



PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI LAID WREATH AT TWALET MARTYRS CEMETERY

On the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of Fenkil Operation and the Liberation of Massawa, President Isaias Afwerki laid a wreath at Thewalet Martyrs Cemetery, in the morning hours of February 08, in tribute to Eritrea's heroes and heroines who paid the ultimate price for the independence of their country

The ceremony was attended by Ministers, senior Government and PFDJ officials, Army Commanders, and invited guests.

Following the wreath-laying

ceremony, President Isaias visited an exhibition organized by the Ministries of Defense and Marine Resources, as well as the Naval Force and Ports Authority, among others. Coordinators provided the President with detailed briefings on the displays.

The 35th-anniversary commemoration of Fenkil Operational is being held from 7 to 9 February under the theme "Fenkil: The Right Choice," accompanied by various programs celebrating the historic event.

OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION OF FENKIL OPERATION

The official ceremony marking the 35th anniversary of Fenkil Operation was held on February 08 with great enthusiasm under the theme "Fenkil: The Right Choice." The event was attended by President Isaias Afwerki, Ministers, senior Government and PFDJ officials, Army Commanders, and a number of nationals.

Ms. Asmeret Abraha, Governor of the Northern Red Sea region, highlighted that this year's commemoration emphasizes

the bold and historic decision to liberate Massawa and remove the occupying forces. She explained that Fenkil Operation was a decisive political and military victory that paved the way for the total liberation of Eritrea.

Ms. Zeineb Omar, Chairperson of the Holidays Coordinating Committee in the Northern Red Sea region, congratulated attendees from both within the country and abroad. She also commended those who contributed to making the event vibrant and memorable.

The 35th anniversary commemoration featured an exhibition organized by the Ministries of Defense and Marine Resources, the Port Authority, and other line ministries. Additional activities included general knowledge and sports competitions, as well as community gatherings.

The East African Half Marathon, organized by the National Athletics Federation, was also held as part of the celebrations for the Fenkil Operation anniversary.



ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN FOOD SAFETY MEASURES



The Regulatory Services Department of the Ministry of Agriculture reported significant progress in agricultural inspections conducted in 2024.

Mr. Tekleab Misghina, Director General of Regulatory Services, stated that the department, through regional inspectors, has worked diligently to ensure the safety of animal and plant-based food products before they enter the market. Efforts were also made to maintain a proper food processing chain and prevent cross-contamination across 18 food and processing plants.

Mr. Tekleab further noted that around 23 tons of obsolete agro-chemicals were safely disposed of in collaboration with relevant Government institutions, with an

additional 140 tons awaiting disposal. The Seed Release Committee, overseen by the Regulatory Services, conducted inspection tours of various farmlands to verify the quality of basic seeds under multiplication.

According to regulatory reports, two guidelines were developed to ensure quality assurance for vegetables and potato seeds. The department also conducted salinity inspections on irrigation farms in Forto-Sawa and Dige, confirming that no salinity issues were detected.

Mr. Tekleab emphasized that the department organized extensive awareness campaigns, including meetings, workshops, and conferences, attended by approximately 2,700 participants.

ERITREA PARTICIPATES IN WORLD CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC FESTIVAL

Eritrea is participating in the 38th World Cultural and Artistic Festival, which is being held in India from 7 February. The annual festival is organized in collaboration with India's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Tourism.

The festival, known as the Surajkund International Crafts Mela, features cultural troupes from 51 countries. Eritrea's cultural

troupe, "Sibrit," presented an artistic performance that showcased Eritrea's traditional culture and the unity in diversity of the Eritrean people.

Mr. Alem Tsehaye, Eritrea's Ambassador to the Republic of India, attended the event.

The festival, which will continue until 23 February, will feature

traditional and indigenous cultural shows, a bazaar, cultural and traditional artifacts, dances, and displays of cultural foods and costumes.

The World Cultural and Artistic Festival is one of the largest cultural festivals in India, attracting over one million visitors from around the world.



REPORTAGE

Fenkil 2025: A Celebration of Resilience

Nebil Fikak

February holds a special place for Eritreans. The 1988 Nadew offensive, a turning point in the Eritrean People's Liberation Front's (EPLF) fight against the Derg regime, was followed by the 1990 lightning offensive of Operation Fenkil, culminating on February 10th in the capture of Massawa. Operation Fenkil ushered in the dawn of Eritrea's independence, marking the end of a 30-year revolutionary struggle.

The 35th anniversary of this unparalleled feat was celebrated from 7-9 February under the theme "Fenkil—The Right Choice". On Saturday morning, President Isaias Afwerki laid a wreath at the Tank Monument, paying tribute to the fallen heroes. President Isaias was joined by Northern Red Sea Region Governor Asmeret Abraha and Culture and Sports Commissioner Ambassador Zemed Tekle, along with ministers, PFDJ officials, army commanders, and others.

and Commander, is a testament to the fighters' heroism and victory. Adorned with flags and slogans, the well-preserved tanks, evoke memories of the remarkable victory.

Operation Fenkil, a three-day battle that began on 8th and ended on 10th February 1990, is a testament to the EPLF's excellence in its coordinated military operation that involved its infantry and mechanized units as well as its nascent navy. The capture of Massawa, a strategic port crucial for the Derg regime's

in 1977. This tank, which played a significant role in various battles throughout the armed struggle, including the battle to capture Barentu and various engagements to halt Derg offensives, became a symbol of resilience and ultimate victory.

Following the wreath-laying ceremony, President Isaias, ministers, government officials, and army commanders visited an exhibition near Sigalet Cinema. The exhibition showcased photographs, paintings and sculptures that portray the history of Operation



survival, effectively sealed the

Fenkil and the armed struggle, the culture and livelihoods of Eritrea's ethnic groups, and the atrocities committed against the Eritrean people; and works by students that demonstrate their creativity.

The 35th anniversary celebrations, which began in Massawa on January 26th, featured a cycling race, a defense forces sports competition, the Eastern Africa Half Marathon Championship (with athletes from Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan), music and dance at the



The Tank monument, featuring three tanks named Jaguar, Tiger,

fate of the Ethiopian army in Eritrea and paved the way for



independence. The operation is remembered as one of the most significant conventional battles in sub-Saharan Africa, involving extensive logistical preparations and a massive deployment of troops and tanks.

