes in our policies are necessary to address these challenges effectively. Mobilizing resources involves assessing our human resources and identifying what is feasible and what is not.

In general, we have not overlooked our trade and investment plans; there are promising potentials. However, we must be efficient in implementing the necessary infrastructure that is vital for creating a conducive environment. Operational details can be monitored, and appropriate actions will be taken at the right time. Investment should prioritize citizens, with our Diaspora receiving utmost priority for obvious reasons. They should invest within a defined framework and roadmap, rather than in a hasty manner.

Returning to the issue of housing, as I mentioned earlier, we have not yet achieved our previous goals. Therefore, we are making adjustments to our institutions to address this. Construction companies will be fully engaged in completing the delayed housing projects, including from the Armed Forces.

SpotLight

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

The Fight Against Tuberculosis, A Resurgent Top Infectious Disease Killer

Last year, tuberculosis (TB) returned to being the world's leading infectious disease killer, surpassing COVID-19. Contagious and airborne, TB was also the leading killer of people with HIV and a major cause of deaths related to antimicrobial resistance. Notably, last year saw 8.2 million people worldwide newly diagnosed with TB, the highest number recorded since the World Health Organization began monitoring in 1995. While TB impacts people worldwide, eight developing countries - India, Indonesia, China, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo - accounted for more than two thirds of the global total.

Although frequently overlooked and notwithstanding a number of challenges, over the decades Eritrea has quietly made important strides in combating TB. At present, the country's TB-related figures and progress are not only among the best in the surrounding region, they also compare quite favorably with continental and global figures. For instance, according to data from the WHO, Eritrea



citizens at all ages and seeks to ensure equity and access to essential health services at an affordable cost. All individuals that have TB (or a number of other diseases and disorders) are provided with free continuous care and quality treatments by the Ministry of Health (MoH). In addition to serving as a

the risk of transmission in the community is significantly reduced. (Globally, it is estimated that people with active TB can infect anywhere from 5 to 15 other people through close contact over the course of a year.)

Furthermore, public campaigns and community awareness initiatives, which are regularly conducted in all parts of the country, raise general understanding and reduce misconceptions, ultimately helping ensure that people with TB symptoms know how and where to seek appropriate help. Meanwhile, efforts to improve early detection of TB have also been intensified, including through the training of village health workers nationwide. Ensuring that people are quickly and correctly diagnosed can allow them to get started on the most effective treatment regimen as early as possible.

Eritrea's progress against TB has also been driven by the country's relentless efforts to address several of the main risk factors or conditions that can impair the immune system,

such as HIV, malnutrition, and undernutrition. Importantly, efforts to combat HIV go closely hand in hand with the fight against TB since HIV and TB form a lethal combination, each speeding the other's progress. Worldwide, people living with HIV are approximately 18 times more likely to develop active TB disease than people without HIV. Last year, of the estimated 10.8 million people who fell ill with TB worldwide, people living with HIV accounted for about 6.1 percent of the total.

In Eritrea, as a result of the sustained implementation of high-impact interventions and a well-coordinated, comprehensive approach, notable success has been achieved in halting the spread of HIV and sustaining a steady decline in prevalence and incidence. Based on recent estimates from UNAIDS, HIV prevalence among adults (aged 15-49 years) in Eritrea is now approximately 0.4 percent, down from about 1.5 percent at independence in 1991. In terms of incidence, it has declined from about 3.9 per 1,000 uninfected population (adults aged 15-49 years) in 1991 to less than 0.1

at present. Meanwhile, the total number of AIDS-related deaths across all age groups in the country is estimated to be several hundred – and reducing annually.

Nutrition, too, has been important. In particular, malnutrition can increase the risk of TB and lead to delayed recovery and higher mortality rates. In this regard, Eritrea's efforts to promote food and nutrition security, led by the Ministry of Agriculture, have been critical. As well, the country's Health and Nutrition program, led by the MoH, in partnership with several longstanding international organizations and development partners, works to prevent and treat malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies across different population groups and within various parts of the country.

Alongside all of the above, Eritrea has a high Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination coverage rate. Developed and introduced in the early decades of the 1900s by French bacteriologists Albert Calmette and Camille Guérin, BCG is considered the world's most widely used vaccine. Although it offers limited protection against TB in adults, it helps to protect young children against severe forms of TB. (It is sometimes offered to adults who are at risk of TB, such as some healthcare workers.) Today, BCG is primarily administered in low- and middle-income countries as a simple, cost-effective intervention against TB.

In Eritrea, at birth (or within a few days of being born), almost all newborn children receive a dose of the BCG vaccine. Since 1998, the country's BCG vaccination coverage, defined as the percentage of one-year-olds who have received one dose of BCG vaccine in a given year, has been extremely high, averaging about 97 percent – a figure that is much higher than both the global and SSA averages.