The battle was fought on multiple fronts, with the EPLF Navy playing a crucial role in destroying enemy ships anchored at Massawa Harbor. The Tank Monument at Tiwalet is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made during the liberation struggle. One of the tanks displayed, Commander No. 1, is a T-55 tank captured from the Derg

streets, and seminars on topics such as the Battle of Salina (Salina 77), the EPLF's maritime transport, and conflict resolution.

The Fenkil Marathon, also known as the Eastern Africa Half Marathon Championship, following its international recognition in 2011, is one of the most important events featured to make Fenkil celebrations colorful. Sixty-three athletes, including three each from Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan, competed in the 21km men's race, twenty-one athletes competed in the 10km women's race, and four men competed in the 5km



wheelchair race.

The 2022 and 2024 champion, Olympian athlete Samson Amare, secured his third victory in 2025. His recent accomplishments include wins at the 2023 Abu Dhabi and 2024 Shanghai Marathons. Samson is also the reigning half-marathon champion at the All-African Games. Afwerki Yemane finished second, and Silas Boshi, from Uganda, finished third. A World Athletics-registered event, the championship allows athletes to earn world-ranking points.

In the women's 10km road race, Yordanos Haileselesie and Dolshi Tesfu, both from Denden Club, took first and second place, respectively while Maria Ali, from Maekel, finished third.

With the pleasant weather, Massawa has been bustling with activity as it welcomed guests. Streets have been decorated with flags and slogans. The warm Massawa evenings created a welcoming atmosphere for locals and visitors, enjoying the peace and the local cuisine.

The official commemoration, which was held on Saturday afternoon, was attended by President Isaias, ministers, senior PFDJ officials, senior army commanders, and hundreds of guests. The event started off with a moment of silence to pay tribute to the martyrs and was followed by a procession of navy vessels. The procession showcased the skills of women in the Navy, and it was met with enthusiastic applause.

Ms. Zeineb Omar, Director General of the Culture and Sports Department at the Northern Red Sea Region, gave a welcoming speech emphasizing Operation Fenkil's significance as a monument of Eritrean heroism. She outlined the various activities planned, including marine resource activities, seminars, competitions, exhibitions, cultural performances, and community events.

In her speech, Ms. Asmeret Abraha, Governor of the Northern Red Sea region, highlighted the significance of Operation Fenkil as a courageous and decisive action that liberated Massawa. Giving emphasis to the need to remain vigilant in a rapidly changing world, she gave a summary of the development activities carried out in the region and the restoration of the historical EPLF forts by members of the Eritrean Defence Forces. Musical and cultural performances followed, featuring prominent artists and cultural groups. The celebration continued with patriotic fervor for around three hours.

On Sunday, the five administrative areas in Massawa hosted visitors in the communal tents set up for the occasion. Gergusum Beach was filled with visitors enjoying the sea, and during the three-day celebration, boats transported people between Green Island and inland Massawa, giving visitors a glimpse of the marine resources in the Red Sea.



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**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**

SpotLight

Healing and Hope: Eritrea's Enduring Commitment and Comprehensive Approach to Eradicating Obstetric Fistula

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

A Devastating - but Preventable - Condition

Obstetric fistula is one of the most severe and traumatic childbirth injuries affecting women and girls worldwide. It results in devastating health complications and strips affected individuals of their dignity, rights, and quality of life. The following article briefly overviews obstetric fistula and examines Eritrea's progress in preventing, treating, and rehabilitating survivors. Despite several ongoing challenges, Eritrea remains committed to eradicating this condition, protecting women and girls, and restoring the lives of those affected.

Understanding Obstetric Fistula

Obstetric fistula is a childbirth-related injury characterized by an abnormal opening between the birth canal and the bladder and/or rectum. This leads to chronic incontinence of urine or feces, significantly impairing a woman's physical, emotional, and social well-being. The primary cause of obstetric fistula is prolonged, obstructed labor, often resulting from inadequate access to timely and quality medical intervention during childbirth. Other contributing factors include harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and early marriage, both of which increase the risk of complications during delivery. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable, as their bodies may not yet be fully developed for childbirth.

As shown by a large body of medical reports and empirical studies, the consequences of obstetric fistula are severe and multifaceted. Women with this condition often experience chronic infections, kidney disease, painful sores, and infertility. Left untreated, it can lead to life-threatening complications. Socially affected women frequently face rejection, stigma, and isolation due to the persistent odor and misconceptions surrounding the condition. Many are abandoned by their families, ostracized by their communities, and subjected to severe psychological distress,

including depression and suicidal thoughts. Moreover, a large percentage of women with obstetric fistula endure the additional trauma of stillbirth, further compounding their suffering.

According to estimates from international organizations, including the World Health Organization, several million women and girls worldwide live with untreated obstetric fistula. Approximately 50,000 to 100,000 new cases emerge each year, predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Arab region, Latin America, and the Caribbean. (In contrast, obstetric fistula is virtually non-existent in developed countries due to widespread access to skilled medical care, including emergency Caesarean sections.)

Eritrea's Enduring Commitment

Like many nations in sub-Saharan Africa, Eritrea continues to grapple with obstetric fistula. Recent local estimates suggest the condition affects approximately 0.34 per 1,000 women, with a higher prevalence among females under 18. Additionally, obstructed labor contributes significantly to maternal mortality, which stood at 184 per 100,000 live births in 2019. Many fistula cases in Eritrea also result in stillbirths, compounding the tragedy faced by affected women.

Despite various challenges, Eritrea has demonstrated a strong, enduring commitment to eliminating obstetric fistula through implementing a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach.

The Ministry of Health (MoH), in close collaboration with local and international partners, provides free fistula repair services, transportation coverage, and a robust rehabilitation program. Central to these efforts is the National Fistula Diagnosis and Treatment Center (NFDTC), located in Mendefera, which offers free diagnosis, treatment, post-surgical care, and accommodation for patients nationwide. Over the years, the center, staffed by locals and receiving support from developmental partners, has achieved a high success rate in fistula repair, allowing survivors



to regain their health, dignity, and independence.