Overall, Eritrea has made important progress in the fight against TB. Sustained commitment and accelerated efforts will help to end the disease and ensure a healthier, safer, more equitable future for all.



registered a TB incidence rate of about 65 per 100,000 population last year, much improved from decades past (in 2000 it was about nearly 180) and recent years (it was about 80 in 2020). By comparison, the global TB incidence rate is estimated to have increased by nearly 5 percent between 2020 and 2023. What is more, the national cure rate for TB has increased impressively, hovering at around 90 percent in recent years. Notably, this is higher than the global recommendation from the WHO.

As with its progress in other areas of health, Eritrea's success in combating TB cannot be attributed to any single factor. Instead, it is the result of a multi-pronged approach.

For one, the country's national health policy aims to maximize the health and well-being of

powerful reflection of Eritrea's longstanding commitment to social justice and equality, this is critical to ensuring that TB patients (and their families) are not burdened by catastrophic financial costs as a result of the disease – something which is all too common in many countries across the globe. (Empirical work and international organizations suggest that due to TB, people face costs or suffer income loss equivalent on average to more than 50 percent of their income.)

Another important factor in Eritrea's positive strides has been the fact that it has maintained a firm focus on prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Prevention is important because it helps to stop people with TB infection from becoming sick, averts suffering, and saves lives. Through TB preventive treatment, not only are Eritreans protected from becoming sick,





Zara Mining
Share Company

Vacancy Announcement

Position:	Batching Plant Operator
Number required	01
Location:	Based at Koka Gold Mine (Site)
Reporting to:	Project
Primary Responsibility & Scope of Work	As a batch plant operator, your duties include supervising the mixing process to ensure that producers use the correct combination of cement and water, testing batches to confirm they have been made to specifications, and addressing any issues.
Duties:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Concrete Batching Plant Operators operate mixing plants to produce batches of concrete from cement, sand, aggregate, water, and other ingredients.Ensuring batching plant suitability is maintained, including routine inspections of machineryPreventative maintenance actions and cleaning of the siteMinimizing waste & maximizing the quality of products.Reporting any defects to line managementAlso assisting the Projects and Maintenance Department with any other activities
Formal Education, Certifications or Equivalent	High school graduate or equivalent.
Working Experience – Nature & Length	Minimum of two years experience operating a batch plant or related operations.
Leadership Experience – Nature & length of time	Good leadership and supervising experience
Salary:	According to the Company’s salary scale.
Additional Requirement for nationals: Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligations and provide evidence of a release paper from the Ministry of Defence. Provide clearance from the current/last employer. Applications should be sent through the Post Office. Only short-listed applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview	
Address: Please mail your applications to Zara Mining Share Company. P. O. Box 2393. Asmara, Eritrea.	



Embassy of India, Asmara invites applications for the post of Marketing Assistant

The applicants should:

- Be fluent in English and Tigrinya.
- Preferably hold a Bachelor’s Degree with Business/Commerce related subjects.
- Have fulfilled their National Service.
- Be medically fit.

Pay will be as per Embassy’s pay scale applicable to the post. Applications for the post may kindly be sent by email to admn.asmara@mea.gov.in or submitted directly to the Embassy of India, House no. 6, City Center Street: 173-5, Asmara within 15 days of the date of publication of this invitation for applications in the newspaper.



Bisha Mining Share Company
P.O. Box 4276
Asmara
Eritrea
Tel: (+291) 1124941
Fax: (+291) 1124941
www.bishamining.com

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Bisha Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following position for Bisha site project.

Position: HME Mechanic
Department: Mining
Section: Asheli Underground
Number Required: Three (03)

Primary Purpose

- Responsible for executing both planned and unplanned maintenance work activities on a shift-by-shift basis safely and effectively. The Mechanic will perform maintenance activities safely and effectively to deliver results that meet quality standards and company expectations.

Unique Requirement

- Able to work in narrow area – tunnel
- No phobia on confine space
- Candidates must be physically and medically fit for the role.

Qualifications:

- Grade 12 Certificate; Trade Certificate

Knowledge and Experience:

- 3 years working experience in Mining Equipment Maintenance

Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
Computer Literacy; MS Office-intermediate, excel-advanced. Driving license. Be able to utilize OEM technical tools, Plan, organize, & execution Risk Management & assessment, analytical and probel solving skill	Good communication skills and Teamwork Ability to work in multi-disciplinary environment. Ability to conduct Maintenance matters to various levels & Willing to learn Interpersonal & Good leadership skills Ability to work under pressure and achieve project milestones; Analytical and Problem-solving..