Rehabilitation and Community Reintegration

Eritrea's comprehensive approach has gone beyond medical treatment, and the country

also in place to reduce stigma and raise awareness about the importance of antenatal care and skilled delivery services. Crucially, reducing stigma and discrimination against survivors helps to restore dignity, encourages seeking treatment, supports mental health, fosters



prioritizes fistula survivors' psychological, economic, and social rehabilitation. Regular follow-ups ensure that patients do not develop recurring injuries. Additionally, survivors receive counseling, financial support, and vocational training, which helps them reintegrate into their communities and achieve self-sufficiency. Community engagement initiatives are

community reintegration, and empowers women - ultimately ensuring that they regain independence, opportunities, and a better quality of life.

Preventive Measures and Broader Health Initiatives

As with its general approach and strategy to overall health and well-being, Eritrea's efforts

to combat obstetric fistula focus heavily on prevention. This reduces risks, enhances early intervention, promotes better maternal health, and minimizes long-term physical and emotional consequences. For one, the country has implemented stringent laws and enforcement measures prohibiting harmful traditional practices, such as FGM/C and child marriage. Public awareness campaigns and media initiatives educate communities about the dangers of these practices and emphasize the importance of reproductive health.

Furthermore, Eritrea's broader healthcare improvements have also played a critical role in reducing obstetric fistula. The government has expanded access to healthcare services, significantly increasing the number of doctors, nurses, and midwives. Greater efforts have been made to deploy healthcare professionals to rural and underserved areas. Today, over 80 percent of Eritrea's population lives within a 10-kilometer radius of a healthcare facility, and more than 70 percent within a 5-kilometer radius. As a result, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel has risen dramatically, while antenatal care coverage has similarly improved, with 98 percent of pregnant women attending at least one antenatal visit.

A Future Free from Obstetric Fistula

Eritrea's unwavering commitment to eliminating obstetric fistula is yielding positive results. Through a combination of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation strategies, the country is not only addressing the immediate needs of affected women but also working to eradicate the condition entirely. By continuing to invest in maternal health, enforcing protective laws, and fostering community engagement, Eritrea is paving the way for a future where no woman or girl suffers from this preventable condition.

While challenges remain, the progress achieved to date is encouraging and underscores the power of a holistic, sustained, and compassionate approach to public health.



SpotLight

Unforgotten: The Asmara Massacre 50 Years Later

Awet Tesfay

In Eritrean history, the crimes and atrocities committed by Ethiopian colonial rulers against the Eritrean people before and throughout the armed struggle for independence are delineated into four escalating phases: 1967, 1970-1973, 1974-1978, and 1978-1991.

During the first phase, military aggression was viciously directed at Eritreans, particularly Eritrean Muslims. The Ethiopian rulers attempted to create division by portraying Eritrean Christians as supporters of the union while vilifying Eritrean Muslims as enemies. This strategy aimed to drive a wedge between the closet-knit population but ultimately failed to take hold. By 1970, this unsuccessful attempt at division was abandoned in favor of indiscriminate mass killings and continuous onslaughts of devastation as the primary weapon against Eritreans. It is important to note that atrocities were not absent before 1970. In 1967, mass killings in the settlements around Asmara terrorized village residents to such an extent that 22 Eritrean members of the Ethiopian parliament petitioned Emperor Haileselassie, expressing their grave objections to the unprovoked killings of innocent Eritreans.

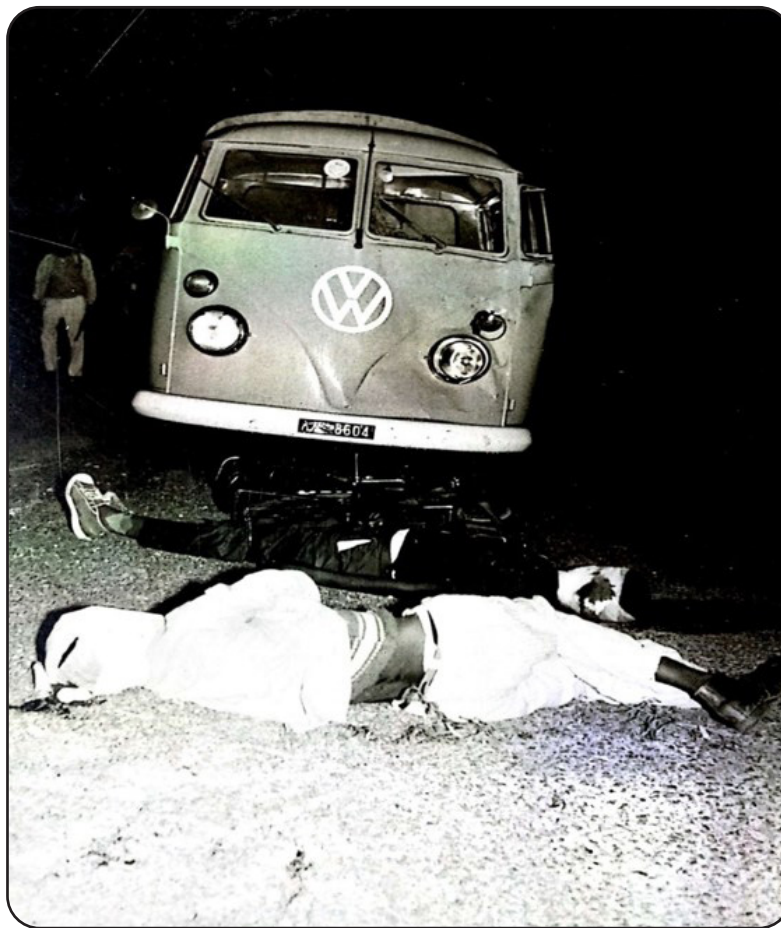
In November 1970, fighters of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) assassinated the commander of the 2nd division of the Ethiopian army along the Asmara-Keren road. This act of resistance shocked and enraged the emperor, prompting a brutal crackdown on the Eritrean people. The western lowlands of Eritrea were declared dangerous zones, suspected of harboring ELF fighters, derogatorily referred to as “bandits.” Consequently, villages in these areas were decreed to either abandon their

homes and aggregate near Ethiopian army camps or face destruction. The Ethiopian army terrorized numerous villages and villagers, with the objective of either annihilating them or devastating their settlements beyond habitability, forcing them to relocate to cities or flee into exile.

Thousands of civilians perished in towns such as Geleb, Ajerbeb, Fafi’da, S’nqa, F’ledarb, Hantol, Musha’ayg, Fana, Shef’shifit, Rora biet Gebru, Baskdira, and many others in the provinces of Semhar and Sahel. In Ona alone, 750 innocent residents were massacred. The killings were characterized by a profoundly callous and sadistic spirit, involving deception and false promises of relocation before mercilessly executing the people.

The overarching goal of these atrocities was to distance the populace from the armed struggle, which the Ethiopian rulers claimed was the direct cause of their suffering. However, these acts of brutality only galvanized the Eritrean people, leading many to join the armed struggle or stand against Ethiopian rulers. This defiance was exemplified by four desperate and brave Eritreans who hijacked an airplane *en route* from Bahir Dar to Benghazi, Libya, to draw global attention to the plight and suffering of the Eritrean people.

In September 1974, the combined opposition of Ethiopians and the ongoing war in Eritrea led to the overthrow of Emperor Haileselassie. His brutal regime was swiftly replaced by the Derg’s equally oppressive military tyranny. This transitional period in colonial leadership provided a unique opportunity for the Eritrean liberation movements to advance their cause. At this juncture, the Derg’s rule was newly established and thus lacked



robust security and intelligence infrastructure. Consequently, the weakened Derg administration allowed liberation movements to cement their influence in and around Asmara. They recruited numerous *Fedayin* and conducted several strategic hits against the colonial forces, raising the people’s hopes that freedom from brutal regimes was within reach.

The Derg regime summoned a substantial portion of its military from Ethiopia to regain control and assert dominance, reinforced by air and naval forces and special forces units. Meanwhile, the *Fedayin* continued their operations in Asmara, culminating in a highly effective operation that involved bombing three locations: Bar Babylon, Bar Gondar, and Bar International. This resulted in the death of several Ethiopian military and high-ranking officials, with many soldiers sustaining serious injuries. The event sent shockwaves throughout the Derg military.

Amidst these developments, many of Asmara’s youth had begun collaborating with the liberation movements. In response, the Derg regime, seeking to terrorize the city’s residents and deter them from supporting the liberation movements, unleashed a series of inhumane crimes. Armed soldiers were dispatched to parks and other gathering places, where

they opened fire on civilians. Special military units, known as “snuffers” (ጸፈጽቲ), specialized in the brutal kidnapping and execution of civilians with complete impunity. Another horrific tactic was “operation piano wire,” in which scores of young people and university students were abducted and strangled with piano wires, and their bodies were displayed on the streets to dissuade the population from supporting or even associating with the liberation struggle. Many families discovered the fate of their loved ones through these gruesome street displays.

Amidst these unspeakable events and mounting tensions, the Derg army embarked on an uncontrollable killing spree in and around Asmara for over a week. This horrendous period is part of the larger stretch of atrocities that occurred during the third phase (1974-1978). It began on January 31, 1975, when the Derg, having funneled its army into Asmara and feeling secure in its strength, set out to push the liberation forces further from the city outskirts. They launched an attack on encampments to the northwest of Asmara. The liberation movement armies held their ground and retaliated, resulting in an exchange of fire that lasted until dawn. In Asmara, soldiers barged into homes, either shooting or stabbing civilians with their rifles, accusing them

of “hiding the bandits.”

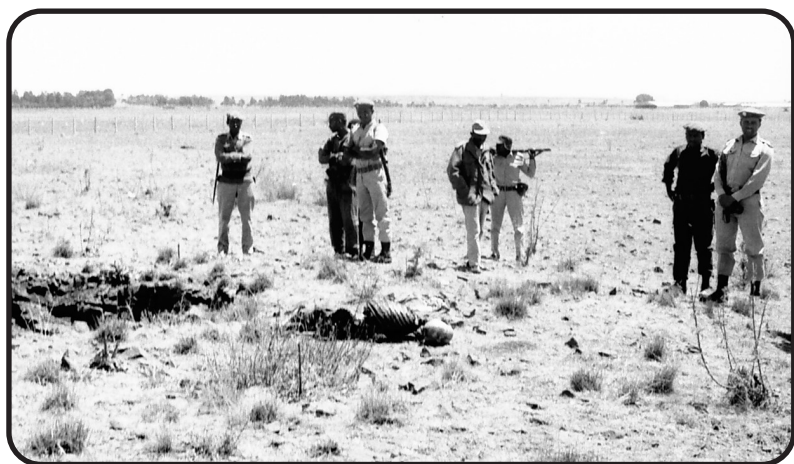
The next day, February 1, the Derg armed forces advanced to Wekiduba, Adi Shimagle, and Adi Habteselus to attack the ELF units around the villages, continuing the slaughter of innocent civilians they had begun the night before. In Wekiduba alone, 87 people were massacred. Throughout the day, Ethiopian forces, aided by aerial reinforcements, mounted offensives against liberation forces garrisoned to the northwest and east of Asmara. Despite their superior artillery, the Ethiopian army faced determined opposition and lost two fighter jets. This triumph provided a moment of optimism for Eritrean freedom fighters and civilians alike.

A similar fate awaited the Ethiopian Derg army on February 2, when they mounted an offensive around Adi Nefas and Emba Derho and sustained serious defeats. The following day, February 3, began with the sounds of shots as the battle continued near Adi Nefas, Adi Yaeqob, and Beleza. The liberation forces, supported by civilians of all ages – women, children, the elderly, and youngsters – held their ground. The Beleza power plant was destroyed in the process, leading to a power blackout that plunged Asmara into darkness. Ethiopian fighter jets directed their lethal ammunition towards villages and civilians, bombing them relentlessly. However, these dirty tactics did little to advance the Ethiopian army, and they could not dislodge the Eritrean liberation forces from the outskirts of Asmara. The threat of Asmara falling into the hands of the liberation forces was significant enough that the Derg resorted to pulling over 60% of its military stationed throughout Eritrea into Asmara.