General Information and other requirements:

- **Place of Work: Bisha.**
- **Salary: As per Company salary scale.**
- **Type of Contract: Indefinite**

Additional requirement for Nationals:

- **Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provided evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.**
- **Present clearance paper from current/last employer.**
- **Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card etc.)**
- **Only shortlisted applicants will be considered as potential candidates for an interview.**
- **Application documents will not be returned to the sender.**
- **All applications should be sent through the post office.**
- **Deadline for application: 10 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.**

Address: Please mail your applications to: -

- Bisha Mining Share Company,
- P. O. Box 4276 Asmara, Eritrea

Note to Eritrean applicants:

Please send a copy of your application

1. Aliens Employment permits Affairs,
P. O. Box 7940
Asmara, Eritrea.
2. Mineral Resources Management
P. O. Box 272
Asmara, Eritrea



Q and A

“My Sole Dream is to Make My Nation and My People Proud Through an Internationally Recognized Work” Samrawit Fitwi

Sabrina Solomon

Our guest today, Samrawit Fitwi, is an Eritrean model, fashion designer, hair and makeup artist and actress. Here, shares her journey in the fashion, make up and film industries.



Please, introduce yourself.

I was born and raised in Edaga Hamus, Asmara. I was raised by a single mother that I will forever admire. I was very competitive at school but was not able to go to college due to some personal issues. So, I shifted my focus to my childhood passion and dream of getting involved in fashion industry.

What attracted you to fashion in your childhood?

I had a feeling that I was made for it. Growing up, I used to read a lot about fashion and fashion designers. And when I was a grown up, I noticed that I had a body that would be good for modeling. So, I started working as a model in 2011. At that time, I worked as a model for a fashion show competition that was televised on Eri-TV.

After a year into my modeling career, I decided to learn more about fashion design while working as a model. In 2013, I took courses on makeup and hair styling, and in 2017, I started working as a fashion designer and hair and makeup artist.

How did your first fashion show go?

My first fashion show was inspired by traditional African wear. Despite my love for modern designs and cuts, I am obsessed with traditional outfits. Therefore, for my first show, I went with a

combination of African garments and pieces focusing on couple's outfits. I used the couple's outfits in a video clip of the late singer, Yonathan Tadese, aka Dula. After that, I started designing modern outfits that I showcase in my own fashion shows and then make them available for sale.

How many fashion shows have you held?

I have so far held over 15 fashion shows with different themes. I once held a fashion show that featured many outstanding models in Asmara, presenting traditional Eritrean and modern outfits. I had a show with Valentine's theme and my outfits were presented by young fashion models that I taught. There was a show that I presented during a religious holiday with a traditional theme. I have also presented my works at shows in Massawa during the celebration of its liberation, and I had a unique fashion show of face masks when the world was invaded by COVID 19 pandemic.

What's your brand or your unique theme as a designer? Is there a single thing that you focus on?

A designer grows with time and experience and eventually develops his or her own brand. I am also in the process of creating my brand, my unique identification designs.

I don't focus on a single thing when it comes to designing

because I believe that if you focus on just one thing, you may get stuck and not move forward. My ideas for designs come from things in the environment that I see. I work on both modern and traditional outfits for different weathers. There's no single thing that I focus on as a designer but try to diversify my designs.

Tell us more about your work as a hair and makeup artist.

I have worked as a makeup artist for long now. I have been doing this job especially for famous singers for their video clips. I am also into doing hair. I do the hair as well as the makeup of the models that wear my designed clothes for my fashion shows, and I once held a hair style show that focused on braids and French twists.

You started a training program for new and young models.

Yes. It was a program that I had in 2023 which became possible with the assistance of the Commission of Culture and Sports. We presented our idea for the training program to the

Commission with the help of Amanuel Dawit, an expert in traditional Eritrean dances. The purpose of the program is to equip Eritrean models with adequate knowledge of their society's culture such as celebrations, traditional dances, and lifestyles. Seeing what we were doing, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) gave my models and I an opportunity to participate at a competition organized on the occasion of Eritrea's Independence Day. I would like to thank the Commission and the NUEW for their assistance.

You have recently been seen on television screens playing roles in films. Tell us more about your work as an actress.

I have never imagined to be an actress. It all started when Debesay Weldu, the film maker, offered me a role in the television series "Machelo". I was hesitant at first because I knew very little about acting. But I decided to give it a try. It was a bit different from the art that I used to do, but it ignited a new passion for me. After my debut through that film,



I have gone to work on many television serials, playing roles as a policewoman, a criminal, a materialistic woman, and others. My journey as an actress is going forward and I'm always learning and growing.

You have been working as a judge in fashion and makeup shows. Tell us your experience in this field.

I have worked as a judge in fashion shows because it is related to my job. I worked as a judge in fashion show for the first time in 2018 after accepting an offer at the youth festival held in Sawa. The occasion allowed me to apply my knowledge and experience, which proved that I was qualified for the position. It also gave me an opportunity to learn a lot from the experienced judges that I worked with.

What is next for you?

Based on our culture, I want to produce internationally recognized artistic work that will make my country and my people proud. And I am confident that this is next for me.

Is there any message you'd like to give to young ladies?

My main message is for the ladies is to have a career that can make us thrive. I advise them not to be dependent on other people and take initiatives to be independent. Although it's natural to sometimes ask for help, it's crucial for a female to have self-confidence and work towards making her dreams come true. Thank you!

We wish you all the best!

Translated from November's issue of Menisey, a quarterly magazine in Tigrinya published by the NUEYS