Hospitals across the city were filled to capacity with injured Ethiopian soldiers, providing the liberation forces an opportunity to inflict severe damage on the Ethiopian army. On February 4, units of the EPLF infiltrated the *Settanta-otto* infantry hospital, opening fire on Ethiopian soldiers and causing heavy casualties within the infantry.

Each defeat encountered by the Ethiopian army was frequently retaliated against Eritrean

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...The Asmara Massacre 50 Years Later

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civilians. Consequently, the enraged Derg army embarked on a vengeful and bloodthirsty rampage, targeting the residents of Asmara. Homes were forcibly entered, and families were violently murdered. The Derg army persisted in this path of killing and

looting, wiping out entire families in the process. Scores of civilians, in a desperate bid for safety, abandoned their homes and sought refuge in churches. For example, the Church of Saint Francis provided sanctuary to over 3,000 individuals. Many families found themselves with no alternative but to flee the city entirely, hoping to

preserve what remained of their kin. The neighborhoods of Gejeret and Ziban Snqey bore the brunt of these barbaric acts. Hospitals were overwhelmed with injured civilians and corpses. The week marked a truly dark period in Asmara's history. The number of innocent civilians killed during this week-long killing spree is estimated to exceed

one thousand. These dreadful days, which tore the city apart, came to be remembered as the Havoc of Asmara.

many women were recruited alongside their male counterparts. The year 1975 marked a significant period when the



... A Conversation with Prof. Edward Denison on Asmara's Architectural Heritage

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Asmara's preservation is largely a result of historical happenstance rather than deliberate planning. A defining characteristic of many modern cities is their unfinished nature. The rise of modernism in the early 20th century was abruptly interrupted by World War II, leaving many cities with partially realized grand plans.

In the case of Asmara, the period following World War II, under British administration, was primarily focused on a war economy, limiting significant construction activity. While some development occurred during the federation with Ethiopia in the late 1950s and 1960s, construction activity remained relatively subdued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, Asmara entered the 1990s remarkably well-preserved, retaining much of its early 20th-century character, albeit with some notable exceptions like developing areas such as Gejeret, Tiravolo, and Geza Banda.

However, the post-independence period witnessed rapid economic growth, accompanied by the construction of high-rise buildings like Nakfa House and the Blue Building. This marked a shift, as a city that had remained largely intact despite various foreign influences now faced the risk of quickly losing its unique character.

We observe this phenomenon in many cities worldwide, where the pursuit of modernity is often equated with constructing high-rise buildings. This is evident in cities like Addis Ababa. However, it's crucial to recognize that the construction of such buildings cannot be necessarily equated to development.

Asmara's approach to development is commendable in its long-term vision. By prioritizing the preservation of existing structures, Asmara avoids the pitfalls of rapid and unsustainable urban development, which often leads to the demolition of older buildings and their replacement with costly high-rises that require constant maintenance and ultimately become obsolete, leaving behind an environmentally damaging legacy.

How does the Modern Heritage of Africa (MoHoA) seek to reshape the understanding of modern cultural

heritage?

My research contends that recognizing the true value of modern heritage in Asmara and, by extension, Africa necessitates a fundamental shift in our understanding of it. This requires decentering current conceptual frameworks and adopting a cosmological perspective that acknowledges our existence in a planetary age.

This is the core objective of MoHoA, a global collaborative network of practitioners, academics, and the public dedicated to decentering existing heritage theories and practices.

One key aspect of MoHoA's agenda is using Africa as a case study to address the pervasive issue of Eurocentrism in heritage discourse. Africa exemplifies how Eurocentric biases have led to the neglect, marginalization, and undervaluation of African cultural heritage. Established in 2020, MoHoA aims to critically examine existing global heritage frameworks and advocate for greater inclusion of African perspectives and contributions to the World Heritage List.

Furthermore, MoHoA recognizes the profound impact of the Anthropocene on modern heritage. Modern heritage emerged from a period of significant human impact on the planet, a period that is now causing existential crises, such as climate change, resulting from industrialization, globalization, and urbanization.

Paradoxically, modern heritage, a product of modernity itself, is now threatened by the forces that gave rise to it. The widespread demolition of modern buildings in urban centers exemplifies this paradox.

The Anthropocene, the current geological epoch characterized by human impact on the planet, underscores the urgent need to recognize this inherent contradiction. Modern heritage must be viewed not only as a product of modernity but also as a victim of unintended consequences. By acknowledging this dual nature, we can develop more effective strategies for preserving and appreciating modern heritage.

Finally, in what ways do you think the adoption of a cosmological perspective can enhance our

appreciation of modern heritage?

Modern heritage signifies a pivotal moment in human history—the emergence of humanity as a planetary species. We transitioned from a period of internationalism in the early 20th century to a globalized world in the late 20th century. This necessitates a shift in perspective, recognizing our interconnectedness as a planetary entity.

The impact of modernity has been undeniably global, with climate change serving as a prime example of its planetary-scale consequences. In the 21st century, we are increasingly viewing ourselves as a planet within a cosmos, with the prospect of interplanetary travel to destinations like Mars becoming a tangible reality.

To effectively address the challenges of the Anthropocene, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and rising sea levels, we must view modernity and modern heritage within this broader cosmological framework. This requires acknowledging that modern heritage, while a product of modernity, also contributes to the challenges that threaten its existence.

By adopting this cosmological perspective, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of modern heritage, recognizing its role within the broader context of human history and its impact on the planet. This understanding is crucial for developing effective strategies to protect and preserve modern heritage for future generations.

Any final remarks or anything that we haven't covered that you would like to add...

I would like to highlight the MoHoA Cape Town document on modern heritage. This document, developed through workshops and conferences, outlines a draft policy framework to decenter the current Eurocentric approach to modern heritage.

By advocating for a more inclusive and equitable framework, we can encourage the recognition of diverse expressions of modern heritage, including those from Africa that may not conform to traditional European aesthetics. The broader adoption of this framework by countries worldwide will ultimately benefit the global majority.

However, Asmara's plight did not end there. On February 8, along the Asmara-Dekemhare road, fighters from the liberation forces successfully laid siege to 25 military trucks delivering arms from Ethiopia to the Derg's military in Asmara. The ELF and EPLF subsequently executed a joint attack on *Qagnew*, the large military camp in Asmara, inflicting a devastating blow to the Derg's forces. Unable to crush the liberation forces, the Derg administration opted to continue terrorizing the city in an attempt to regain some measure of control and carried out a series of civilian killings.

Numerous units from the Ethiopian Air Force, navy, and even Special Forces were summoned to Asmara as the situation grew increasingly dire. Amid the chaos of attacks and counterattacks, these units operated without centralized command, leading to unchecked civilian killings and other atrocious acts. The mass slaughter and hanging of young men and women became so rampant that many freedom fighter commandos, horror-stricken by the extermination of their people, abandoned their posts in the camps around Asmara and rushed into the city to engage in close combat with enemy soldiers. This action relatively stabilized the situation. Nonetheless, the indiscriminate killings and cruelty so completely antagonized Eritreans, especially the youth, that many left the city and their civilian lives to join the liberation forces. Rather than quelling the people's will, these atrocious acts only intensified their desire for freedom.

The year 1975 is remembered as the most brutal and horrific in Asmara's history, witnessing unspeakable horrors. Although Asmara experienced the most brutality that year, other towns and villages throughout Eritrea suffered similar crimes. During the last months of 1974 and the early months of 1975, an estimated 10,000 recruits flocked to both the ELF and EPLF, eager to fight alongside freedom fighters to rid their country of the oppressive Derg regime. Most of these recruits, hailing from both Eritrea and Ethiopia, were under 20 years of age. Among them were individuals from various walks of life: professors, teachers, university students, doctors, members of the police force, and government officials. Notably,

predominantly male liberation forces welcomed large numbers of female fighters into their ranks, altering the face of the movement and revolutionizing the cultural and religious outlooks of the Eritrean people. This influx of young fighters strengthened and fortified the liberation forces to the point where the prospect of freeing the country from Ethiopian oppression seemed within reach.

However, throughout the fourth phase (1978-1991), the Ethiopian military administration received considerable foreign support and, for over a decade, continued its devastation of Eritrea, prolonging the war and delaying Eritrea's independence. Despite this, independence was inevitable.

This week, we remember the horror and pain suffered by the people of Asmara. This beautiful city endures fifty years on, as does the rest of the country. The minarets and church towers stand side by side, adorning the unmistakable urban skyline. Its residents walk its streets with pride and assurance. The sounds of life and laughter echo throughout the city as the sun rises and sets boldly on its safe streets. Known, besides its quaint charm, for the peace and security it embodies, Asmara remembers the price that was paid fifty years ago.

Strolling on the sidewalk, I imagine a time when my Asmara was wrought with strife and death. Yet, wherever I look, etched in the faces of the people and marked on the city's architecture, there is only calmness and quiet dignity. The roads and streets, once bloodied by the bodies of Eritreans, are now bustling with a vibrant population. Many young people my age rush about, preparing for a weekend in Massawa. I, too, am hurrying to drive down to Massawa to celebrate Fenqil.

At this thought, I am reminded of the distasteful refrain uttered by Ethiopian colonial rulers and adopted into a deadly policy in their war against Eritreans: "drying the sea to kill the fish."

It never fails to astound this notion of scorching Eritrea to rid it of Eritreans. Echoes of this barbaric sentiment can still be heard today. Yet, Eritrea remains strong, and Eritreans flourish – along with their sea and fish.



Eritrea

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI)
for Training and Certification
Dekemhare 30 MW Solar PV Project
Government of the State of Eritrea

Sector: Energy
Project Code: P-ER-FA0-001

The Government of State of Eritrea has received financing from the African Development Fund (ADF) towards the cost of the Dekemhare 30 MW Solar PV Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds of the grant to payments under the contract for ‘Technical Training and Certification’.

This Technical Training and Certification under this contract will be given to the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MoEM) staff. This contract will include the following but not limited to:

1. Technical Training and Certification that will enable MoEM staff to conduct renewable energy resource assessment in the areas of:
 - a. Solar Energy
 - b. Wind Energy
 - c. Geothermal Energy
2. Prefeasibility and feasibility studies of Renewable Energy Projects
3. Training and certification in
 - a. Design, Installation, Commissioning, contract, and construction management of large-scale renewable projects (grater than 10 MW)
 - b. Supervision of construction of renewable and thermal energy projects.
 - c. Testing and commissioning of renewable and thermal power plants.
4. Training and certification in the areas Of
 - a. Development of BESS and solar power plant,
 - b. Substation and protection systems,
 - c. Grid integration of Renewable Energy,
 - d. SCADA systems
 - e. Training to enable staff to conduct Grid impact study.
 - f. Operations and front-line maintenance of BESS and PV solar power plants,
 - g. Planning, design, efficiency improvement of power plants.
 - h. Power system analysis, grid modernization, power quality, data analysis and visualization, power system protection system coordination.
 - i. Financial, legal, operational, and environmental aspects renewable energy plants.
5. Evaluation of trainees to confirm and assure their technical skill competence.

It is expected that this contract will take 12 months. Physical presence of the training firm in Eritrea is required.

The Project Executing Agency (Ministry of Energy and Mines (MoEM)) now invites eligible training Firms to indicate their interest in providing these trainings. Interested training Firms must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). training Firms may constitute joint - ventures to enhance their chances of qualification and the inclusion of local content is encouraged.

Eligibility criteria, establishment of the shortlist and the selection procedure shall be in accordance with the African Development Bank’s Procurement Policy for Bank Group Funded Operations, dated October 2015, which is available on the Bank’s website at www.afdb.org. The Ministry is under no obligation to shortlist any firm who expresses interest. Interested Training firms may obtain further information at the address below from 08:00 - 12:00 and 14:00 - 17:00 hours during working days.

Expressions of interest should be sent Electronically to the addresses below through email or delivered to the address below by March 11,

2025 at 10.00 hrs. local time and mention: “Technical Training and Certification”.

Ministry of Energy and Mines (MoEM)
Department of Energy
Attention:
Name: Tefferi Abraha
Director, Energy Resources Development Project Manager
Address Street; Denden Street, No. 176
Postal Address: 5285
Postal Code: 174
Tel: 2911125972 Mobile: 2917175327
E-mail: tefferiab.pce@gmail.com

ERITREA
Specific Procurement Notice
(Invitation for Bids [IFB])

IFB Number: 06.2/01/ OCBI/AfDB-DRSLP V/AED/NARI 3/YT/25
Purchaser: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
Project: DROUGHT RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD

PROGRAM (DRSLP V) - ERITREA PROGRAM
Contract title: SUPPLY and INSTALLATION OF PRESSURISED IRRIGATION AT HALHALE, GOLJ (AKLELET), AND GAHTIELAY AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATIONS

Country: 900155016104/2100155040575
Procurement Method: OPEN COMPETITIVE BIDDING (INTERNATIONAL)

OCBI / LCB No: 06.2/01/ OCBI/AfDB-DRSLP V/AED/NARI 3/YT/25
Issued on: February 2025

1. The Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Eritrea has received financing from the African Development Bank Group hereinafter called the Bank toward the cost of the DROUGHT RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM (DRSLP V) - ERITREA and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the Supply and Installation of Pressurised Irrigation at Halhale, Golj(Aklelet), and Gahtielay Agricultural Research Stations.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Eritrea now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Supply and Installation of Pressurised Irrigation at Halhale, Golj(Aklelet), and Gahtielay Agricultural Research Stations.
3. Bidding will be conducted through the Open Competitive Bidding (International), (OCBI) method as specified in the Bank’s Procurement Framework dated October, 2015 and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Framework.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Eritrea, Yacob Tesfom, yacobtesfom@gmail.com and inspect the bidding document during office hours i.e., 08:00 to 15:00 hours at the address given below.
5. The bidding document in English may be received by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:30 a.m. local time on 24 March 2025. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on 11:00 a.m. local time on 24 March 2025.
7. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of USD 6,000.00 or its equivalent in convertible currency
8. The address (es) referred to above is (are): Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Eritrea

Yacob Tesfom
Head Office, Gejeret, Sawa Street,
P.O. Box 1048,
Tel. 002911189266/002911180699,
Asmara, Eritrea
Email: yacobtesfom@gmail.com.



Zara Mining
Share Company

Vacancy Announcement

Position:	Mine surveyor
Department	Mine operation/ Survey
Number required	01
Location:	Based at Koka Gold Mine (Site)
Reporting to:	Mine Chief Surveyor
Primary Responsibility & Scope of Work	To maintain accurate plans of the Mine. To maintain accurately measure and recording mine workings. To ensure the safe handling, storage, and transportation of Survey equipment.
Duties:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Responsible for maintaining an accurate plan of the mine as a whole and will update maps of the surface layout to account for surveying the open pit mine workings to keep a record of the mining operation.- Collect data about landscape features for engineers, including the positioning of objects, land contours, and materials below the earth’s surface.- Measuring process to calculate ore production, in volume or mass units, from the mining operation.- Survey the volume of the dumps of waste accumulating on the surface of the mining property.- Different methods are used to gather data needed for construction, such as geo-mechanic and geo-matic surveys, geospatial measurements, and feasibility surveys.- Prepare reports daily, weekly, and monthly for the senior surveyor.- Advising engineers about earth’s materials.- Convert mine planning conceptual layouts into survey data.- Execute surveying activities assigned by Senior Surveyor/Engineer to standard.- Establish and conduct pit wall monitoring.- Plan and coordinates surveying activities for underground and surface mining operations.- Ensure compliance with safety regulations and standards of Zara Mining Share Company.- Ensure alignment of the Underground Development and Stope rings are accurate with design.
Formal Education, Certifications or Equivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Diploma in Surveying
Working Experience – Nature & Length	Relevant surveying experience in an open pit surface and Underground mining environment is required.
Other skills and abilities	Knowledge about safety regulations. It is being able to manage time effectively. English Strong written and spoken communication. Critical thinking skills. Ability to analyze graphical data. Teamwork abilities. Computer literacy in Microsoft office word, Excel & power point programs. Knowledge about CAD & Surpac programs and surveying technology. Ability to prioritize effectively. Ability to work with high accuracy levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Salary: according to the Company’s salary scale.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Place of work: Zara Mining Share Company Koka Gold Mine Zoba Gash Barka.	
Additional Requirement for nationals: Having fulfilled their National Service obligations and providing evidence of a release paper from the Ministry of Defense—present Clearance paper from the current/last employer. Only short-listed applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview. Application documents will not be returned to the sender. Please mail your applications to the ZARA MINING SHARE CO HR office. Asmara Address: Zara Mining Share Company P. O. Box 2393. Asmara, Please send a copy of your application to Aliens Employment Permit Affairs P.O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea. Dead line 10 days.	



“Decentering Euro-centrism in Heritage Studies”: A Conversation with Prof. Edward Denison on Asmara’s Architectural Heritage

Habtom Tesfamichael



Edward Denison

What inspired you to study the architecture of Asmara?

My first encounter with Asmara was in 1997 when I visited as a tourist. I was immediately captivated by the city’s architectural beauty and the harmonious relationship between the built environment and social life. This unique atmosphere, so different from anything I had experienced, left a profound impression on me. I was driven to understand the origins of this remarkable city – its history, the forces that shaped its creation, and the broader context of Eritrean history.

However, my initial visit was brief as I traveled overland from Cape Town to Alexandria. After departing Massawa by boat, I vowed to return to Asmara. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the border war soon after prevented my return until 2001.

In 2001, I returned with my then-partner, now my wife, and joined the Cultural Assets Rehabilitation Project. This involved extensive research within the municipal archives, providing invaluable insights into Asmara’s history, particularly from the 1930s to the 1970s. Over six months of dedicated archival work deepened my understanding of the city’s past. This experience and the numerous projects I’ve undertaken since then have fueled my fascination with Asmara and continue to drive my work here.

My presentation built upon the work of the Asmara Heritage Project, led by Medhanie Teklemariam, where we continued archival research and documentation, culminating in the successful nomination of Asmara to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2017.

Today’s guest is Edward Denison, a professor of Architecture in Global Modernity at University College London (UCL). Prof. Denison actively engaged in discussions surrounding the nomination of Asmara to the World Heritage List, and his work critically examines the Eurocentric perspectives that often dominate the field of heritage studies. He presented a paper at the 2025 International Conference of Eritrean Studies (ICES) held in Asmara from 4 to 6 January.

While the details of that nomination have been extensively documented in previous publications, I focused on a broader perspective -- expanding our understanding of Eritrea’s encounter with modernity beyond the Italian colonial period.

The prevailing narrative often portrays Asmara as an exclusively Italian creation, but I argue for a more nuanced view that recognizes the city’s distinct Eritrean identity. I examined the city’s experiences after the Italian colonial period, mainly focusing on the impact of Kagnew Station and the presence of American military installations during the Cold War. These sites played a significant role in shaping Asmara’s history and involvement in Cold War geopolitics.

The Americans, who were stationed in Asmara for 25 years, introduced advanced technology and infrastructure, including listening stations used to monitor the Soviet space program. They even planned to build a nuclear station in Asmara though this project was never realized. These events demonstrate that Asmara’s encounter with modernity extended far beyond the Italian colonial period.

While the UNESCO nomination is a significant achievement, it tends to emphasize the European influence on Asmara, overlooking its equally important Eritrean history.

Regarding the ICES, it was an exceptional experience. The diverse range of subjects and disciplines, all centered around Eritrea, provided a unique opportunity to engage with colleagues worldwide and within Eritrea. This interdisciplinary exchange significantly enhanced my understanding of Eritrea and its intellectual community. I have been fortunate to attend all three ICES held in Eritrea, and each one has been an invaluable experience.

Your paper at the ICES 2025 was on decentering the general perception of modern cultural heritage. Can you tell us more about it, particularly in the context of Asmara?

By ‘decentering,’ I mean that the current international framework for heritage is fundamentally Eurocentric. This Eurocentric bias

strongly influences how we define and value heritage.

I propose that we challenge this perspective and consider how cultural heritage is valued in other regions, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These regions have their unique cultural conditions and expressions that may be equally, if not more, valuable than those defined by European standards.

This is particularly evident in modern architectural heritage, where ‘modernist architecture’ often implies a specific European aesthetic. While some buildings in Asmara may exhibit European influences, their true essence is using African materials, skills, and labor. This connection can be traced back centuries, even to the ancient city of Adulis. The ruins of Adulis demonstrate a continuity of construction techniques and skills evident in 20th-century Asmara, highlighting the distinctiveness of Eritrean architecture.

Critiquing this Eurocentric perspective means recognizing that the evaluation of modern architectural heritage often occurs through a European lens. Whether in China, South Africa, or other regions, the criteria for assessing and valuing heritage are frequently rooted in European aesthetics and values.

This approach fails to acknowledge the unique historical and cultural contexts within which these buildings were created. It overlooks the intricate relationships between local communities, global influences, and architectural expression.

This Eurocentric bias is evident in the disproportionate representation of European cultural heritage sites on the World Heritage List. With five times more European sites than African sites, the list reflects this inherent bias. While Africa is a continent of 54 countries possessing a rich and diverse cultural heritage, its representation on the World Heritage List is grossly inadequate. This disparity clearly demonstrates the pervasive influence of Eurocentric perspectives.

What are the main characteristics that make Asmara a key cultural heritage?

While we often focus on aspects of Asmara’s architectural and urban

planning, which were undoubtedly crucial to its recognition as a World Heritage site, I believe the city’s true significance lies in the expression of an indigenous condition within its built environment.

This unique character stems from the harmonious integration of local Eritrean labor, materials, and skills with the external influence of Italian colonialism. The Italians relied heavily on Eritrean labor to construct many buildings that still exist today. This interplay between local expertise and external influence created a unique architectural expression.

This phenomenon is not exclusive to Asmara. In many colonial contexts, across Asia and even in the peripheries of Europe, local conditions have been manifested through architectural forms that deviate from traditional Western European styles.

For me, Asmara’s true distinction lies in this unique expression of its indigenous character. While its urban planning and architecture are undoubtedly remarkable, it’s unfortunate that the city is still often viewed through a European lens, primarily as an “Italian city.” In my opinion, this perspective fails to recognize the city’s unique and authentic Eritrean identity.

Asmara has now been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. How does this impact the city?

Nominating a site for UNESCO World Heritage status requires significant effort from the state party. However, regardless of the designation, the most crucial aspect is the commitment of the state party—in this case, the State of Eritrea—to protect the site.

Asmara, an urban site, entails implementing comprehensive heritage laws, revising building regulations, and conducting in-depth research to develop a robust conservation management plan. All of these measures are essential for Asmara’s long-term protection.

The UNESCO World Heritage designation itself can be considered a bonus. It elevates Asmara to an internationally recognized platform, which can enhance the city’s profile and generate pride

among its residents. With over 1220 World Heritage sites worldwide, this recognition can bring tangible benefits in tourism, restoration efforts, and international support for the site’s conservation.

What were the main challenges faced in enlisting Asmara in the World Heritage Site List?

The nomination process was a significant undertaking requiring substantial financial resources. While the establishment of the Asmara Heritage Project by the Eritrean government, providing a dedicated office space, was a crucial first step, further funding was essential to support the extensive research and documentation required. We received valuable support from various organizations, including Norway, the British Embassy, and the European Union.

However, despite these logistical and financial challenges, the exceptional dedication and collaborative spirit of the Asmara Heritage Project team made the process remarkably smooth. With 36 members working diligently, the team overcame obstacles with remarkable professionalism. Having worked on numerous heritage nominations across Africa, Latin America, Europe, and China, I can confidently say that the Asmara Heritage Project team was truly outstanding.

Minor procedural challenges arose during the UNESCO evaluation process. While we initially submitted the nomination based on criteria two, three, and four, UNESCO approved the nomination based on criteria two and four. They did not accept our argument for criterion three, which, in my view, was crucial for acknowledging the significant contribution of Eritrean labor and skills to the construction of Asmara.

We are currently working to refine our argument and present it in a way that more effectively conveys its importance and secures UNESCO’s recognition. This process has also presented an intellectual challenge, requiring us to further refine our understanding and articulation of Eritrean contributions to the built environment.

Has Asmara been preserved by chance or by design?

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